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**The Novels of Joyce Cary:
Romantic Illusion and Existential "Pathology"**

by
Julie M. Fenwick

A thesis presented to the University of Ottawa in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of
English



Julie M. Fenwick, Ottawa, Canada, 1990



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Abstract

It is Joyce Cary's contention that each individual fashions for him or herself an "idea of life" which renders experience coherent and meaningful. His own "idea of life" was arrived at in part by examining and adapting elements drawn from the notions of a variety of artists and philosophers. Cary's novels dramatise his assessment of the adequacy of various notions and philosophical positions by creating characters to whose "ideas of life" they are centrally important.

Cary's earliest novels address a whole range of "inadequate" ideas which he depicts as derived from romanticism and as fundamentally related to one another. These include the secularisation of divine providence as Hegelian dialectic, as a deterministic unconscious, and as the "life force." Furthermore, he depicts the romantic Utopianism of philosophers such as Rousseau as rooted in the same error as Social Darwinism, namely faith in a providential "natural law" which shapes human destiny. The ground of Cary's rejection of these notions, and of the connections he draws among them, is his belief that they all limit the freedom and responsibility of the individual. As such, they become both a prison for the human spirit and a refuge from existential choice.

Having examined Cary's wholesale rejection of these ideas, this thesis goes on to discuss his novelistic dramatisations of specific notions adapted from the works of Carlyle, Wordsworth, and Kierkegaard. Cary is indebted to Carlyle for a notion of history as a cycle of decay and subsequent new creation of public institutions and symbols which embody cultural traditions. But history also exhibits a linear development, fueled by the desire of all people for greater "richness" of experience. Carlyle suggests that an important role in this development is reserved for exceptional individuals who are providentially selected "heroes" and who have a right to command absolute obedience in the realisation of their creative visions. In contrast, although Cary depicts "Promethean" iconoclasts as the

inspirers of historical development, he suggests that the cooperation of other free individuals is necessary to bring their imaginative visions to actualisation.

Cary's novels emphasise freedom, creativity, and individual responsibility not only as the hall-marks of a "mature" culture, but also as the signs of a mature self. Childhood development recapitulates the evolution of human society from the tribe, in which autonomy is sacrificed and creativity stifled in the interests of security and stability. However, all individuals "outgrow" the tribe at adolescence, when the desire for self-assertion, if repressed, can lead to neurosis or to outbursts of individual or collective violence. In more "mature" cultures, this self-assertion must be directed by education into socially acceptable and personally fulfilling channels.

Cary's notion of the manner in which such a responsible and self-fulfilled individual develops is very similar to that of Wordsworth, with one important exception. Whereas Wordsworth attributes primacy to the relationship of the developing self to nature, Cary depicts the relationship with other people as paramount. Nonetheless, Cary's infants and children strongly resemble Wordsworth's in that they pass from a state in which they fail to differentiate between their own existence and that of the world, to a state in which they regard all of the world as animate but as separate from themselves. Furthermore, Cary's notion of memory is strikingly similar to Wordsworth's, as is his depiction of the manner in which children "discover" language, by associating powerful emotions with images and concepts.

Cary depicts the acquisition of a moral sense as an important facet of personal maturation. The mature person transcends the self to engage in compassionate relationships with other people, while respecting their separateness. Furthermore, the ability to transcend the self is fundamental to the exercise of creativity. It is involved both in the intuition which inspires artistic creation and in the engagement with material reality that is necessary to

"translate" such intuition into a concrete symbol. In his final novels, Cary depicts the dire consequences of failures of self-transcendence. He also returns to several notions raised in his earliest works, principally the value of sacrifice and the validity of the "inner voice" as a guide to moral choice. He creates characters and situations that recall those of Kierkegaard's Fear and Trembling, and shows the tragic consequences which ensue when a man mistakes himself for a privileged "hero" with direct access to the divine will.

Many of Cary's characters who subscribe to such "inadequate" notions exemplify the existentially "pathological" states described by Tillich, Buber, and Marcel. Cary's examination and critique of specific romantic texts leads him to adopt a position that can be identified as "existentialist." His ideas diverge at revealing points from those of Sartre, and display a remarkable affinity with those of Nikolai Berdyaev. In the light of these divergences and affinities, the position exemplified by Cary's novels can be located within the heterogeneous existentialist movement.

Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgments	vi
A Note on Documentation	vii
Abbreviations of Titles	viii
Chapter I. Joyce Cary's "Idea of Life"	1
Chapter II. Joyce Cary and Providence	41
Chapter III. African Prometheus: Carlyle and Cary's Myth of History	85
Chapter IV. Historical Recapitulation and the Growth of the Self:	
Maturity, Morality, and Memory	122
Chapter V. Intuition and Symbol in <u>The Horse's Mouth</u>	162
Chapter VI. Carlylean and Kierkegaardian "Heroes": Egotism,	
Guilt and the "Inner Light"	203
Chapter VII. Joyce Cary's Existentialist "Pathology"	250
Afterword	288
Bibliography	292

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A Note on Documentation

References to material in the Osborn Collection in the Bodleian Library are documented according to Barbara Fisher's Files and Notebooks in the Manuscript Collection of Joyce Cary: A Classification and Analysis. Each reference is prefaced by a box number (MS 271). Some boxes contain notebooks, designated by a letter and a number. The sheets of some of these notebooks have been numbered (MS 271 N82 19r). Other notebooks (which are evidently homemade and resemble recipe files) were divided by Cary into sections according to topic (MS 280 N119 "Nature"). Other boxes contain file folders, designated by a number and two letters. Some, but not all, of the sheets they contain are numbered (MS 258 S5C 10). Still other boxes contain typescripts, which retain Cary's original page numbers, as well as the cataloguer's numbers. Whenever these numbers differ, both have been given (MS 206 14/15).

Abbreviations of Titles of Works by Joyce Cary

AF The Case for African Freedom and Other Writings on Africa

A&R Art and Reality: Ways of Creative Process

AS Aissa Saved

AV An American Visitor

AW The African Witch

CC Castle Corner

C&F The Captive and the Free

CJ Cock Jarvis

CMD Charley Is My Darling

DS The Drunken Sailor: A Ballad Epic

EL Except the Lord

EJ A Fearful Joy

HC A House of Children

HM The Horse's Mouth

HS Herself Surprised

MJ Mister Johnson

MS Marching Soldier

NHM Not Honour More

PG Prisoner of Grace

PM Power in Men

PRF The Process of Real Freedom

SE Joyce Cary: Selected Essays

SS Spring Song and Other Stories

TBP To Be a Pilgrim

CHAPTER I

Joyce Cary's "Idea of Life"

(i)

Joyce Cary (1888 - 1957) was in his forties when his first book was published, old enough to have formed decided opinions on the topics which his fiction is principally concerned with exploring: freedom, creativity, and moral choice. He arrived at these opinions by examining the ideas of a variety of thinkers, rejecting some of their notions and adapting others to fit his own interpretation of the contemporary twentieth-century situation. His novels can be thought of as a series of "experiments" during which Cary places characters, each of whose actions are guided by a certain set of beliefs, in a certain environment. The reader is invited to evaluate a particular set of notions, by examining the consequences to the characters of acting and choosing on the basis of these ideas. Many of the notions held by Cary's characters, from Marie Hasluck's "Rousseauism" to Gulley Jimson's admiration for Blake, can be related to romanticism and his "experiments" consist to a large extent of a critique of specific aspects of romanticism.

Blake's influence on Cary has been exhaustively analysed.¹ In contrast, only a few references to the similarity of Cary's thought to Wordsworth's notions are to be found.² His own references to Wordsworth are particularly interesting in that virtually all of them are to the "Intimations of Immortality" Ode.³ As Chapter IV will demonstrate, the Ode comes to occupy a central place in his myth of psychic development from child to adult. The manner in which it does so is entirely typical of Cary. In discussing the sources of his notions, it is very difficult to attribute "influence," for he appears to have found most

stimulating those thinkers with whom he was at times in agreement, but whose notions drove him at other times to vigorous refutation. Cary's own intellectual explorations exemplify his contention that "even a bad doctrine is better than none at all. You can test it, differ from it, your mind has something to work on" (A&R 42). Wordsworth's Ode is a good example of a work which provides him with a philosophic position against which he tests and defines his own ideas.

Cary's relationship to Thomas Carlyle is also one of intellectual stimulation born of both agreement and disagreement. For example, he evidently objects to Carlyle's hyperbolic, digressive, and exhortatory style, although he finds the substance of Carlyle's works valuable: " 'We forgive Carlyle his abominable style on account of his matter' " (letter of Jan. 23, 1927 to Lionel Stevenson, quoted in Fisher, Joyce Cary Remembered 64). There is a very strong resemblance between many of Cary's notions and some of those expressed by Carlyle in Sartor Resartus. Cary owned a copy of Sartor Resartus and as a young man he read Symons' The Symbolist Movement in Literature, which cites Carlyle's notion of the symbol. Carlyle's political philosophy is mentioned in Cary's Power in Men (48). Significantly, Cary places Carlyle among the creative iconoclasts who crew the ship of imagination in The Drunken Sailor. Although Cary did not make extensive notes on Carlyle's books, this may be because he encountered Carlyle's works and internalised them at such an early age that when he later began his more systematic readings in philosophy further investigation was unnecessary. A piece of indirect evidence for Cary's "debt" to Carlyle is that many of his notions strongly resemble those of Nikolai Berdyaev, whose brand of existentialism (as Berdyaev himself acknowledges) is heavily indebted to Carlyle (Berdyaev Dream and Reality 89; History 13).

Cary's affinity to Berdyaev is symptomatic of the ultimate result of his "experiments," for in scrutinising and adapting specific romantic notions, he arrives at a

position which has been described as existentialist. Cary made extensive notes on the works of Soren Kierkegaard (MS 280 N110, N111), and his later novels suggest that he examined Kierkegaard's work in a manner similar to that in which he had earlier scrutinised those of Wordsworth and Carlyle. This thesis, therefore, seeks to elucidate the relationship of the notions underlying Cary's novels to those of Wordsworth, Carlyle, and Kierkegaard, to trace the manner in which this relationship shapes the evolution of what is usually described as his existentialism, and thereby to place him within a very broadly defined existentialist movement.

Virtually every important work of Cary criticism makes implied reference to his "existentialism" by stressing his preoccupation with human freedom and isolation, with the need to respond creatively to contingency, and with the potential for tragedy entailed in the exercise of freedom and creativity. Cary summarised these ideas in an interview conducted during the last decade of his life, when he was engaged in expressing in his mature works the fruits of a lifetime of philosophical speculation:

. . . for me the principal fact of life is the free mind. For good and evil, man is a free creative spirit. This produces the very queer world we live in, a world in continuous creation and therefore continuous change and insecurity. A perpetually new and lively world, but a dangerous one, full of tragedy and injustice.

("Interview," SE 5)

Statements such as this have led critics to label Cary as an existentialist, even though the philosophical basis of many aspects of his thought has yet to be thoroughly explicated.⁴

The term "existentialism" is itself problematic, embracing as it does such disparate philosophies as those of Soren Kierkegaard and Jean-Paul Sartre. As a first step in locating Cary's position within this broad spectrum, this chapter examines in detail a statement he made in the course of the interview quoted above, discussing each of the notions which he articulates with reference to both his published and unpublished writings,⁵ and elucidating his often idiosyncratic vocabulary.

Cary begins his credo by emphasising that he is:

influenced by the solitude of men's minds, but equally by the unity of their fundamental character and feelings, their sympathies which bring them together. I believe that there is such a thing as unselfish love and beauty. I am obliged to believe in God as a person. . . . and [in] His grace. . . . It is by His grace that we know beauty and love, that we have all that makes life worth living in a tough, dangerous, and unjust world. . . . if you say I am an Existentialist in the school of Kierkegaard, that is . . . reasonable. But Existentialism without a God is nonsense — it atomises a world which is plainly a unity. It produces merely frustration and defeat. How can one explain the existence of personal feelings, love and beauty, in nature, unless a person, God, is there? He's there as much as hydrogen gas. He is a fact of experience. . . . I don't believe in miracles. . . . some breach in the fundamental consistency of the world character, which is absolutely impossible. God is a character, a real and consistent being, or He is nothing. If God did a miracle He would deny His own nature and the universe would

simply . . . vanish, become nothing. . . . The world is a definite character. It is, and therefore it is something. And it can't be any other thing.

("Interview," SE 6-7)

There are two important points to note about this statement. First, it is a fine example of qualities characteristic of Cary's prose: simplicity of expression and density of content. It contains most of the major elements of his existentialism, and the flat assertions are a synopsis of years of speculation recorded in his files and notebooks. Cary's characteristic mode of writing was to discard approximately two thirds of any manuscript ("My First Novel" 637), eliminating all but the most essential elements of his thought, and (in his fiction) sacrificing philosophical speculation for the presentation of experience: "I don't care for philosophers in books. They are always bores. A novel should be an experience and convey an emotional truth rather than arguments" ("Interview," SE 4). This gives both his fiction and his nonfiction a superficial simplicity which is often misleading.

The second point of importance concerns Cary's language. He consistently employs traditional terms such as "God" and "grace" in ways which depart significantly from orthodoxy. In addition, he uses words such as "beauty" and "goodness" to refer to existential experiences which are directly accessible to everyone, rather than to indicate abstractions or quasi-Platonic essences. Thus his vocabulary reflects his notion of the concreteness and unity of "reality."

Cary's characters respond to the contingencies of experiential reality according to their own "ideas of life," uniquely individual approaches to their existential situations. The more self-conscious characters, such as Jimson and Wilcher, articulate and examine their "ideas of life," while the less self-conscious, such as Mr. Johnson, simply live them. In between these extremes fall characters such as Charley, an adolescent in the process of

evolving significant form for his experience, which he is as yet too young to articulate. Cary effectively communicates all the "muddle" of children like Charley and of men who, like Wilcher, undertake an agonising re-evaluation of their ideas of life, perhaps because he himself, at the age of thirty-one, conducted a radical self-examination: "after ten years of active, thoughtless, and various experience in the world, [I] began . . . to ask what it amounted to, to dig up all [my] foundations, to find out exactly what they were . . . and [I] then slowly and painfully rebuilt them . . . as a coherent whole" (African Freedom 14).

In this rebuilding process, Cary's method was to sift and to adapt the thoughts of others. At his death he had in his library works by Hobbes, William James, Descartes, Goethe, Rousseau, Berkeley, Hegel, Croce, J. S. Haldane, T. H. Huxley, Kant, Locke, Nietzsche, Bertrand Russell, Schopenhauer, Swedenborg, Comte, Sartre, Freud, Herbert Spencer, and J. S. Mill (Cary Bibliography list B). His notes contain references to many of these thinkers as well as comments on Spinoza, Marx, Jung, Adler, Plato, Darwin, Fichte, Bakunin, and Proudhon. Many of these notes consist of extracts from the books Cary read, sprinkled with his own comments in parentheses. His comments suggest that his notions evolved by integrating ideas gleaned from many of these philosophers with the fruits of his own experience and with the system of values he had acquired from his liberal, Protestant background. The consistency of attitude displayed in notebooks used over thirty-five years suggests that although Cary spent the rest of his life incorporating new ideas into the original framework, the basic structure of his "idea of life" remained unchanged.

Cary is not worried by the knowledge that his notions lack the degree of rigour one would expect in those of a serious philosopher. He asks of his "idea of life" only that it be compatible enough with reason and experience to make sense of the world for *him*: "It is designed to lie close to my own experience. I haven't attempted to harmonise inconsistencies" (A&R 13). He asserts that, as a guide to living, it is more important for a

personal philosophy to be true to experience and satisfying to the reason than to be entirely self-consistent and logical (MS 272 P52 18v, 20r).⁶

Cary's own efforts therefore exemplify his contention that each person must construct his or her own "idea of life" and that the most useful of these ideas are a compromise of fidelity to experience with internal coherence: "we are alone in mind, and so we are compelled, each of us, to form our own ideas of things" (A&R 9-10). As a corollary, "we are all alone in our worlds" which we have made for ourselves (preface to First Trilogy ix-x). Echeruo points out that this notion of isolation in a self-created world is held by existentialists as diverse as Sartre and Kierkegaard (Order 8). What is important about Cary's variation on a basic existentialist theme is that, for him, the construction of an "idea of life" is an artistic activity. The "creative imagination" gives significant form to the content of one's experience in creating one's private world (A&R 72).

However, such creation draws raw material not only from the individual's unique situation, but also from certain experiences which all men and women have in common. The world "is not merely a flux of senseless change. Underneath all the turmoil there are certain fixed and permanent things. . . . there is always affection, family love and responsibility . . . and on the other hand you have always the same anxieties, loss, bitterness, and danger, the everlasting dilemmas of life" ("Unfinished Novels," SE 115). Furthermore, as Helen Gardner points out, to Cary the individual's isolation is (paradoxically) one of these universal dilemmas: "What to other writers has been a source of dismay, the separateness of human experience . . . was to Cary a proof of the essential unity of mankind" (82).

But people are united at a more intimate level than their universal predicament as isolated beings. They are fundamentally connected by their feelings: "men are together in feeling, in sympathy," even though they are "alone in mind" ("Morality and the Novelist,"

SE 157). Cary sometimes employs the word "feeling" conventionally, to refer to an emotion. In this passage, therefore, he is suggesting that people are unified by their common emotions of love, hate, ambition, and desire. His notes make it clear that he considers the experience of the emotions which are called, for example, "love" or "anger" to be the same for all people, because such basic emotions are given, a part of nature (MS 238 82, 312). He suggests that it is the wish to achieve the richest possible satisfaction of these "universal" feelings that motivates the creation of an "idea of life": "the most important part of man's existence, that part where he most truly lives and is aware of living, lies entirely within the domain of personal feeling. Reason is used only to satisfy feeling, to build up a world in which feelings can be gratified" (A&R 24).

Assigning such overwhelming importance to emotions as motivators might seem to limit freedom of choice. In apparent paradox, Cary asserts that it is *because* feelings are their most fundamental motivation that people are free. In order to understand Cary's argument it is important to realise that he distinguishes between a "reason" (a rational explanation of an action), a "cause" in the general sense (anything evoking some sort of reaction), and a "cause" as a determining factor (something dictating the nature of the response). These distinctions can be the source of a certain confusion, if one fails to appreciate that a cause will not always determine completely the nature of the reaction it provokes. An examination of Cary's writings, both published and unpublished, reveals that when he says that feelings are caused, he means that feelings appear in reaction to some internal or external situation, but that their quality and intensity are largely determined by the experiencing subject.

Cary explains this by postulating that feelings have the capacity for an infinite internal "variety of qualities and intensities" like shades of a colour (A&R 142; see also MS 280 108 "Freedom"; MS 271 N100 11v-12r). No two people ever experience *exactly* the

same feeling in the same situation: although there are some feelings that are universally evoked in a given situation, there is still infinite variation of individual response. This is perhaps easier to understand if one visualises Cary's analogy of feeling to a colour spectrum. Certain basic "universal" emotions are experienced over a narrow range of this spectrum by virtually everyone, but even this narrow range is infinitely divisible, because feelings are immaterial and not subject to the laws of matter (MS 280 N108 "Freedom"). No two people experience exactly the same "shade" of emotion in the same situation, nor does the same individual in similar situations. Since the same cause does not inevitably elicit a standard effect, feelings escape deterministic causation, while retaining their universality and "givenness."

Cary admits that one could, of course, argue that the feeling subject responds deterministically, on the basis of memory, social indoctrination, and heredity (MS 267 N59 "Free will"). But he rejects this possibility, insisting that although feelings are influenced by the external world, by accidents, by mistakes, and by memory, these interact in a highly complex manner that transcends cause and effect (MS 206 18/19). Furthermore, people do not act purely on the basis of feeling. Feeling supplies the motivating drive, but choices for action are subjected to examination by the reason (MS 271 N101 37), and this provides a corrective against the possibility that feeling can be " 'perverted' " (MS 273 S12M, quoted in Fisher, House 205). Cary argues that the reason also transcends cause and effect, because the effects it produces are incommensurate with their causes (MS 271 101 36v).

This incommensurability arises because ideas introduce something new, unpredictable, and qualitatively different into the cause and effect sequence of the non-human world: "If [a man] has power to frame his own ideas, those ideas enter into the stream of causation, as cause, to determine his action" ("Demolition," SE 68; MS 206 7-10; A&R 8). As with feelings, Cary again concedes that "the argument could be refuted, in

logic, by the statement that a man's ideas are themselves entirely determined" ("Demolition," SE 69). However, he reiterates his belief in the freedom of the mind, a belief based on experience, transcending logic ("Demolition," SE 69-70).⁷ To say that one has a reason for doing something is not the same as saying that an effect proceeds from a cause. Although all sane people have reasons for their actions, their choices are fundamentally free: "Everyone but a lunatic has reason for what he does. . . . But I believe, with Kant, that the mind is self-determined. That is, I believe intensely in the creative freedom of the mind" ("Interview," SE 10; see also MS 271 N85 1, MS 206 17/18).

By positing that feelings are not governed by cause and effect, that ideas introduce new possibilities for action which did not previously exist, and that choice inevitably involves both feelings and ideas, Cary strives to rescue freedom of action from the dictates of unconscious drives, inherited instincts, and deterministic environmental factors. To this end, he insists that even "universal" emotions are uniquely experienced and that "although all events are determined, those that are ideas for action formed in some mind are partly self-determined and unpredictable" (A&R 8).

This leads Cary to assert that, because they are rooted in the application of ideas to emotion (A&R 13), values also are fundamentally undetermined and subjective (MS 206 18-21). Nonetheless, moral values are not arbitrary, because they are "tied to ends" (MS 271 N99 7v). All actions have consequences, and the reason and the imagination cooperate to predict the probable outcome of one's actions and to choose the most creative response to the contingencies of one's present situation (MS 206 46/21). The importance which Cary attributes to the role of imagination in moral choice resembles Kierkegaard's assertion of the fundamental creativity of such choices, an insight for which he expresses great admiration (MS 206 49/24). Cary also agrees with Kant that saying there is something one "ought" to do assumes one is free to choose, and that moral action is

essentially creative: it is not merely a choice of given alternatives, but the creation of new possibilities for action (MS 206 2; MS 273 S12C 3-4).⁸

However, Cary rejects Kant's categorical imperative as fundamentally "useless" and even "immoral," because it assumes that there is a single formula which can be applied to all experiences of a certain type (MS 271 N99 3r, 5r, 7v), whereas he insists that every situation is unique (MS 271 N100 12r). People the world over may agree "[a]t a certain primitive level" that "[c]ourage, duty, affection, loyalty, self-discipline, truth" are valuable, even if they "differ . . . about their relative importance" (A&R 153). But although such a "moral constant" exists, "every moral problem is itself unique" (A&R 154, 157). The "constant" represents an ideal, the "problem" the reality of a contingent world of unique individuals. For this reason, Cary considers the categorical imperative too "abstract" and an unreliable guide to a particular individual in a specific situation (PM 13). The single great moral "imperative" which underlies all of Cary's novels is "anti-categorical": one must face the consequences of one's own freedom and respect that of others. That is, one must make decisions which recognise and respond creatively to the uniqueness and contingency of one's experience, not seeking escape from responsibility in abstract rules of conduct that treat every existential situation as a member of a "category."

Cary is not suggesting that human freedom is absolute, for his characters must constantly struggle against the limits of necessity in order to realise their ideas and to satisfy their feelings. Cook, referring to Cary's depiction of the "incessant struggle against limiting necessity" on the part of the free and creative individual, describes his notion of necessity as "compounded of chance, physical and economic law, and human desire" (27, 29). Similarly, Mahood sees in Cary's works a drama of the "creative force . . . meeting the immovable obstacles of the physical, 'given' world" (80). This struggle with necessity is

the result of individuals' attempts to build, out of the raw material of a frequently intransigent reality, private "worlds" in which their feelings can be satisfied.

In sum, Cary depicts feelings, in the sense of emotions, as providing the fundamental motivation for creative action and moral choice. However, his understanding of the word "feeling" is more subtle and complex than at first appears. "Feeling" does not always signify merely the content of an emotion; it can also refer to a mode of apprehending the world. Cary's usage reflects the fact that the English word "feeling" ordinarily has more than one connotation. One can have a "feeling" *of* anger (feeling as simple emotion) or a "feeling" *that* something is beautiful or true (feeling as intuitive apprehension).⁹ Because he often slides from one connotation to the other, Cary's notions of feeling and intuition are frequently confusing, but they lie at the very heart of his "idea of life" and merit careful and detailed examination.

Cary depicts "feeling," in the second sense, as a mode of apprehension in which subject and object form two poles of a continuum. He states that, in speaking of "feeling," the terms subject and object "do not divide, they bring together things formerly indifferent. They express a relation" (MS 271 N82 13r). In fact, if subject and object were not "parts of one whole" no relationship of any kind could exist between them (MS 267 N65 untitled ms). Because of this wholeness, "feeling" is "both 'in' the subject and the object at once" (MS 271 N82 2). Cary then goes on to use this notion of "feeling" (as the unity of subject and object) as a basis on which to distinguish between perception and intuition.¹⁰

It appears from Cary's notes that he took from Hegel the notion of pure perception as the simple grasping of a complex whole, without conceptualisation or a division into subject and object. These notes also suggest that he accepts, to a limited extent, Kant's notion that "the realm of phenomena . . . could be . . . scientifically known because all rational minds structured the manifold of experience in the same way" (Toews 35).¹¹ Cary

states that the initial "pure" perceptions are reliably consistent, because they depend upon innate categories of thought which enable even small children to recognise qualities such as "flatness" and "squareness" (MS 272 P43 2v). However, conceptual thought alters this pure perception; it "abstracts[,] names" distancing subject from object (MS 271 N82 13r).

Cary's notion of intuition, on the other hand, is that it has its basis in the direct apprehension of reality by "feelings" (MS 238 234), in which both subject and object are intimately linked. No two subjects intuit the real in the same way because intuition involves "valuation," that is, the attachment of ideas to emotion (MS 271 N82 19r). Cary's notion of valuation renders his depiction of the relationship of "feeling" to intuition somewhat confusing: intuition involves "feeling" in both senses of the word, that is, as a mode of apprehension and, in the process of valuation, as simple emotion.

As a further complication, the emotional component of valuation is inevitably shaped by ideas: "no one after the first few months of life retains the primitive emotions as pure general feeling. The moment a child begins to think and to record its reflections, judgments begin to attach themselves to its emotions. Its individual mind . . . begins to soak into its emotional make-up" (A&R 30). Although intuitions initially occur subconsciously (A&R 99), in all but the very young child they inevitably rise to consciousness. At the moment at which one first becomes consciously aware of an intuition, it is as a pure feeling-as-apprehension, "direct experience of a datum, not mediated by reason or judgement" ("Demolition," SE 69). But this datum is soon submitted to reflection. That is, intuition involves an original subconscious relationship of subject and object (feeling-as-apprehension), which then rises to consciousness where it is subjected to valuation (feeling-as-emotion interacting with and modified by ideas).

Because intuition involves both emotions and ideas, it is characterised by both universality and individuality. The emotion accompanying an experience may be universal,

but the intuition is unique in every case, because each person inhabits a separate mental world and ideas are at least partially self-determined. Nevertheless, Cary describes intuition as "the reaction of a person to the world outside" (A&R 11) and "the recognition of the objective real in its own quality" (A&R 31). He tries to justify this claim by positing that intuition, despite its subjectivity, grasps the object's reality, because it is based on feeling-as-apprehension, on a genuine relationship of subject and object.

However, it is sometimes difficult to judge where Cary draws the line between perception and intuition, because, whereas perception is limited to the apprehension of the phenomena, feeling-as-apprehension, on which intuition depends, deals both with phenomena (a "feeling" of "blue" or "yellow," MS 239 206), and with reality (a "feeling" of "beauty"). Perception is the basis of conceptual knowledge of the real as it manifests itself in phenomena, but intuition appears to be a direct contact, via "feelings," with both phenomena and reality (MS 271 N82 19r). For this reason, Cary asserts, the intuition of a poet, painter, or prophet can give us greater insight into the real than abstract rules induced from perception of the phenomena (MS 271 N82 13r).

A grasp of Cary's notion of "feeling," both as emotion and as a mode of apprehension, is crucial to an understanding of his assertion that "beauty" is a "feeling" ("My Religious History," quoted in Fisher, Theme 133; MS 273 S12M). He describes the aesthetic response to the beautiful as an intuition grounded in emotion, a universal affect found in the youngest children. Although generations of philosophers have failed to define "beauty" and standards of beauty vary from culture to culture, the word refers to a quality and an experience which is universally recognized (MS 257 N41 5), because the nature of the emotion which people associate with an intuition of the beautiful is universal. As evidence for this contention, Cary notes that beauty gives everyone a certain *kind* of

experience (MS 257 N41 5), that is, one that is comparable even though it differs from subject to subject.

Therefore, when Cary says that a small child responds aesthetically to the world according to "a complex set of emotional forms" he does not mean that the child has an idea of beauty in the Platonic sense, but only that the emotional component of the intuitive apprehension of beauty is universal in nature:

This is not a question of innate ideas but innate feelings. And those of a small child may be said to belong to a world of universal forms. In mind and reason it is an individual, but in emotion, in fundamental sympathies, it belongs to a universal community.

(A&R 12)

Cary has transferred "form" to the emotions, because he does not envisage another "Platonic" reality to which all self-conscious rational beings have access. In his notes, he consistently rejects the "forms" of philosophers such as Plato as "abstractions" with no "relation to the real" (MS 272 P52 22r).

Because Cary rejects universally accessible Ideas, the child remains "[i]n mind and reason an individual," and, despite the universality of its emotional "forms," its intuitions will be uniquely its own. The only exception to this is the very small child in whom "primary intuition" (feeling-as-apprehension) does not rise to consciousness. Such a child is not yet an individual, and therefore its intuitions of the real take place "within a common personality" from which the growth of self-consciousness precipitates a true self (A&R 14).

Moreover, it must be remembered that even the "universal" emotional "forms" have an infinite capacity for internal variation (MS 280 N108 "Freedom"). Cary argues that this tension of universality and subjectivity explains the puzzling fact that beauty remains an intuition which is so subjective that it cannot be rationally defined, even though it is universally recognisable by the "form" of its affect. His notion of beauty is related to his claim that, despite the subjectivity of the artist's intuition, a work of art can communicate unique experience by an appeal to universally recognisable emotions. This tension of subjectivity and universality is the ground of the artist's struggle to render subjective intuition in a form which will communicate his or her experience and so overcome the isolation of the individual, a struggle with which Cary's Art and Reality is greatly concerned.

For Cary suggests that isolation from other people can be meliorated when one intuitively grasps the real and communicates this intuition in a work of art. This ability is not limited to painters and poets. People's intuitions help them to create their own "ideas of life," works of art by means of which they give coherent form to their experience. And any individual's "idea of life" may find expression in further acts of creation observable by other people — as in Bill Wilcher's garden, Sara's homes, Plantie's job, or Celia Rudbeck's marriage.

Moreover, because they give form and coherence to experience, mature "ideas of life" also help to integrate the psyche, healing the internal conflicts which are typical of adolescents such as Aissa and Charley. This aspect of Cary's notions of feeling and intuition links them to Wordsworth's and Carlyle's attempts to find a creative and healing response to the psychological and spiritual malaise that splits mind from world, self from other, and subject from object. The pathological extreme of this dualism is psychic fragmentation and alienation of self from God, from nature, and from other selves. In

Sartor Resartus, *Teufelsdröckh* exemplifies this condition, which Carlyle ascribes to an overbalance of the rational self-consciousness at the expense of feeling and faith. In the Twentieth Century this condition, considered to be pathological by Carlyle, becomes the typical situation of the "existentialist" hero. These characters lack qualities found in many of Cary's protagonists: hope, affection, and a strong sense of commitment to others.

Cary counters the isolation of the solitary twentieth-century self-consciousness by positing that all people are united by their "feelings" in both senses, as "universal" emotions and as the direct apprehension of a shared reality. His novels depict the power of the imagination to create satisfying individual worlds, the capacity of ordinary men and women to intuit the real, and the ability of artists to communicate their intuitive visions. And he seeks to heal psychic fragmentation by positing that emotion and thought are equally vital to all these activities of the creative imagination.

Cary's notions consistently involve a balance and interaction of reason and emotions, reflection and intuition, conscious and unconscious. He opposes the reason not to emotion but to logic, in that logic deals only with measurable "fixed quantities," whereas the reason "deals with feelings and values" (MS 280 N108 "Perception"). He asserts that logic can no more explain the existence of freedom than it can the uniqueness of personality, the nature of reality, or the workings of intuition and imagination (PM 86, 87; MS 293 S22K 6, 9). In contrast, the reason can and should form part of a delicate and fruitful balance with emotion within the psyche.

Furthermore, Cary does not equate the reason with consciousness and emotion with unconscious activities. Since he notes that reflection and logic can take place subconsciously, he clearly does not see processes occurring below the level of conscious awareness as necessarily irrational (MS 229 151). Conversely, his aesthetic theory depends upon a conscious recognition of emotional "form" (see Chapter V). His refusal to segregate

the functions of the human psyche into conscious and rational *versus* unconscious and emotional is related to his vision of reality as a totality made up of continua, which are difficult or impossible to bisect. These continua exist by virtue of the tension between interacting opposites, but he is reluctant to draw arbitrary divisions or to privilege one "end" of a continuum over the other, preferring to maintain both terms within a polarity. But Cary's choice of polarity does not mean that he advocates dualism. On the contrary, he consistently asserts that the "universe is certainly a unity of some kind" (PM 257), and that reality "is one whole" ("The Way a Novel Gets Written," SE 121).

The advantage, to anyone wishing to conceive of reality as a unity, of positing the relationship of two entities as a polarity is that the terms become interdependent: the continuum cannot exist without both poles. Cary is fundamentally committed "to the unmediated wholeness of feeling and thought, the unity of the knower and the known, of the outer and inner, of subject and object, particle and wave, form and matter, self and not-self" (Anshen, introduction to A&R xiii-xiv). His notes reveal that his "reality" is a dynamic totality involving polarities of thought and emotion, perception and intuition, freedom and necessity, God and nature, mind and body, real and ideal, self and world, immanence and transcendence (MS 267 N68 2r, 19r-v; MS 271 N82 17v, 28r, 29r, "Immanence and Transcendence"; MS 268 S10A 3-4).

In support of his notion of unity, Cary suggests that mind and body come into conflict only because they are parts of a whole within which they interact (MS 267 N65 untitled ms 6). The distance between mind and body within this unity is essential, for if this "gap" did not exist people would be the slaves of their instincts (A&R 28). On the other hand, he dismisses the existence of mind divorced from body, because no evidence of such existence has ever been found (MS 267 N68 2r). Real and ideal form another polarity within a totality: they are parts of a "continuum" which it is impossible to bisect (MS 267

N68 19r-19v; MS 271 N82 28r). Reality can no more be divided into the natural and the divine than it can into real and ideal. Nature is God's "body" and divinity is "immanent" throughout all creation (MS 267 N65 "Politics and Freedom"). God is "real" and "coexistent with the world" (MS 273 S12C 1), but Cary does not advocate pantheism. Immanence and transcendence are abstractions which refer to different aspects of a unity. Both are qualities of God, who is both immanent and transcendent in the world, just as the self is "in" the body and yet transcends it (MS 271 N82 "Immanence and Transcendence").

Self and world are also part of a greater unity. Cary asserts that the distance between a person and outer reality is largely a "false dichotomy," because the important "gap is not between the individual and the outer world; it is in the man, between his individual mind . . . and the universal consistencies of human nature" (A&R 28-29). This is the gap between "universal" emotions, consistent modes of responding to common experiences, and the unique person. Emotions remain "part of the universal real" and therefore "objective" to the subject's self-consciousness (A&R 29). However, the individual mind is intimately linked, by means of a polarity, with these "universal" emotions. In this way, Cary mitigates the alienation of self from world by means of a polarity, of which one term is the unique self-consciousness and the other the universal emotions.¹²

Cary's notion of polarity, involving two clearly distinguishable poles that nonetheless shade into and interpenetrate one another in the continuum between them, recalls romantic notions of distinctions without clear-cut divisions. For instance, Cary suggests that although the line between real and ideal cannot be drawn, they are recognisably distinct (MS 271 N82 28r). He considers that Hegel, like many idealist philosophers, made a mistake when he confounded "ideal existence with the real" and postulated "a self-conscious mind producing the real out of itself" (PM 52). The individual

self-consciousness does not produce reality out of itself; it is "part of the universal real," compelled to reckon with the natural laws of the world from which it is separated and transgressing them at its peril (A&R 29, 6, 14). Therefore, the "flaw in Hegelian philosophy is its failure to establish a reality over against mind," its attempt to destroy the independence and integrity of one term of a polarity (PM 53).

Thus Cary may at first appear inconsistently dualistic when he says that the objective world exists independently of mind (MS 271 N82 29r), until one grasps that he views both mind and the objective world as parts of a single total reality. He may also appear dualistic when he postulates a measure of creative freedom for ideas and feelings and simultaneously asserts that the objective world has its own fixed and unalterable character (MS 272 P46 1r-v; MS 271 N82 29r-30r). However, Cary avoids dualism, in this instance, by his notions of "activity" and "character," as two completely interdependent aspects of reality (MS 293 S22K 28-9; Fisher, Theme 133-34): "Motion, time, life, mind, feeling, liberty, power are different names for the activity; and the character is what we know as order, space, matter, body; but the two cannot be separated in reality" (PM 255). That is, he makes the freedom of human actions consistent with a dependable but independent objective world, by postulating that ideas and feelings are free and creative activities of the fixed character of the real.

Cary's notion of "character" depends on the argument that an action must be an action of some sort, and everything that is must be a thing of some kind; that is, all things and all activity must have a certain character. He insists that there is no such thing as pure Being devoid of character (MS 293 S22K 26). Realists and nominalists are equally mistaken: realists for attributing the consistent character of the universal real to forms dependent on mind, nominalists for failing to appreciate that each particular depends for its very existence on a permanent character in the natural world. Particulars and universals are

mutually dependent. Particulars cannot exist without a consistent character to reality and universals have no real existence apart from particulars (MS 268 S10A 3).

Cary explains the paradox of the physical consistency and mutability of the world by suggesting that reality as a whole has a consistent and orderly character, but appears chaotic because of the diverse and unpredictable activity of its parts (MS 272 P52 22v). Although the whole of reality is greater than the sum of its parts, and therefore its fundamental order can never be grasped totally by the human understanding (MS 272 P46 6r), people can learn something about reality in two ways. First, science uncovers "facts," formalised concepts derived from measurements and perceptions. However, this is highly abstract knowledge, at two removes (measurement and concept) from reality: "all scientific standards, which are measurements, tend to hide, even from scientists, the fact that they are not dealing directly with reality, but with measurements" (PM 86).

Second, intuition has the power to reveal "truth" about reality, that is, to grasp an aspect of the permanence which underlies apparent chaos. Because it is based on feeling-as-apprehension, intuition is "the recognition of the objective real in its own quality" (A&R 31), and, therefore, "it is only by intuition that we have direct knowledge of the world" (A&R 18). Since such knowledge is possible, Kant was wrong to postulate that the thing in itself is forever separated from us (MS 272 P52 15v): " 'Kant's statement that one cannot know the thing in itself, but only phenomena . . . was a disaster for philosophy' " (MS 232; quoted in Hazard Adams, Particular Real 17). Art is the representation of an intuition, achieved by selecting from the confusion of everyday experience elements which it endows with a "valuation" (A&R 5). These elements can then be arranged in a manner which gives the beholder a glimpse into the nature of reality.

However, because the division into activity and character is fundamentally false, Cary does not suggest that either science or art can disclose final and absolute truth about

"the active nature of being itself." Reality ultimately escapes even "the human imagination" (A&R 116), since we can know *a* truth, but not *the* truth of reality. In this way, he retains a sense of the fundamental mystery of the universe, in an age dominated by the success of science in uncovering "facts," and yet denies that people are totally cut off from the "truth" of reality.

If one accepts the illusory nature of the division of reality into character and activity, it becomes possible to render at least some "facts" of science compatible with "truths" of intuition with which they appear to conflict. An example of this is Cary's suggestion that although the "truth" that reality is one whole can be intuited, this does not mean that all the parts are harmoniously attuned. He explains the "fact" of nature's indifference to human needs and desires by positing that struggle and conflict among its parts are fundamental to the character of the real, necessary to its very existence (A&R 7-8; PM 35, 37). In Cary's universe, nature is not benevolently responsive to human needs; rather it is a part of necessity, a medium with which people must contend to satisfy their physical needs and to realise their ideas.

Cary's depiction of the natural world is related to his attempt to counter the determinism which would make humanity part of a gigantic machine operating without meaning or purpose. This notion of mechanical determinism is based on a model of reality entertained by Newton and Einstein, of a universe obeying laws which allow one to predict events, a capacity limited only by one's inability to measure all of the relevant factors. In contrast, probability theory and the notion of a radical "uncertainty" at the level of sub-atomic particles have been interpreted (for example, by the theatre of the absurd) as "evidence" that reality is characterised by unpredictability and chaos. Cary, therefore, is confronted by two different depictions of reality, one as relentlessly and mechanically consistent and the other as extremely unpredictable. His dichotomy of fixed character and

ever-changing activity is an attempt to repudiate the adequacy of both these views, in favour of his own notion of an orderly but dynamic universe.

But Cary does not reject the possibility of absurdity out of hand. He realises that in the universe depicted by quantum theory, "uncertainty" is part of the very nature of the electron, and his notes reveal that he was aware of, and fascinated by, probability theory (MS 272 P52 43r). But Cary counters the possibility of fundamental chaos which these theories appear to invite by invoking the interdependence of character and activity. He observes with delight that in the world of the very small with which quantum theory deals, the false dichotomy of activity and character seems to disappear. An electron, he notes, does not behave like a thing, but like "activity with a certain character" (MS 293 S22k 28; MS 240 123). Probability theory, therefore, is justified in claiming that it deals with the "ultimate framework" or character of reality (MS 206 12). And Cary appreciates that a universe ruled by the laws of probability is still a reasonably orderly place because we are able to predict events with a calculable degree of accuracy (MS 206 12-13). For these reasons, he is more than ever convinced that there exists a "fixed character" in the universe, that if the nature of reality could alter from moment to moment purely by chance, the world would cease to be: "the living world needs a fixed character, or it could not exist at all" (A&R 7).¹³

For all these reasons, it is evident to Cary that the universe is essentially orderly, that it has a consistent character, that there is a " 'shape of things under the confusion of appearance' " ("On the Function of the Novelist," SE 150). As Wright observes: "Cary made his books out of a perception of eternal order, of character, behind the twentieth-century aspect of confusion and disorder" (33-34). Cary summarises his complex exploration of the unity of reality in a superficially simple contention: " 'It is not the case that there is an actual world which accidentally happens to exhibit an order of nature. There

is an actual world because there is an order. If there were no order, there would be no world. Since there is a world, we know there is an order' " (PM 255).

Although the fundamental order of the universe appears to him to be self-evident, Cary repudiates those who see some inherent ultimate purpose in natural or historical processes. As Chapter II will demonstrate, in his fiction he attacks all notions of mechanical determinism or teleological process in human experience by revealing their inadequacies when they are used by his characters as a guide to existence.¹⁴ It is therefore unsurprising that in his nonfiction Cary attempts to discredit all deterministic philosophies, by arguing that no middle ground exists between the notions of the person as a free being and of an individual as a completely determined "robot" (letter to the Listener 65; "Interview," SE 11). Furthermore, he insists that if one chooses to believe in one's own freedom, one has chosen to believe in God, since freedom without God makes "nonsense" of the universe ("Interview," SE 7, 11). God and freedom ratify one another's existence.

Cary's not entirely successful attempt to save the argument from circularity is based on his assertion that we can know that both freedom and God exist because goodness is a "feeling" that cannot be explained logically, but that is nonetheless part of everyone's experience. Even one act of kindness unmotivated by thought of reward, Cary says, redeems the world, for it reveals that human beings are not at the mercy of determinism. People are not biological machines programmed to maximise their own chances of survival, but are free and capable of choosing to act altruistically: "if you accept . . . the existence of even the minutest act of unselfish goodness, then for you the world is not a machine" (letter to the Listener 65). And Cary repeatedly emphasises that such acts are the common stuff of everyday experience, so common that we are in danger of taking them for granted and leaving them out of our estimation of the world.

That is, Cary suggests that humanity's freedom is revealed by the experience of goodness and that goodness is self-evident. Since freedom exists, so does God. Furthermore, Cary asserts that God gives meaning to the world, rescues it from absurdity, not by constructing a providential plot to human history, but by being "the soul of beauty, love" and goodness, those "feelings" which endow human life with significance ("Interview," SE 11; "A Great Author," SE 253). To experience these "feelings" is to know that God exists: "No more could be demanded by any theologian to prove the existence of God. It is the only valid proof." Therefore, the "truth" of an intuition of God's existence is supported by experience ("Split Mind," MS 247 225).

So although the world appears as a machine when considered by scientific logic, it can be grasped by the intuition as "a personal soul," immanent with the divine (Cohen 11-12). This has two consequences. First, Cary is able to preserve the unity of the universe, postulating two different modes of apprehending the world (perception and logic *versus* "feeling" and intuition) to explain its apparent but illusory dualism ("Demolition," SE 69-70; MS 280 108 "Dualism"). As a corollary, he avoids adopting the untenable position of denying the obvious success of science in manipulating and predicting natural events, while reinforcing his claims for the validity of artistic and religious intuition.

Second, Cary concludes that God is personal, because God *is* beauty and goodness, which are "feelings," and "feelings" cannot exist apart from an experiencing personal subject ("Split Mind," MS 247 228; Fisher, Theme 132-5; "A Great Author," SE 253). He asserts that: " 'If there is such a thing as unselfish love, if there is a single act of pure kindness, then the world cannot be entirely a machine, it must be at least partly a being that can love and feel beauty. . . . And as love cannot be conceived without someone to feel that love, this being is a personal being' " ("The Duty of Love and the Duty of Reason," quoted in Foster 285). Thus Cary's God is not a cold, distant, and omniscient self-

consciousness, but a personality apprehended by the individual in daily experiences of goodness and beauty.

Cary's interpretation of "grace" follows from these notions. The appeal for him of some conventional opinions on the nature of grace is obvious: for instance, grace as an intuitive rather than as a conceptual conviction of God's "presentness." Furthermore, grace as unearned and therefore free of a chain of mechanistic cause and effect is compatible with Cary's notions of freedom. So is the view of grace as a gift which one is free to accept or to refuse. For the same reason, the extreme Protestant position which sees grace as reserved for a few predestined individuals is alien to his notions. To enter a state of "grace" is to recognise, in beauty and goodness, God's presence in the world: "a revelation happens every time we see the meaning of a poem, grasp the beauty of a picture, recognise and respond to kindness or feel sympathy" (PG 7). Since this revelation flows from universally available experiences, anyone can know that God exists.

By redefining "a personal God" in this manner, Cary is able to combine a fundamental belief in human freedom with a conviction that the universe is not of necessity meaningless. In a similar departure from orthodoxy, he exculpates God from a charge of immorality and tyranny by redefining the notion of God's omnipotence. He suggests that God does not have the ability to do anything without restriction, but only to do everything that can be done without destroying the fabric of reality. He escapes the trap of theodicy, which William Barrett describes as "the tragicomedy of rationalism *in extremis*" (97), by positing that God cannot violate the permanent character of the real. God is subject to necessity, that is, he cannot do something which is inconsistent with the character of the real without destroying the universe. Cary chooses to believe that the temporary suspension of natural law by divine fiat is impossible, because "any interference [by God] in the

natural order of things" would "make God responsible for all evil not due to evil will; that is to say, for all bad luck" ("A Great Author," SE 252; see also PM 263).¹⁵

In Cary's opinion, this absolves God of responsibility for contingent, accidental suffering, while leaving humanity responsible for the consequences of its own hurtful actions and "evil will" (MS 293 S22K 17-18, 20, 21). He rejects absolutely the counter argument that God could intervene but does not, because some greater divine purpose requires human suffering. The basis of his objection is that this notion not only reintroduces a providential *telos* (which, as Chapter II demonstrates, Cary emphatically rejects), it also runs counter to the great truth of Christianity that each individual soul has value and cannot justifiably be used as a means to an end (Fisher, Theme 144).

Therefore, to the possibilities of absurdity raised by both the Newtonian and the quantum views of reality, Cary opposes a model that is romantically organic, a complex, unified system of mutually dependent parts, forever fixed in character and ceaselessly active, poised in a delicate balance of freedom and necessity, and rendered meaningful by a personal God. This "idea of life" incorporates many romantic notions and it is from a perspective largely shaped by romanticism that Cary calls into question specific aspects of its philosophy. The rest of this chapter will be devoted to tracing certain fundamental similarities and differences between Cary's notions and those of Wordsworth and Carlyle, while succeeding chapters will examine his idiosyncratic adaptations of specific areas of their thought. In addition, this chapter will lay the foundations for a later examination of the relationship of Cary's notions to an important aspect of the philosophy of Kierkegaard who, in reacting against a world largely shaped by romantic attitudes and ideas, laid the foundations of existentialism.

(ii)

Many of Cary's notions are clearly related to some of Wordsworth's most characteristic ideas, particularly with respect to the importance both attach to "feelings." For example, Cary suggests that private worlds are created to satisfy the emotions, while Wordsworth contends that it is emotion which endows certain elements of experience with significance and leads to their incorporation into a private world (The Prelude II 232-261; III 127-42; XII 225-71). Cary's interest in the "Intimations" Ode reflects the fact that he, too, attaches supreme importance to intuitive processes involving an emotional response to the not-self, which enable the consciousness to transcend the seeming fragmentation of experience in intimations of totality. In addition, Cary's "universal" emotional "forms" recall Wordsworth's contention that it is possible to find "elementary feelings" that illustrate "the primary laws of our nature," his conviction that there exist "passions and . . . feelings . . . / Essential and eternal in the heart" (Preface to Lyrical Ballads, in Poetical Works 734-35; The Excursion I 343-44).

Both Wordsworth and Cary describe these "universal" emotions as the stuff of poetry, which should deal with "the primary laws of our nature . . . the essential passions of the heart" (Preface to Lyrical Ballads, in Poetical Works 734-35): "great art is always an expression of a fundamental character in things, the simple and powerful emotions which have always dominated and perplexed life" (HM 9). Significantly, the existence of "universal" emotions is the basis both of Cary's theory of the symbol as a mode of communicating intuitive experience (see Chapter V) and of Wordsworth's assertion that the "spontaneous overflow" of his own feelings, when formalised in art, will communicate the content of his experience through the reader's recognition of universal affect (Preface to Lyrical Ballads, in Poetical Works 735). In addition, Cary's "feelings" and Wordsworth's

"imagination" play an important part in overcoming the alienation of self from the not-self by the engagement of a subject with an object, both of which nonetheless remain distinct. Cary uses the intimacy of this relationship to justify his suggestion that art conveys intuitively apprehended "truth." The content of poetry is also for Wordsworth a special kind of "truth": "carried alive into the heart by passion; truth which is its own testimony" (Preface to Lyrical Ballads, in Poetical Works 737).

Moreover, Wordsworth's notions that "both thought and feeling are involved in the concrete experience" and that pristine "feelings" are soon modified by thought and by memory are also held by Cary (Sykes Davies 133; Preface to Lyrical Ballads, in Poetical Works 735). Although Wordsworth privileges intuitive and imaginative processes, he, like Cary, respects the importance of the reason. Wordsworth finds that a Godwinian reliance upon the reason alone leads to confusion and despair (The Prelude XI 223-57, 276-305), but he describes it as interacting with emotion in the development of the moral sense. For Wordsworth and Cary both suggest roles for imagination, reason, and emotion in moral choice. Wordsworth depicts reason and imagination working together to restore a lost unity to the psyche, on a level that is "higher," because it involves morality, than that of the unreasoning, amoral, intuitive child. The child is led by its imaginative and emotional response to nature to "intellectual Love":

This spiritual Love acts not nor can exist
Without Imagination, which, in truth,
Is but another name for absolute power

And clearest insight, amplitude of mind,

And Reason in her most exalted mood.

(The Prelude XIV 188-92)

Assigning an important role in moral choice to imagination and emotion, as well as to the reason, helps both Cary and Wordsworth to reject theories of psychological determinism that deem "our blessed reason of least use / Where wanted most: 'The lordly attributes / Of will and choice' " (Wordsworth, The Prelude XI 308-10).

However, there is one important respect in which Cary's notions differ profoundly from those of Wordsworth, who sees the psyche's relationship with the natural world as primary. Wordsworth's view of nature reveals that although he rebels against eighteenth-century mechanism, he is still able to share its view of the universe as a highly integrated order and to posit a predisposition of mind and world to "fit" one another that facilitates interactions between them: "He considers man and nature as essentially adapted to each other, and the mind of man as naturally the mirror of the fairest and most interesting properties of nature" (Preface to Lyrical Ballads, in Poetical Works 738). Furthermore, he is able to convince himself that in these interactions nature is benignly responsive to human needs and desires, a task impossible for Cary, who lives in a post-Darwinian, as well as a post-romantic, world. Consequently, although Cary insists that people are part of the natural world, he also argues that nature fails to reflect human notions of justice and morality.¹⁶ As a result, he depicts relationships with other people as of primary importance in the maturation of the psyche and in maintaining a stable adult personality (see Chapters IV and VI).

Nonetheless, Cary and Wordsworth agree on the fundamental nature of reality, for while Cary posits a unified reality made up of distinctly polarised opposites, Wordsworth claims that everything in nature "is distinct, yet nothing defined into absolute independent singleness" ("Essay, Supplementary to the Preface," in Poetical Works 748). Cary's world, like Wordsworth's universe, is one in which the "play of polarities" is not a "systematic dialectic" but a way of looking at the world as the arena within which contraries and opposites interact (Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism 282). This Wordsworthian preference for polarity over dialectic is fundamental to Cary's notion of the relationship of the individual to society, to other individuals, and to the external world. In Cary's reality, opposites interact in sustained polarised relationships, rather than conflicting until they are absorbed into (and annihilated by) a third term.

Carlyle's depiction of the world in Sartor Resartus resembles Wordsworth's in that it is also "quite undialectic" (Feinberg 79), but it is a far more turbulent and violent place than that depicted in The Prelude. LaValley points out a fundamental similarity of concern between Carlyle and Wordsworth, in that both seek "to remove the barriers of habit and custom, to delve beneath the superficial, the intellectual, and the analytic in order to reach deeper realms of feeling, emotion, and significance" (5). Wordsworth's The Prelude and Carlyle's Sartor Resartus reflect these shared concerns: "both chart the effects of . . . rationalism upon the poetic imagination and the ensuing crisis of identity" and depict "a victory of the imagination by a redefinition of the value of the past, a return of man to his roots in nature and in history" (LaValley 105). However, Sartor Resartus also reflects Carlyle's uneasiness with romantic notions of powerful subterranean realms of feeling and emotion and their potential for unleashing chaos, and he calls many aspects of Wordsworth's universe into question (LaValley 99).

When one considers them in relation to Cary, the similarities and differences of Wordsworth's and Carlyle's notions are illuminating. Cary clearly shares their concern with realms of experience other than the intellectual and his polarities exhibit the "undialectic" quality found in both Wordsworth and Carlyle. Unlike Wordsworth, and like Carlyle, whose "colliding contraries" remain "essentially . . . *irreconcilable*" (Feinberg 79), he envisages a reality of ceaseless struggle and conflict. Nonetheless, the desire to detect wholeness beneath, behind, or beyond sustained polarity or conflict is a paradigmatically romantic attitude which finds expression in Wordsworth's "fit" of mind and world, in Carlyle's "Force," and in Cary's notion of character and activity.

Carlyle's depiction of "Force" may have played a role in shaping Cary's notion of "activity." He describes all of creation as a unity permeated by the "Force" which maintains it in ceaseless action: "I say there is no such separation: nothing hitherto was ever stranded, cast aside; but all . . . is borne forward on the bottomless, shoreless flood of Action, and lives through perpetual metamorphoses" (*Sartor Resartus* 48). Cary's and Carlyle's models are fundamentally alike in that they are organic rather than mechanistic: both counter the vision of the universe as a great deterministic machine by arguing that, as in organic systems, the whole of reality exceeds the sum of its parts.¹⁷ Carlyle protests that: "Academies of Science, they strive bravely; and from amid the thick-crowded, inextricably intertwined hieroglyphic writing [of the natural world], pick out, by dextrous combination some Letters . . . and therefrom put together this and the other . . . Recipe. . . . [but] Nature is more than some boundless Volume of such Recipes' " (*Sartor Resartus* 178-79).

Like Wordsworth, Carlyle and Cary depict the natural world as exceeding mechanical explanation and emphasise the limitations of logic. They also stress the distinction between logic and reason and the need for the reason to join forces with intuition. According to Carlyle, the evil excesses of the French revolution are largely the

result of the guiding influence of philosophers such as Voltaire, who relied upon logic rather than upon reason ("Voltaire," Essays II 137). For although Carlyle privileges feeling over the analytic intellect, he values the reason as a necessary controlling agent, mitigating the "destructive force that is potential within man's released [emotional] energy" (LaValley 5-6, 27). Even while he constantly and bitterly excoriates his society for its neglect of "feeling," Carlyle is alarmed by the possibility of such chaos. Accordingly, his Teufelsdröckh is a philosopher whose method replaces "common school Logic" with a balance of "practical Reason" and "Intuition" (Sartor Resartus 34-35). As we shall see, Cary's notion of health, both in societies and in individuals, is that it depends upon a tension of reason with intuition and of self-control with emotion (see Chapters III and IV).

One of Cary's apparently most idiosyncratic notions can in fact be traced to Carlyle, in that both of them interpret humanity's sense of struggle against fate as evidence for its freedom: " 'Our Life is compassed round with Necessity; yet is the meaning of Life itself no other than Freedom, than Voluntary force: thus have we a warfare . . . a hard-fought battle' " (Sartor Resartus 126). A more orthodox point of agreement is Carlyle's contention that God is "the fountain of all Goodness, Beauty, Truth, and revealed in every revelation of these" ("Signs of the Times," Essays II 247). However, there is one aspect of Carlyle's thought that Cary cannot accept, the notion of the existence of an Ideal reality of which our world is merely a fallen "reflection." He repeatedly, emphatically, and even scornfully rejects "principles, eternal objects, universals" as "mere abstractions" and "falsifications" (MS 273 S12C 4, 5-6). This important difference governs Cary's selection from and adaptation of elements of Carlyle's theory of the symbol (see Chapter V).

Since both Kierkegaard's and Carlyle's notions come under Cary's scrutiny, their similarities of tone, method, and areas of concern are significant. Both philosophers frequently assume a tone of prophetic denunciation when speaking of their age as one

which has lost emotional energy and spiritual direction. Both address the reader in exhortation or ironic asides, use multiple personae, and overcome the abyss of absurdity by an irrational and affirmative "leap" of faith. Both express the concerns of romantic poets such as Wordsworth when, in Sartor Resartus and The Present Age, they deplore an age which has sacrificed the capacity to "feel" deeply to an over-developed self-consciousness.

At other times both Carlyle and Kierkegaard express a deep distrust of romantic solipsism, even as they relentlessly explore their own (surrogate) psyches. Carlyle exhorts the reader to " 'Close thy *Byron*; open thy *Goethe* ' " (Sartor Resartus 132). The first volume of Kierkegaard's Either/Or provides, in the seducer, an unflattering portrait of romantic solipsism, an effete romanticism which substitutes for genuine passion the frisson of an intellectual thrill derived from a deliberate manipulation of another's emotions. This portrait of "aesthetic man" emphasises the need to temper romantic self-assertion with respect for the integrity of other individuals, a notion which is fundamental to Cary's sense of morality (see Chapters IV and VI). Cary shares with Kierkegaard a passionate commitment, drawn from the Protestant tradition of the unique, irreplaceable self, to the freedom and worth of every person. It is Kierkegaard's assertion of the primacy of the individual which leads Cary to claim affinity with him: "Kierkegaard states the uniqueness of the individual and I stand by that" ("Interview," SE 7).

This respect for the uniqueness of all individuals is what aligns Cary's notion of duty more closely with Kierkegaard's than with Carlyle's. For Carlyle depicts the annihilation of self as the first step toward spiritual rebirth through action, which is to be guided by doing " ' *the Duty which lies nearest thee* ' " (Sartor Resartus 132, 133, 135). Furthermore, he increasingly comes to define this "duty" as simply obedience to the dictates of exceptional "heroes," to whom alone self-assertion is allowed. Kierkegaard, like Cary, sees duty as a more problematic concept than does Carlyle: "the difference between

good and evil always remains, and so do responsibility and duty; even though it is impossible for another to say what my duty is, it will always be possible for him to say what is his duty" (Kierkegaard, Either/Or II 268). Or, as Cary puts it, "[l]ies are always lies, evil is always evil" but "[e]very moral situation is unique and needs a special answer" ("Political and Personal Morality," SE 229, 230).

Cary's novels reveal that he, like Kierkegaard, believes that duty is still a meaningful guide to moral action but that since everyone's existential situation is unique, no one can dictate what form a person's duty will take in every situation. However, Kierkegaard pushes this personal definition of "duty," as the denial of consensual morality, to an extreme in Fear and Trembling. He invokes a concept of personal morality, based solely upon an inner conviction of direct access to the Divine will, which Cary terms "inner light mysticism" and which he deeply distrusts (MS 267 N60 untitled ms). Cary's last novel is an examination of the dangers of behaviour which violates the most widely held moral values, those "constants" which unite humanity, and Cary places his characters in a situation analogous to that of Abraham in Kierkegaard's work (see Chapter VI).

The complexity of Cary's relationship to Kierkegaard is revealed when one compares Cary's notion of polarity to Kierkegaard's rejection of Hegelian mediation in favour of a "dialectic" which maintains, rather than resolving, distinctions, even to the extent of making a virtue of paradox (Hannay, introduction to Fear and Trembling 15). There is a very general resemblance of Cary's notion of polarity to Kierkegaard's attitude to paradox. Kierkegaard's aesthetic man chooses paradox as a method of evading choice and commitment, but his religious man commits himself totally to paradox, choosing an impossibility "on the strength of the absurd" (Either/Or I 37, 37n; Fear and Trembling 77 ; Blackham 10). That is, Kierkegaard, like Cary, does not see the refusal to choose one opposite over another as necessarily blameworthy.

However, there are several very important differences between Cary and Kierkegaard. First, unlike Kierkegaard, Cary wishes to find reasons, which are rationally satisfying even if not totally logical, for adopting his position. Second, he does not see his paired opposites as mutually exclusive. That is, Cary prefers polarity to paradox. Third, and even more importantly, Cary does not view the field of *moral* choice as a proper arena in which to entertain a paradox. One need not privilege reason or emotion, activity or character, conscious or unconscious in forming one's "idea of life," but when faced with a moral choice, embracing the absurd in the hope that God will perform the impossible leads only to tragedy. In the field of morality, Cary favours Kierkegaard's ethical man, who chooses between two courses of action or finds a median position to which he can commit himself. His first novel deals with an individual who adopts the "aesthetic" solution to difficult moral choice (see Chapter II), and his last explores the choice of the absurd by the religious man (see Chapter VI). Both solutions lead to tragedy.

Therefore, Cary's relationship with Kierkegaard clearly involves both assent and stimulating dissent. His willingness to be placed in "the school of Kierkegaard" ("Interview," SE 7) is typical of the manner in which he attributes "influence" on his own thought to philosophers and other artists with whom he is frequently in profound disagreement.¹⁸ In the chapters to come, this thesis examines the manner in which Cary's novels "test" romantic notions by showing the consequences for his characters of trying to live by "ideas of life" that have been shaped by these notions. As the first step in this process, Chapter II examines a variety of notions which Cary associates with romantic theories of history and of the unconscious, and which he rejects out of hand rather than adapting and incorporating into his own "idea of life." Subsequent chapters explore Cary's adaptation of Carlyle's notions of history (Chapter III) and symbolism (Chapter V) and of Wordsworth's ideas of the development of the psyche (Chapter IV) and of the privileged

status of poetic language (Chapter V). Chapter VI examines the cost of Carlylean "heroic" self-assertion to the integrity of the self and explores the consequences of Kierkegaard's "teleological suspension of the ethical" at the promptings of a subjectively apprehended "truth." Finally, Chapter VII situates Cary's mature "existentialism" within the spectrum of modern existentialist philosophy.

NOTES TO CHAPTER I

¹ See, for example, Hazard Adams' "Blake and Gulley Jimson: English Symbolists" and *Joyce Cary's Trilogies: In Search of the Particular Real* (26-50, 134-44 et passim); Miller's "Blake and Gulley Jimson in Joyce Cary's *The Horse's Mouth*"; Soderskag's *Joyce Cary's "Hard Conceptual Labour": A Structural Analysis of To Be a Pilgrim*.

² Hazard Adams compares Wilcher's vivid childhood memories to Wordsworth's "spots of time" (*Particular Real* 14, 64, 192-93, 198, 202), and he notes that "Cary's child is a . . . Wordsworthian innocent, capable of direct intuitions unmediated by any language of forms" (*Particular Real* 26). This is the only extended discussion of Cary and Wordsworth, although other authors occasionally make references in passing to similarities among their notions. For example, David Craig's "Idea and Imagination: A Study of Joyce Cary" notes that Cary's privileging of feeling is reminiscent of Wordsworth's position in the preface to the *Lyrical Ballads* (5, 7). Helen Gardner, in "The Novels of Joyce Cary," comments that: "Although [Cary] appears superficially a realistic novelist . . . he really has far more in common with a poet such as Wordsworth than with Defoe or Fielding" (90).

³ Cary makes some general references to Wordsworth in his notes (MS 238 80; MS 239 212), in *Art and Reality* (30, 45, 77), and in *The Drunken Sailor* (41). He refers to *The Prelude* in *The Moonlight* (258) and in *Art and Reality* (168). But particular references to the "Immortality" Ode are found in his notes (MS 238 198-204; MS 290 P113 4v), in *Art and Reality* (3), in *An American Visitor* (211-12), in *The African Witch* (117), and in *A House of Children* (28). In a sense the Ode "haunts" Cary. It is the only poem to which his novels refer in this manner. In contrast, all the references to Blake's poems are confined to *The Horse's Mouth*.

⁴ Chapter Three of Echeruo's *Joyce Cary and the Dimensions of Order* is entitled "Being and Living: The Existentialist Trilogy." However, *The Horse's Mouth* is the only novel analysed with respect to notions that are specifically identified as "existentialist" (83-88). Kenneth Hamilton's "Boon or Thorn? Joyce Cary and Samuel Beckett on Human Life" is limited to a comparison of Gulley Jimson with the protagonists of Beckett's trilogy. Majumdar's *Joyce Cary: An Existentialist Approach*, the only extended work of criticism specifically devoted to Cary's "existentialism," is radically compromised by Majumdar's readings of the novels (perhaps as a result of his inability to obtain copies of all of Cary's books) and draws only very general comparisons between Cary's novels and vaguely defined existentialist notions.

⁵ A careful examination of Cary's unpublished writings casts a great deal of light on the opinions expressed in his published works. In the following discussion, extracts from Cary's notebooks and files in the Osborn collection in the Bodleian Library are paraphrased. Every effort has been made to document these sources as precisely as possible according to Barbara Fisher's classification (see "A Note on Documentation").

⁶ Some critics charge that the canon lacks a consistent philosophical basis (Robert Bloom), is deliberately ambiguous (Roby), or reflects Cary's own psychological ambivalence (Fisher). Bloom has been vigorously and ably refuted by John Tilling, Giles Mitchell, and Hazard Adams, while Walter Allen, Charles Hoffman, Golden L. Larsen,

Andrew Wright, Edwin Christian, and Michael Echeruo have stressed Cary's consistency of attitude and opinion. This thesis contends that while Cary's notions are not philosophically rigorous, his novels are not self-contradictory or radically inconsistent with one another.

⁷ Edward Case points out that Cary is the heir of "British empiricism, standing aghast at the multiplicity and richness of experience," and therefore eschewing authoritative pronouncements, which can only be based on inadequate data. On the other hand, England has a long tradition of following custom drawn from "common experience" (121). Cary consistently privileges experience, which is open to everyone, over authority, and asserts the inadequacy of logic. See Echeruo (Order, Chapter One) for a discussion of Cary's relationship to Hume's empiricism.

⁸ For a discussion of Cary's debt to Kant, see the first chapter of Echeruo's Joyce Cary and the Dimensions of Order.

⁹ Cary's notion of feeling-as-apprehension resembles that of A. N. Whitehead, on whose works he made extensive notes (MS 273 S12C 5-7; MS 272 P38, P39). Whitehead, who traces his ideas back to Bradley and to William James, includes under "feeling" the "datum," or object which is experienced, the "subjective form" of the experience, and the subject which experiences (Adventures of Ideas 232-33). The "subjective form," that is "how that subject prehends that datum," may involve "emotions, valuations, purposes, aversions, consciousness" (Process and Reality 35). It is "the character assumed by the subject by reason of some prehended datum" (Adventures of Ideas 233). The subjective form, however, is not constituted by the subject alone. Whitehead sees the object as contributing to it, in that "the qualitative content of the object prehended enters into the qualities exemplified in the subjective form of that prehension" (Adventures of Ideas 252). Feeling is therefore an act of "appropriation of some elements in the universe to be components in the real internal constitution of its subject" (Process and Reality 353). Cary's terminology, therefore, is analogous to Whitehead's, and both see "feeling" as a mode of apprehension in which subject and object are intimately related.

¹⁰ For a discussion of Cary's notions of intuition and perception as compared to those of Croce, see Echeruo (Order, 21-25), Hazard Adams (Particular Real 16-19 et passim), and Christian (Creative Imagination 5-6).

¹¹ For a discussion of Cary's use of Kant's "a priori forms or categories," see Echeruo (Order 19).

¹² Cary's polarity overcomes Sartre's vision of the self-consciousness as an isolated entity secreting around itself "a nothingness which isolates it" from the reality within which it is embedded (Being and Nothingness 24).

¹³ However, some degree of uncertainty is welcome to Cary: "It is in the field given over to luck, the field of the unconditioned, that the free soul operates" (A&R 44). Furthermore, although freedom generates more confusion, in that human activity "brings uncertainty into every chain of causation where one link is the human will," this very freedom is the wellspring of the creativity by which people bring order into the world through the exercise of their imaginations (A&R 8).

¹⁴ So thorough is Cary's subordination of his own point of view to that of his characters', that some critics have seen these deterministic theories as Cary's own. This mistaken notion is a major source of the charge of philosophical inconsistency brought against Cary by Dennis Hall, who asserts that in Cary's novels "man is the slave of his nature" and that the first trilogy is characterised by "fixed nature . . . limited response, exceedingly limited freedom" (74, 65). This is an unfortunately literal reading of these works that mistakes the views of some of the characters for Cary's own.

¹⁵ Cary makes the point that the notion that there are limits to God's omnipotence is not new to theology ("Interview," SE 7).

¹⁶ In this respect, Cary's notions are much closer to those of Blake, who sees the world of nature unredeemed by the human imagination as amoral and therefore "unjust" and "cruel" by human standards. In The African Witch, the African landscape is a "desolation . . . not a grand, but a mean, desolation: raw, senseless nature" (167). But to Aladai, whose European education has taught him to see the natural world as the arena for human creativity, "its savage desolation . . . was at the same time a challenge and a delight." The delight stems from a romantic identification with its "wildness" that fosters a desire to "drink, sing, and dance all night." But the challenge awakens a desire "to build, to enrich," to transform nature according to human imaginative vision, rather than to participate in its unredeemed savagery (AW 170).

¹⁷ However, whereas Carlyle posits a general "Force" acting through all existents, Cary's "activity" is the expression of each being's unique nature, or character. The difference arises because Carlyle is the heir of a school of biology which felt the need to invoke an *élan vital* in order to explain the transition from inorganic to organic matter. Cary's view is influenced by twentieth-century biology, which sees a living thing as a complex system whose characteristic activity is determined by its unique combination of universal inorganic components. In minimising the discontinuity between the inorganic and organic worlds, Cary even goes so far as to attribute the capacity to "feel" (in the sense of apprehending some aspect of reality) to elemental matter: "A piece of iron feels the influence of a magnet, but its reactions to the feeling are blind. The amoeba reacts to feeling with purposive action — either to secure food or escape something unpleasant" (PM 260).

¹⁸ Hazard Adams notes that important as Blake's ideas are to Cary, he depicts Gulley "ransacking" the poet's canon for notions that are understated or "potential" in it (Particular Real 37).

CHAPTER II

Joyce Cary and Providence

(i)

In his early novels, Cary illustrates the pitfalls of embracing "ideas of life" that include notions of deterministic forces governing human destiny. Among these mistaken notions are faith in divine providence and in the existence of various abstract principles which, Cary suggests, are derived from a romantic secularisation of the notion of providence. Fisher quotes Cary's notion of " 'a turning point' in all history, when loss of faith in a supernatural providence has involved people 'in the sudden collapse or change of their ideas.' " Since they are " 'faced with these large questions to which most of them can't find an answer, except in the language of these very ideas whose disappearance raised the question,' " people have recourse to a variety of "providential" notions (House 138; quote taken from MS 268 S10D). One such notion is the belief in an immanent teleology in nature or history, which may be manifested as a sense of racial or national destiny, as Victorian ideas of progress, or as the faith that *laissez-faire* economics reflect an ineluctable "law" of nature. Cary's notes depict this cluster of attitudes as derived from Hegelian dialectics and Social "Darwinism," both of which, he asserts, are ultimately grounded in theories of "a golden age" and of "nature as a benevolent force," notions formulated by romantics such as Rousseau and later transferred to the historical and social sphere by Hegel, Adam Smith, Spencer, and Marx (MS 206 112/1-117/6, 76/4-77/5; PM 58; CC 371). Furthermore, Cary's notes suggest that there is a relationship between the "modern psychology of the unconscious," as a highly deterministic controller of behaviour, and "neo-Hegelian" notions of immanent teleology (MS 239 199-200). Cary also identifies the

concept of a life force as yet another mistaken notion derived from the romantic desire to see a teleology at work in human history ("Interview," SE 9-10; MS 239 206). He condemns all these ideas of "providential" forces as inherently pernicious, because they suggest that people's freedom is limited and thereby encourage the evasion of responsibility.

In his novels, Cary depicts faith in divine providence as a self-imposed limitation of human freedom, permitting the abandonment of existential responsibility for the world. Characters who refuse their responsibility to make choices by accepting the contingency of the world as the will of providence are shown to be tragically mistaken, even though initially this acceptance may be accompanied by a euphoric sense of release from the burden of choosing for themselves. These ideas are clearly illustrated in Cary's first published novel, Aissa Saved, which he describes as concerned with problems of " 'providence, foreknowledge, will and fate' " (10). One of the ways in which Cary addresses these problems is by an exploration of the experience of religious conversion.¹

The first religious convert in Aissa Saved is Mr. Carr. Spiritually depleted by his unrewarding missionary work among the outcasts, petty criminals, and misfits of African society, Mr. Carr regains his faith in providence and finds "the way out of the dark confusion in which he had been struggling so long and desperately, with problems never to be finally solved and difficulties renewed every day, the way of faith" (AS 28). Carr thus escapes from the bitterness and self-doubt arising from his sense of responsibility for the spiritual success of his mission and from his fear of failure. The event which triggers this conversion is a hymn celebrating total submission to God's will: " 'None of self and all of Thee.' " Believing that he has recognised a profound spiritual truth in this invitation to subordination of the will, Carr experiences a feeling of "resurrection" and enormous "release" (AS 29). However, later events in the novel suggest that Mahood is entirely

correct in describing this conversion as "a tragic abrogation of responsibility" (118).² Mr. Carr's return to the absolute faith in providence held by his wife occurs in the early chapters, and in the balance of the novel Cary calls the Carrs' convictions into question by drawing parallels between their beliefs and those of Aissa.

Despite their differences in background and education, there are strong parallels between Mrs. Carr and Aissa. Both are young mothers, both are lame, both sacrifice themselves and their children. Like Mrs. Carr, Aissa has a deep capacity for religious experience. After her conversion, the Carrs see in Aissa some of the qualities of a saint: "simplicity, confidence in faith, ecstasy, self-intoxication" (AS 152), characteristics which Hilda Carr exhibits in a somewhat more self-controlled fashion than the volatile adolescent girl. Aissa's experience also parallels that of Mr. Carr. Like his, her conversion occurs during a period of despair, when she is crippled and ill, temporarily separated from her lover and her baby, and cast out from society as a suspected witch, and it is triggered by hymn singing (AS 148). Because of the terrible action to which Aissa's beliefs lead her, namely the ritual murder of her child as a sacrifice to bring rain, the parallels drawn between the Carrs and Aissa invite the reader to question the missionaries' faith in divine providence.

Aissa Saved considers two forms of sacrifice, both of which are shown to be mistaken. First, sacrifice may function as a symbol of unquestioning obedience to the divine will, offering a sense of release from the anxiety of responsibility for personal ethical choice similar to that experienced by the new convert.³ Second, mistaking the contingency of the world for the will of providence may lead one to see sacrifice as a pragmatic method of appeasing powerful and offended deities, in an effort to avert some disaster or to procure some blessing for the community (MS 257 N41 7). The second conception of sacrifice, which is held by the pagan Africans, may be mistaken but it serves

a purpose within "its own frame of reference," whereas sacrifice as the Carrs conceive it, "as a surrender of the will, an escape, a suicide, a piece of self-indulgence . . . must be called wrong because it is a surrender of the personal responsibility which is the right and glory of mankind" (Cary MS 258 S5E; see also MS 257 N39, quoted in Mahood 116).

Cary refers in his notes to the fact that Aissa embraces a confused mixture of both views of sacrifice (MS 258 S5E 6). Like the other Africans, she interprets the story of the Passion as a blood sacrifice to appease the wrath of a jealous God (AS 42). But the act of sacrifice has a further significance for her, because it also releases her from the intolerable strain she experiences as a result of her belief that she must choose between her love for Abba and for Jesus. Significantly, Aissa's conviction of guilt for loving her baby more than Jesus comes upon her when she hears a hymn: "'All de tings I lak de mos / I sacrifice dem to His blood' " (AS 205). The sacrifice of Abba is followed by an ecstatic sense of release: "peace . . . released her soul from the terror and agony of the long struggle" (AS 206). Thus Cary draws explicit parallels between his depiction of conversion and ritual murder, suggesting that the surrender of responsibility for self-determination involves a kind of human sacrifice.

Following Abba's death, Aissa experiences an ecstasy which sustains her even when pagan farmers break all her limbs and put her on an ant hill to be torn into minute pieces in a slow and agonising death. She dies laughing for joy, as she has a vision of Abba in heaven riding the "Holy Goat," while the ants, in their mindless frenzy, risk being crushed in order to convert her into food for their community (AS 211). Dennis Hall depicts Aissa's dying vision of Abba united with God as a kind of affirmation,⁴ and indeed it is a triumph of imagination, an aesthetic effort by which she manages to integrate her maternal love and the demands of a jealous God. However, despite the apparent affirmation of Aissa's dying vision, Cary states that "'Carr's conversion . . . and Aissa's discovery . .

. that to be happy it is only necessary to abandon personal responsibility and give up all to Christ are in fact surrenders — the escapes of human nature overpressed by responsibility of judgement' " (Cary MS 258 S5E 4v, quoted in Hoffman, Comedy 10). Abba dies because Aissa is paralysed by indecision and allows God, or rather the pagans, to choose for her. Aissa's solution to her problem is, in Kierkegaard's terms, an aesthetic one, which evades meaningful choice by maintaining the conflicting elements (her love for Abba and for a "jealous" Jesus) within a paradox (her vision) where they can coexist.

Similarly, Mrs. Carr contends that the death of her first child at the will of divine providence is an insoluble paradox which she must accept. Furthermore, she believes that the suffering of innocent individuals serves a greater divine purpose: " 'if there were no suffering in the world, no pain, no loss, no sin and anger, then we should not need the love of Jesus, we should not turn to him and trust him. We should never know the great love which changes the whole world and . . . gives us understanding so that we can thank God for everything he has done' " (AS 148). This faith leads Hilda to refuse to leave the mission during her second pregnancy, even though the situation is unhealthy, and she (and presumably her baby) die (AS 158). Hilda's sacrifice to the divine will and her faith that God's purpose justifies suffering allow her to eschew responsibility, secure in the knowledge that providence works for the ultimate good of all, but she pays a heavy price for this release. Cary absolutely rejects the possibility that the suffering of the individual may serve as a means to a greater end, either divine or communal. He considers such a notion immoral: " 'To allow a child to die for some greater good is to treat that child as a means rather than an end. And that is not only a crime, it is a betrayal of Christ' " ("Split Mind," MS 247, quoted in Fisher, Theme 144).⁵

In his next novel, An American Visitor, Cary links the romantic belief in a benign "nature" to conventional faith in divine providence as his protagonist, Marie Hasluck,

embraces first American transcendentalism and then Christianity.⁶ Initially, Marie holds the romantic and (to Cary) unjustified assumption that tribal Africans are noble, free, and happy because of their union with nature. Cary refutes the idealisation of native Africans as possessors of "magnificent health, a beautiful body, an animal contentment," by listing a horrifying catalogue of diseases, from leprosy to smallpox, and from bubonic plague to syphilis, which he observed among Nigerians (AE 74-75).

Marie seems to be as blind to such horrors as she is to the reality of tribal society. Although Cary depicts Birri social life as complex and full of tension, Marie insists that the traditional Birri society is admirable because it is "natural," a survival from the Golden Age when people lived in harmony with nature and with one another. Cary's notes describe Rousseau's myth of the Golden Age as an escapist fantasy for grown up children (MS 206 76/4-77/5). In The Case for African Freedom, he asserts that "[a]buse of civilization . . . begun by Rousseau and continued by reformers, by neurotics . . . is partly a genuine reaction of idealists who . . . judge society on ideal and abstract grounds; and it is also escapism" (111). That is, it represents an eschewal of responsibility, based on the claim that the ideal society can be achieved without creative effort, by simply following "nature."

Marie's romantic interpretation of Birri society is both idealistic and escapist. She asserts that the tribesmen's moral education is " 'traditional — it's just grown up' " organically. Marie does not appear to notice any inconsistency in her conviction that "you had to bring people up to like the right things, the natural things," because she believes that " 'traditional custom . . . is a system of natural rights and duties and obligations' " (AV 89-90). In the opinion of the cynical entrepreneur, Cottee, Marie is an anarchist who wants to send people back to " 'the golden city. . . natural obligations and natural rights . . . back to providence.' " Cottee believes that Marie desires a return to a " 'golden age' " in which " 'Nature [looks] after everything and [makes] the world safe . . . while you sit in your

armchair' " (AV 91-92). Marie is one of those romantic anarchists whom Cary accuses of assuming that "human nature, left to itself, is not only good and wise, but concordant in action. They ground their theory on a law of nature acting through men." All anarchists "deny liberty," by setting above the individual an "absolute," whether this is called "serial dialectic, natural law, or God" (PM 54, 57). That is, they see a "providential" force, historical, natural, or divine, shaping human destiny.

Marie is depicted as an individual who cannot face the responsibility of existential choice, and who is terrified at the possibility that there may be "nothing secure, nothing fixed, permanent and trustworthy in the whole world" (AV 95). She therefore clings to her conviction that there are "natural" rights and wrongs which can be easily identified, and that to live as the Birri tribe does is to give up the crushing responsibility for individual moral decision by simply following "nature" as it is embodied in tribal tradition. Marie is rudely snatched from this comforting faith when a party of Birri warriors threatens to kill her lover, district officer Bewsher. She is enraged by the missionary Dobsons, who advocate trusting in God rather than in the army to defend the mission, because she does not see that her own notions are a secularised version of the Dobsons' belief in divine providence (AV 120-21).⁷ Marie's faith in the "natural" goodness of the Birri crumbles in the face of a threat to the man she loves and she calls in the troops (AV 118-20).

Because of her deep need for some source of moral authority external to herself Marie, after losing her faith in "nature," experiences a religious conversion. Cary carefully constructs parallels between the circumstances of Marie's conversion and the events which destroy her faith in the Birri. Once again a war party threatens the mission, once again Bewsher, who is now her husband, is in danger. However, now Marie is filled with contempt for her former idealisation of the Birri. People who can accept "the insecurity of things" are right and she is a fool to believe in "a natural order of things, fixed and eternal,

divinely appointed" (AV 193). She entertains a despairing vision of mankind aboard a leaking, rotten vessel going nowhere (AV 193-94), the very type of despair which William James depicts as conducive to a conversion experience.

Marie may have abandoned "Rousseauism" but she still feels the attraction of romantic notions of harmony between humanity and nature. Accordingly, she seeks refuge from her spiritual crisis in Wordsworthian "intimations of immortality" which lead her to cherish the notion that "the whole world was in sympathy with her mood, that there was in space a mind which loved beauty and which had sympathy and tenderness for all creatures" (AV 211). However, Marie regards this deity as an illusion of her own creation, a beautiful ideal in whose existence she does not truly believe "any more than she believed that little babies came from heaven trailing clouds of glory" (AV 212). She finds this Wordsworthian immanence aesthetically satisfying but intellectually unconvincing: "She found in the brightness and immensity of the spectacle in front of her something large enough to house part of the majesty, beauty and eternal being of the god she desired, and therefore she placed him there and rested in the midst of him" (AV 211-12). Like Carlyle's Teufelsdröckh, Marie discovers that this lovely illusion is not sufficient to sustain her when she is faced by the possibility of losing the person she loves (*Sartor Resartus* 106; AV 212-16).

Thus Marie is in a state of spiritual crisis when she hears a sermon preached by Mr. Dobson, who asserts that it is faith in God's providence alone which can prevent the world appearing "as a cruel and pointless accident" (AV 217). Suddenly, the crisis has passed, Marie feels herself floating "in the security of God's love, God's justice" (AV 221) and, convinced that God will protect Bewsher, hides his pistol when the Birri approach the mission. Bewsher is killed.

By drawing parallels between Marie's two spiritual crises Cary depicts Marie's faith in "Mother Nature, a loving providence desiring only to make all children happy and good" (A&R 61), and in God's providence as different manifestations of the same urge to find security by tracing beneath the bewildering diversity of events the working out of some abstract principle. Neither "natural goodness" nor "providence" can be trusted to shape one's experiences without involving one in existential choice. Marie appears to learn that her romantic notions are mistaken. Following Bewsher's death she convinces herself that she is responsible for his murder because she succumbed to " 'the oldest kind of juju,' " the belief that one can secure safety by the surrender of moral responsibility to a higher power, trusting that whatever happens is the will of a beneficent providence or a benign nature (AV 237). Marie can now accept the frightening fact that the world is not a safe or secure place, that risk and suffering are part of the conditions which make possible love and freedom: "To try to make the world safe for anyone . . . is as hopeless a project . . . as to command . . . that storms shall stop blowing and earthquakes cease to crumple" ("Sources of Tension," SE 224). But the book ends ambiguously, with the suggestion that the incorrigibly romantic Marie now sees risk itself as redemptive, and that she may pursue "another state of being, where men and women [are] born to heroic destinies . . . [an]other romantic world" whose abstract principles and goals will provide her with the certainty she seeks (AV 238).⁸

In Castle Corner Cary widens his exploration of notions of divine and "natural" providence to include a sense of national or racial destiny as it manifests itself in the myth of empire. The Corners are members of the Irish landlord class to which Cary's own family belonged, and their relationship with their tenants is feudal and paternalistic. Old John, the family patriarch, regards his tenants as "helpless and foolish children," and sees himself as part of a divinely ordained hierarchy: "God was Father of creation, the King was

father of his people, and he, John, was father of his tenants" (CC 9). Although Cary loved Ireland, admired his Irish relatives, and appreciated the strength of the ties that often bound landlords and tenants, he undercuts any romantic glamorisation of this relationship (such as that found in Carlyle) by emphasising the extreme poverty, ignorance, and insecurity of the peasants' lives.⁹ Furthermore, Old John's concept of patriarchy is of the distinctly Old Testament variety. He is a magistrate as well as a landlord and thus entitled to sit in judgment over his own tenants, and his powers in the community are absolute. His judgments are stern; tenants who disobey his orders are evicted to starve and Old John feels no responsibility for them because he is doing his duty and " 'God will provide . . . we are all in God's hands' " (CC 25). It is this sense of a privileged place in a providentially ordained hierarchy, which relieves one of responsibility for the consequences of one's actions, that permits the atrocities committed in the name of empire.

Ireland represents the oldest part of the British Empire, and here the myth of the Englishman's providential destiny to rule the dark places of the earth is beginning to be called into question by the Irish demand for home-rule. The parallel between Ireland and Africa is explicitly and repeatedly made.¹⁰ The millionaire Benskin, who believes that empire is "a sacred cause . . . [which] brought peace, prosperity and free institutions wherever it went," sees the Corners as " 'pioneer[s] of empire' " in Ireland as Rhodes was in Africa (CC 146-47). Benskin himself, having acquired a fortune in South Africa, returns to England, buys an estate, and enters "the ranks of country gentlemen [as] one entering upon a quasi-religious vocation; to support and maintain the traditions of the hierarchy . . . to use his influence for the faith" of imperialism (CC 337).

An important link between Africa and Ireland is Felix Corner, who, realising that the old Irish society he loves is being smashed, drifts into the next theatre of empire. Felix is a man of considerable compassion and fashionably liberal views, but he is ineffectual

and without a sense of direction. He sees the universe as grounded in a Kantian " 'law of universal application,' " in a kind of " 'moral truth' " which will inevitably come to realisation, whether or not he actively and consciously participates in the process (CC 86). His view of the role of "natural" moral standards in this process is more sophisticated than Marie Hasluck's. Although Felix reflects that in Nigeria slavery is perfectly " 'natural . . . like the family and the tribe,' " he realises that all "natural" ideas are eventually superseded by others, that none are given for all time and every situation (CC 84-85). He also acknowledges that the nineteenth-century " 'conflict of beliefs' " has eroded the old idea that providence ineluctably ordains class and racial distinctions in the way that Old John believes (CC 85-86). It is therefore ironic that Felix clings to a sense of destiny, to faith in an inevitable progress as the " 'ideas of universal justice and peace and security [which] are the only permanent things in the world . . . are bound to be realised' " and "the inevitable golden age" will be achieved (CC 86). In the idealistic but indolent Felix, Cary depicts the pernicious effect of a romantic secularised version of providence as inevitable progress toward an earthly millennium, which permits one to eschew individual responsibility and to evade meaningful action.

Felix is joined in Africa by a young relative, Harry Jarvis, who has been thoroughly imbued with:

the master faith of the age; the idea of the struggle for existence; the survival of the fittest; the idea that some power in nature itself, a scientific providence discovered and proved by Darwin, had ordained progress by universal war. The imperialist God of Darwin, the faith of war and competition, pervaded all books, newspapers, speeches, board meetings . . . even the very

missionary meetings, which assumed the white man's right to Christianize the world.

(CC 160-61)

Jarvis is influenced by men such as the speculator Nussbaum, who has made a fortune from African mines, and who believes in unrestrained economic competition as " 'science, nature — the fundamental rule of life,' " whatever the human cost in lost jobs and starving families (CC 371). These "economics of nature and providence" ignore the claims of the individual, who may be sacrificed to economic theory. Although he supported the Liberal Party, Cary differs from traditional *laissez-faire* liberals in that he rejects "uncontrolled" competition because the person "who is ruined in the economic conflict is not an economic unit but a real man" (PM 129). He therefore objects to theorists who, like Nussbaum, treat people as numerical abstractions, failing to translate statistics on poverty into the real hunger of real people.

Nussbaum is an ardent Social Darwinist, who has faith in "inevitable progress based upon a natural providence," an idea which, according to Cary, antedates Darwin: "It appeared in Rousseau" (CC 371). Furthermore, Cary draws parallels between Rousseau's "natural providence" and traditional Christian notions (CC 279). He thus explicitly links the "scientific providence" of the Social Darwinists to romantic notions of immanent "natural" teleology and traces both of them back to the Christian doctrine of divine providence. In addition, Cary's notes reveal that he sees at the basis of Victorian liberalism's notion of progress based on uncontrolled competition an often unconscious faith in providence, an assumption that, given free reign, human nature inevitably will develop its inherent goodness (MS 268 S10D) and the millennium will be realised. Thus even Social Darwinists see an ultimately benign purpose behind their doctrine of social "survival of the

fittest." Therefore, Cary depicts idealists such as Marie and Felix and imperialists like Benskin and Nussbaum as linked by their fundamental beliefs. All of them mistakenly see in the contingency of events progress toward a goal sanctioned by "natural law," whether this is interpreted as natural goodness or as ruthless competition.

The myth of empire which these ideas are used to support is subscribed to by both the idealistic Jarvis and the Cockney trader, Hatto, who believes that the government which forbids him to enter the Laka district is violating a law of nature, by preventing him from selling gin and guns to " 'ignorant savages' " and " 'silly old nigger[s]' " (CC 164-65). The energetic and enterprising Jarvis, fearing that the British government's reluctance to invade Daji is an example of the " '[p]ure bloody funk' " which is sacrificing "something precious and even holy . . . the honour of an Empire which was also his own honour, and his own glory," marches against orders to Daji with a handful of men (CC 322, 324). Nussbaum and Benskin seize upon this exploit to make Jarvis a hero of empire in the British press, in an effort to gain support for the Boer War (CC 365-56). Jarvis himself sees the war as "a stroke of redeeming providence, bringing the country back from foolish extravagance . . . to stern duties and responsibilities" of empire (CC 398).

By juxtaposing the idealistic and attractive Jarvis to the blunt and ignorant Hatto, Cary suggests that the only palpable difference between them is the language in which they describe their respective senses of destiny. This is made abundantly clear when Jarvis addresses a crowd of Lakawa tribesmen using the conventional rhetoric of empire: " 'the Yorubas are the children of the great white queen . . . [who] has ordered that all men be at peace and observe justice and do not shoot at traders anywhere.' " The African poet, Jingle, with a poet's instinct for essential meaning, simply translates this as: "if the Lakawa shot Yorubas, the white man would shoot them" (CC 174).

Jarvis, Hatto, and Felix are joined for dinner aboard a rotten old riverboat in the heart of Africa by Captain Pooley, who believes that everything is ordained by providence, and that the world will end in 1897 as prophesied by " 'the ten toes of the prophet Daniel,' " and by Major Kentish, the company agent, who is in Africa because he has failed everywhere else (CC 166-67). The derelict *Maria Fry*, aground on an island in the Mosi River, resembles Joseph Conrad's riverboat, which the vision of empire and an ill-assorted crew have brought into the heart of darkness. These Conradian undertones form an ironic background for the various notions of providence (as a "natural law" of competition, as permanent moral truth inevitably achieving its own realisation, as the will of God, or as racial destiny) upheld by the characters: Jarvis the idealist and Hatto the opportunist of empire, Felix the visionary of the inevitable golden age, and Pooley the Christian fundamentalist. Whereas Pooley, who is paralysed by the imminence of the apocalypse, resigns himself to following orders and Felix passively awaits the inevitable millennium, Jarvis and Hatto are marvels of energy and enterprise who wish to be actively involved in the realisation of England's destiny. Yet all of them have surrendered responsibility for dealing with situations and peoples, in all their contingency and uniqueness, in favour of some myth of ultimate purpose (divine providence, empire, progress) to which individuals and even whole races may be subordinated.¹¹

According to Cary one of the most dangerous of these myths is nationalism which, in several African novels, he relates to notions of naturally or divinely "providential" destiny. He describes nationalism as rooted in romantic self-assertion on the national scale: "The man, when knowledge, wealth, or glory comes within his reach, is rebellious of all hindrance; the nation, when it grows conscious of itself, defies authority" (PM 164). But in its "self-assertion," the nation becomes an entity to which the individual may be sacrificed in the interests of national "destiny." Cary describes nationalism, however idealistic its

source, as a pernicious notion which is fatally attractive to the young at their "best and worst; [to] their idealism, their irresponsibility, their romantic love of excitement, their courage and their recklessness" (PRF 16). Nationalism is dangerous because it deals with an abstraction (the "nation") rather than with a collectivity of individuals, and nationalist leaders are willing to sacrifice "real men" to this abstraction: "The nationalist leader is inhuman, dangerous, an enemy of God, because he has abandoned reason and lives with abstraction" (AF 126-27). Furthermore, nationalism provides easy answers to complex social problems and relieves one of the responsibility to choose for oneself. Therefore, Cary rejects nationalism as the enemy of democracy and "of truth, knowledge, of liberty and all its creative arts" (PM 164-65).

One of the worst effects of British imperialism, according to Cary, is that through its influence some promising young Africans are infected with the dangerous delusion of nationalism, with tragic consequences. Although most of the African peasants in An American Visitor treat the All-Birri as a joke (53, 56), in Obai's mind Bewsher's dream of a united Birri tribe takes the form of a primitive nationalism: the Birri are the "bravest and wisest people in the whole world. . . . Our country is the richest in the world, our women are the most beautiful" (52). Bewsher's professed aim is to keep out white entrepreneurs long enough to allow the Birri to develop their own culture, but he himself is constantly imposing European models, such as nationalism, upon them. His attempt "to preserve and develop the rich kind of local life which is the essence and the only justification of nationalism" is noble in intention but doomed, because the nationalist ideas he imports from Europe help to destroy the local life he is striving to preserve (AV 133).

Obai is among the first victims of the nationalist dream. He is an ambitious young man, with a "rather nebulous" grasp of nationalism as a means of achieving a great destiny for himself and for his people (AV 126-27). When Obai believes that Bewsher has betrayed

the Birri by allowing white entrepreneurs into the area he goes "round the villages like a madman preaching war against Bewsher and the whites." Ironically, Bewsher has "broken the old narrow tribalism" only to have the villages unite for a doomed war against the white man (AV 164). This fatal war becomes unavoidable when Obai, "repeating clearly and proudly his national cry," stabs Bewsher and kills him (AV 229). Bewsher's nationalist ideas ultimately defeat everything he sought to accomplish: Obai is hanged, the Birri's society is fragmented and they almost cease to exist as a distinct people, and the colonial administration welcomes the help of European developers in restoring order (AV 232). The Birri tribes have been sacrificed to the abstract concept of the All-Birri nation, as have Bewsher and Obai.

In The African Witch, Cary's most vivid indictment of the pernicious effect of ideas of nationalism and racial destiny, he again considers deterministic notions which justify sacrifice of the individual to an abstraction, whether this is "nature" or "the nation." Idealistic, Oxford-educated¹² Louis Aladai sees himself as a leader who will bring the riches of European culture to Rimi, but he makes the fatal mistake of treating Rimi as an abstraction, of planning a glorious future for the Rimi nation, rather than addressing the particular concerns of the Rimi people:

On the next day the people from the villages began to arrive, many from great distances; they had heard only that a man had come, a Rimi, the son of Rimi kings, who promised to give them freedom, to obtain justice for Rimi, to help Rimi people . . .

They did not know what he meant by freedom; and as for justice to Rimi, they supposed that someone had misunderstood and repeated nonsense. Rimi didn't commit murders, or eat, or have children, or marry, or catch the fever.

All that was nonsense, it did not concern them. But food, wives and children, illness, concerned them very much; and they wanted . . . the best advice, to defeat bad crops, disease, and the spite of enemies.
(AW 105)

When the Oxford tutor, Judy Coote, tries to point out to Aladai that "Rimi" is an abstraction and that it is not the same thing as the Rimi people, he accuses her of lacking " 'patriotism' " (AW 107).

In Aladai's "idea of life" Cary draws a connection between nationalism and a "Hegelian" faith in historical destiny. Aladai falls into the trap of "Hegelianism" when he believes himself to be caught up by historical forces over which he has no control, to be marked out by destiny "like a fool . . . helplessly driven and used by circumstances," driven by the fate which chose him alone, out of a million Rimi, to receive an Oxford education (AW 112). When the obtuseness and bigotry of the whites and the devious machinations of African politicians embitter Aladai, alienate him from the European colonists, and undermine his chances to succeed the Emir, he decides that his destiny may not be to lead Rimi but to sacrifice himself for it. His sister Elizabeth points out that to sacrifice oneself for an abstraction is meaningless. When Aladai reminds her that their aunt " 'threw herself into the river for Rimi, for the people's sake' " (for he still cannot distinguish between Rimi and *the* Rimi) Elizabeth coolly replies, " 'That was for good fishing, and the fish came' " (AW 211). For Elizabeth is a pagan priestess who believes

that the contingency of natural events can be attributed to the malice of witches or to the caprice of offended deities who may be placated by sacrifice. Cary thus equates the dark and blood-thirsty gods of nature, demanding human sacrifice, with the nationalist idea for which Aladai is eager to immolate himself. Despite Elizabeth's desire to distinguish between them, both national destiny and nature gods are abstractions in which people attempt to see a kind of determinism at work beneath the contingency of events.

To illustrate the dangers of these abstractions, Cary uses the crocodile as an important recurring image in the novel. In sharp contrast to romantic notions of nature as a nurturing mother, the crocodile that ate Aladai's aunt becomes a symbol of mindless nature, in whose meaningless "cruelty" the Africans persist in seeing a humanly comprehensible purpose, and whose adverse manifestations are mistaken for the anger of an imagined deity. However, some of the English colonists also exist in self-enslavement to another variety of crocodile. The English bigot, Honeywood, a robotic hollow man "ruled entirely by prejudice and a mass of contradictory impulses and inhibitions, which he called his opinions, and thought of as his character" is "the servant of nature, the crocodile in the swamp. He had no freedom. He was not a living soul" (AW 192-93). Honeywood refuses to see Louis Aladai as an individual who must be judged on his own merits, and classifies him as a "nigger," one of a faceless, "naturally" inferior, subhuman mass. To deal in abstractions ("Rimi," "niggers," or "the will of god") and to see them as evidence of some historical, natural, or divine determinism is to be unfree. It is to fall victim to the crocodile, and this is Aladai's fate.

The concept "Rimi" gains an intoxicating hold over Aladai: "the word affected his nerves, pulse; he felt it through his whole body; it made his blood tingle" (AW 231).¹³ He is so bewitched that he abandons his programme of peaceful reform and comes to believe that war is necessary to forge the Rimi into "a nation, a real nation with a soul, with

freedom" (AW 269-70). As tensions rise and Elizabeth and Judy try to find a compromise which will prevent violence, Aladai goes to Coker's shrine at the old crocodile swamp, where he is horrified to realize that Coker's *juju* is the head of Schlemm, a white missionary, and that he himself has always subconsciously known this (AW 292). This shock introduces a dialogue of two voices in Aladai's mind, a debate over the value of self-sacrifice.

Kanu, Echeruo, and Mahood see this important and interesting debate as an example of Cary's unconscious bigotry, in which European intellect argues with African blood lust, but this reading is overly simplistic. In fact, most of the examples of self-sacrifice which occur to Aladai are drawn from European history: "the blood of martyrs is the seed of the church — the blood of the Russian nihilists — the blood of the Irish nationalists" (AW 294). Schlemm himself died as a Christian martyr: "It was his job" (AW 292). The reasoning voice points out that the European-inspired abstraction "Rimi" is in fact a kind of nationalist and racist *juju*: "the religion of the blood, the race, the old crocodile" (AW 293). This voice sounds English because it is the voice of Judy Coote, pointing out that what Rimi needs is not sacrifice to the nationalist idea (" 'Rimi, my country — I give my life — for love of Rimi' "), but " 'peace, trade — schools,' " that is, practical solutions to its problems (AW 293). But the lure of martyrdom is too strong for reason: " 'It is fate' " which offers Aladai the " 'greatest chance — to die for Rimi' " (AW 295). He leads his mob in a charge against the government troops at "the worst possible place for an attack" and is killed by the third volley (AW 297). After an official enquiry which hands out praise and blame with what Cary represents as the usual bureaucratic blindness to the actual situation, Rimi returns to its former condition (AW 301). Aladai has died for nothing: he has fallen victim to the crocodile because he placed his faith in an abstraction which gave him a deluded sense of destiny.

Aladai is in one sense a victim of his education, for he has internalised western notions of nationalism and historical destiny which help to destroy him. Far from depicting Aladai as an ignorant savage with only a superficial understanding of these concepts, Cary makes it clear that many of the European colonists share his delusions. Cary's African novels suggest that he would agree with A. N. Whitehead's assessment of the "liberal faith of the nineteenth century" as "a compromise between the individualistic, competitive doctrine of strife" of the Social Darwinists and "the optimistic doctrine of harmony" embraced by those who placed their faith in inevitable progress toward the full realisation of mankind's "natural" goodness (Adventures of Ideas 40). In the mythology of imperialism, this liberal faith can therefore be used to justify (by "providence" in the shape of a "natural law" of competition or in the guise of the advance toward the millennium) exploiting the inhabitants of other continents in the process of "civilising" them. Aladai himself subscribes to this creed: he genuinely believes in the superiority of European culture and refuses to consider that Rimi might develop along independent lines, as Judy Coote suggests (AW 24).

The nineteenth-century belief in the superiority of European culture was so pervasive that imperialism found some advocates as unlikely as Aladai. For example, it is somewhat unexpected to encounter Wordsworth's depiction of "Albion's noble race in freedom born" colonising the world and spreading the blessings of "humanised society" to "the smallest habitable rock, / Beaten by lonely billows" (The Excursion IX 393, 389, 387-88).¹⁴ On the other hand, one is not surprised to find Carlyle advocating British imperialism as a divinely appointed duty to civilise the world and to develop the natural resources which other races are too stupid and lazy to exploit ("Chartism," Essays VI 159-60; "The Nigger Question," Essays VII 101-105). Cary's novels consistently depict imperialist activities as motivated by a mixture of genuine idealism with more suspect

sentiments: Bewsher, Jarvis, Cottee, and Hatto span the spectrum of European imperialism in Africa. His portrayal of the bigoted Honeywood as "a tumour . . . a fungus that eats the face of a corpse" suggests that he would have found Carlyle's racism repugnant (AW 193).

But although Cary expresses misgivings about England's imperial destiny, other of his notions parallel those of Carlyle. For example, (writing twenty years before Darwin) Carlyle equates *laissez-faire* economics with a natural "Law of the stronger" and deplores " 'fair competition' " as in reality "mutual hostility" that is tearing society apart (Past and Present 30, 202). The liberty of the individual that the advocates of *laissez-faire* piously defend, he says, is for the majority of working people " 'Liberty to die by starvation' " (Past and Present 290). Most importantly, like Cary, Carlyle denies that people are at the mercy of natural and economic forces and that therefore they cannot make meaningful choices about the future of their societies ("Impossible," Essays VI 174-75). As Chapter III will demonstrate, this idea is of fundamental importance to both Cary's and Carlyle's sense of historical development.

For Cary rejects all notions which appear to relieve humanity of responsibility to shape its own future, either individually or collectively. In his African novels, he examines the cost of the abandonment of responsibility for personal moral judgment to any so-called "higher" power, whether this is envisioned as divine providence or as abstract principles which, he suggests, are rooted in romantic secularisations of this doctrine. In two of his mature works Cary turns to a subtle examination of two other deterministic concepts which he also depicts as derived from romanticism and as invoked to sanction the evasion of personal responsibility: the unconscious and the life force.

(ii)

In The Moonlight and Herself Surprised, Cary explores the consequences of claiming that unconscious forces govern human behaviour, especially sexual activity, and that, owing to the existence of these principles, people cannot be held responsible for their actions. The notion of powerful and irrational "subterranean" psychic forces found in the works of Blake and Carlyle, LaValley suggests, served as a paradigm for twentieth-century models of the unconscious (5, 27, 128). Whereas Blake depicts this force being harnessed by the creative imagination to transform the world, Carlyle is more troubled by its possible destructiveness (LaValley 6, 27, 38). Cary shares some of Carlyle's ambivalence with regard to unconscious emotional energy, and many of his characters, from Aissa to Preedy, are motivated toward self-destructive behaviour by powerful feelings which they only dimly understand. But Cary does not depict these characters as thereby escaping responsibility for their choices. He is very critical of Freud's mythology of the psyche in which underground psychic energy becomes a highly deterministic motivator of behaviour which the consciousness may find undesirable or even repugnant, and for which it cannot be held responsible (MS 258 S5P F2 4-6; MS 258 S5C 1-2). Sara Monday, the narrator of Herself Surprised, tries to evade responsibility both by remaining "unconscious" of her own motives and by invoking providence to explain her choices. Given Cary's condemnation of the abandonment of responsibility to providence, this juxtaposition renders suspect Sara's claim that her behaviour is governed by irresistible "natural" drives.

In his notebooks, Cary calls into question the notion that people are at the mercy of their unconscious. He states that although the unconscious "may limit or partly direct . . . actions," it is "just another circumstance [the] conscious will must reckon with" while remaining itself free and responsible (MS 258 S5C 33). He notes that the Freudians

themselves posit that unconscious elements can be controlled by bringing them to consciousness (MS 267 N59 "Instinct"), and his notes on Adler express approval of that psychologist's contention that the line between conscious and unconscious processes is difficult to define (MS 258 S5C 10). These notes, and Cary's treatment of the unconscious in his novels, suggest that he would be in full agreement with the contention that " '[t]he unconscious . . . is not hiding away in some unconscious or subconscious recess of our minds, but is part of our consciousness, the significance of which we have not fully understood' " (Ansbacher, quoted in Hillman 110).

Cary criticises notions of psychological determinism by illustrating the problems such beliefs create for his characters. Sara is one of the most appealing of all Cary's creations, and one is tempted to sympathise with her point of view because of her generosity, her courage, her good humour, and her capacity for joy. However, the reader should beware. In looking back over her own life, Sara sees herself not as the shaper of her own destiny but as "the victim of mysterious events," as someone with only limited control over and responsibility for her own fate (HS 8). Sara is constantly "surprised" by her own actions because she makes important decisions at the unconscious level, evading conscious acknowledgement of responsibility for her actions by attributing them to her "flesh" and ultimately to the providence that created it: " 'If I am a body then it can't be helped, for I can't help myself' " (HS 10).

Sara is equally generous in relieving others of responsibility. She excuses Matt's clumsy sexual liberties because "it was nature working in him" and she says of her seducer, Hickson: "it was no great crime . . . to be a man and like me as a woman. Or if it was so, then providence must answer for our shapes" (HS 15, 28). Sara equates "natural" with "inevitable," blames providence for designing the human sexual impulse imperfectly, and thereby relieves herself and others of responsibility for socially unacceptable actions.

In fact, Sara's view of sexual motivation is very close to the highly deterministic notion of the unconscious that depicts people as being in the grip of powerful "natural" forces which irresistibly drive their behaviour along predetermined paths which sometimes astonish their conscious selves.¹⁵ At times Sara feels that this disjunction of conscious and unconscious is so extreme that she is split into two selves, "one of them a loving wife and the other mad and wicked" (HS 18, 20). She identifies with a Charlotte M. Yonge heroine in whom good and bad impulses contend "but whether the better or worse would gain the advantage seemed rather to depend on chance than on herself" (HS 35). This notion of unconscious control of behaviour can be a paradoxically comforting philosophy in that it seems to offer an escape from responsibility, but Cary uses Sara's own story to point out its limitations.

Both Sara's marriage to Matt and her seduction by Hickson are occasions on which she "surprises" herself, that is, on which she makes an unconscious decision which defies the prohibition of her conscious conventional morality against marrying above her station or using her sexuality to secure favours for her husband from Hickson: "[Matt] kept on asking me [to marry him] every day; and one day, when he asked me if I could not like him enough, though I meant to say no, yet the words came out of my mouth that I would try" (HS 16). Once married to Matt, Sara is taken unaware by her own response to Hickson: "I did not notice Mr. Hickson or what he was doing, but only felt the joy of the evening, until I came to myself and saw that he was going too far. Then I was so angry that I hardly knew what I said" (HS 31). Nonetheless, she continues for many years to permit Hickson sexual liberties, "allowing him so much that I can't believe the eyes of my own memory" (HS 37). Having "surprised" herself, Sara attributes the happiness these decisions bring her to "God's providence and my own special luck" (HS 37), rather than to her own shrewd pragmatism.

Paradoxically, despite Sara's disavowals of responsibility, she is frequently afflicted by a profound sense of sin and a conviction of unavoidable judgment. For instance, she sees the death of her baby son as a punishment for her "sins" of marrying a man of a higher class than her own and for permitting Hickson to take sexual liberties with her. That is, she makes the mistake of reading the wrath of providence over her sexual misdemeanours into an event of pure contingency, the death of her child. However, Sara feels just as guilty for wearing black for only four months after her mother's death as she does for deceiving Matt (HS 33-34). The heterogeneous nature of this catalogue of "sins" is extremely revealing. Consciously, Sara accepts all the sexual standards of her adopted middle class as God-given, while unconsciously she remains an earthy country woman, shrewd, pragmatic, and sensual.¹⁶

Although she suffers from feelings of guilt, Sara frequently "forgets" to be mindful of her Old Testament God, who, she believes, tempts her to relax vigilance by giving her happiness and then punishes her forgetfulness by killing her baby (HS 33-34, 42). Like the crocodile in the swamp, such an arbitrary and punitive deity is merely an abstract personification of contingency. Sara's account of her life spins a tale of providence out of this contingency and her own creative response to it. However, her story undermines itself in the telling, and the reader is left to draw conclusions that are quite different from Sara's. For example, she makes Wilcher happy by doing "four women's work, for less than the wages of one" (HS 160) while keeping the improvident Jimson and his family from starvation by pilfering small unwanted articles from her wealthy but miserly employer, a crime for which she is sent eventually to prison. The inequity between the venial nature of her sins, the generosity of their motivation, and the price she is required to pay for them severely undercuts Sara's assertion of a providential justice plotting her life.

Sara's somewhat muddled ideas can be considered as a reversal of her actual existential situation. Although she believes providence and nature make her the sort of person she is, she nonetheless feels responsible for events which she imagines to be the results of her actions. Yet throughout her narrative Sara is revealed as someone who makes crucial decisions which, because of some unforeseen contingency, often lead to consequences other than those for which she hoped. Sara, in fact, has the situation backward: people are responsible for their actions whether or not they consciously acknowledge their motivation, but they live in a universe in which chance frequently shapes the consequences of their acts otherwise than they choose.¹⁷

For example, Sara marries Matt, carefully fosters his shaky self-confidence and makes him very happy, despite her infidelity, vulgarity, and duplicity. However, Gulley's revealing portrait forces Matt to see himself as the mediocrity he really is, destroying all his self-confidence, and causing him to become jealous of his flirtatious wife (HS 49, 62-65). The chance intersection of Sara's life with Gulley's thus transforms her complacently happy and easily manipulated husband into a suspicious and timid old man. But to Sara, Gulley's entrance into her life is "the turning-point in my downfall, and, I dare say it, the instrument of providence, to punish my prosperity and forgetfulness" (HS 40). She succumbs fatalistically: "I felt that all this had been prepared and that nothing I could say would be any good," because "if I was appointed to have a fall it was no more than I deserved" (HS 62-63, 64).

When Sara finds herself reduced to the position of a *servani* in her own home, functioning as nurse and housekeeper to her elderly, difficult husband, she believes this is because "I had failed to be a lady . . . because I was too weak," and, giving into "my own nature," she embarrasses her daughters by reverting to a broad country accent (HS 72, 73). In fact Sara's "weakness," her "sinfulness," and her "nature" have brought her back to her

true self and her real home, the arena in which her artistry as cook and housekeeper has greatest scope. She realises this herself when, as a widow, she becomes a housekeeper to another peevish old man: "it seemed to me that it was providence Himself that had taken me by the hand and led me back to the kitchen" for "my true home being in the kitchen . . . I was a born servant in my soul and . . . I felt the true joy of my life . . . clear and strong" (HS 149). What Sara calls providence is really contingency interacting with her own unconscious self, a self she has chosen to subordinate to middle class conventions, but which is too healthy to be subdued entirely. Thus Cary holds his characters responsible for at least some of their own unconscious motivations, those which they *choose* not to permit to rise into consciousness, and which are sometimes the truest expression of their selfhood.

At the end of her narrative, Sara asserts that she will "keep a more watchful eye, next time, on my flesh, now I know it better" (HS 220), but the reader knows that Sara is still blaming her "flesh" for her own choices and that she will continue to surprise herself until the day she dies. Crafty, generous, untrustworthy, loving, and loveable, the indomitable Sara will always be true to her real self, thereby never ceasing to astonish her conscious conventionality. In doing so she escapes the very providence and "nature" in which she professes belief to achieve true freedom and self-affirmation. For, by a neat inversion, Cary depicts Sara's unconscious not as a deterministic source of universal and ineluctable behaviour, but as the chosen repository of some of her most important personal characteristics.

In The Moonlight Cary continues, at a very subtle and complex level, his exploration of a *chosen* separation of consciousness and unconsciousness as an attempt to avoid acknowledging responsibility for acts which one deeply desires but considers morally reprehensible. Ella Venn is surely the most radically self-divided character in Cary's canon. She quite literally does not allow herself to know what she is doing. As her

sister Rose tells her, " 'how often have you deceived yourself about your own intentions — even as a child you were famous for saying one thing and doing another' " (The Moonlight 20). At times this inconsistency is forced upon Ella's consciousness (" '[Rose] says I am always pretending to do one thing while I am really doing something else' "), but this does not prevent her from continuing to deceive herself (The Moonlight 22).

In part because Rose is the only person to point out these inconsistencies in her behaviour, Ella's attitude to her strong-minded elder sister is one of mingled affection and resentment. Rose, unlike Ella, is a highly self-conscious individual, much given to evangelical soul searching. However, Rose and Ella do share one characteristic: they both try to control the behaviour of other members of the family. But whereas Rose does so openly, in the name of duty, and convinces others by her impressive integrity, the moral suasion of one who feels that she is doing the right thing, Ella is secretly manipulative and does not permit herself to know what she is doing.

Twice in the novel this duplicity has great effect on the lives of other people, first when Ella "accidentally" loses Rose's unsigned will, and second when she "absent-mindedly" orders the wrong prescription of Rose's sleeping draught, and "unthinkingly" hands her the distinctively coloured box, so that Rose realises that her sister is offering her a potentially lethal medicine and concludes that Ella wishes her dead (The Moonlight 104-105). When the shocked and grieving Rose dies in the night from a self-administered overdose (The Moonlight 131), Ella accuses herself of murder. One of the paradoxes of Ella's personality is that she is a compulsive confessor, but that she consistently manages to accuse herself in such a fantastic way that no one believes her. Ironically, although Ella did not allow herself to understand her own acts while she was committing them, she alone realises that she is in fact morally responsible for Rose's death.

Ella's young relatives, Robin, Kathy, and Amanda, alarmed by her self-accusation, attempt to deny her guilt by invoking the unconscious: Rose " 'tyrannized' " over Ella and gave her a " 'guilt complex' " which has led to a delusion of responsibility for her death. The astonished Ella asks, " 'do you think we couldn't help ourselves?' " (The Moonlight 146-47) For at the core of Ella's self-division is an acute awareness that she *can* help herself. Her need to evade conscious knowledge of her own actions would not be so pressing if she did not believe that she is responsible for them.

Thus Ella's situation represents an advance over that of Sara. Ella does not attempt to lay the blame for her own actions on providence. However, she chooses not to be conscious of her own actions until the consequences force her to acknowledge her responsibility. When she finally does achieve this insight, and finds that she is unable to convince anyone of her guilt for Rose's death, she "absent-mindedly" takes an overdose of sleeping draught herself (The Moonlight 310-11). Ella's judgment on herself is Cary's indictment of those who would try to relieve people of responsibility and of freedom by making them the victims of their own unconscious. People, in fact, *choose* some of the contents of their unconscious and remain responsible for their actions despite their attempts to evade conscious knowledge of what they are doing.

In the character of Rose, Cary explores a more complex situation than Ella's, for although Rose is always acutely aware of her own actions, her motivations are not always as disinterested as she believes. That is, Rose fails to consider that her own unconscious is one of the factors which the conscious will must take into account in making decisions. The oldest child of self-indulgent and neglectful parents, Rose at an early age assumes responsibility for her sisters' behaviour. Cary says that in assuming this parental role and incurring her sisters' resentment, Rose is the victim of the "injustice risked by everyone who takes responsibility for government" (The Moonlight 11). Yet Rose's sense of

selfhood is intimately bound up in her attitude to sex, and in doing her "duty" and "protecting" her family from sexual transgressions she is very often unconsciously protecting herself.

For instance, there can be little doubt that Rose genuinely suffers in persuading her sister to marry her own ex-fiancé, Groom, a man Bessie finds physically repugnant. Rose's own attitude to sex betrays a Victorian ambivalence. She is a woman capable of passionate feeling, who asserts that married sex is " 'wonderful, sacred' " and " 'religious and blessed and holy,' " yet who feels that the sexual act itself is potentially "gross" and " 'disgustingness' " (*The Moonlight* 49-50). In ignoring Bessie's plea that it is not sex she objects to, but sex with Groom, and in persuading the run-away bride back to her husband's bed, Rose is upholding her own idea of the privileged status of married sex. The act itself may be repugnant, but marriage sanctifies it and endows even the most unprepossessing of husbands with rights which it is his wife's duty to fulfil.

Virtually every act of Rose's to which the reader may object as unkind, tyrannical, or even ruthless stems from her need to protect her concept of married sex alone as holy and all else as " 'disgustingness.' " For instance, she drags her elderly and stricken father from his mistress's bed despite the woman's pleas that to remove him will be to kill him. When he dies on the journey home, Rose puts his corpse to bed with hot-water bottles until a doctor can be summoned to certify that he died in his own bed (*The Moonlight* 233-34). Similarly, she disposes of both Ella's suitors, the aesthete poet Tews and the ineffectual Ernest, on the grounds that the first is a depraved sensualist and that the second, although separated from his wife, is a married man. And she forces Ella to surrender her illegitimate daughter to be brought up as Bessie's child. Thus Rose sacrifices one member of her family after another to an abstract concept of "duty" which serves her own sexual prejudices.

Cary frequently focuses on sexual mores because these are often seen as a type of behaviour over which the individual has the least conscious control, permitting the view that this is an area of diminished responsibility. His notes suggest that notions of a deterministic individual unconscious and of a kind of psychological providence, an impersonal psychic force driving human conduct along predetermined paths, are rooted in the same error (MS 249 245). For this reason, Cary's novels depict the notion of a life force controlling sexual conduct to be as mistaken as the claim that sexual activity is governed by the individual's irresistible unconscious desires.

In his non-fiction, Cary's opinion of the life force is succinctly expressed: "The life force is rubbish, an abstraction, an idea without character" ("Interview," SE 9-10; MS 293 S22K 26-27). As we have seen, to govern one's life by abstractions is a costly mistake in Cary's world. In The Moonlight, he creates a cast of characters and a situation reminiscent of a novel by D. H. Lawrence, and uses this as a background against which to explore the notion of a life force.¹⁸ Cary's novel depicts the life force as an abstract concept which is used to relieve the individual of responsibility for sexual behaviour, by positing the female's subservience to a powerful principle which works through her sexuality to propagate itself.

Ella's daughter Amanda and her cousin Robin view the life force as a powerful compulsion which uses men and women for its own mindless purpose, to whose ends the individual is subordinated. Ella is deeply horrified by a conversation in which Amanda and Robin express their irritation and cynical amusement at the power of sex to make them behave like lunatics, at "the wiles of nature, in her ruthless determination to propagate life" (The Moonlight 91). She prefers a more sentimental view, in which sex and birth are part of "a sacred mystery" giving significance and beauty even to the bloody, smelly lambing fold (The Moonlight 57).¹⁹

Because Amanda cannot share this sentimental and sacramental view, she is humiliated by her own body's "mechanical" responses to her lover's sexual expertise (The Moonlight 16). She sees the Victorian woman of her mother's generation as "a sensual victim and machine, a fleshly device for the production and nourishment of other little lumps of flesh, a creature as little free or noble as the segment of a tapeworm" (The Moonlight 150). Her concept of the life force leads her to be disgusted by and alienated from her own body. Amanda is revolted by an idea of herself as "a walking womb . . . a slave to nature, which had given her a heart only that she might be a servant to her reproductive organs. An animal constructed from top to toe only to continue the species" (The Moonlight 150). Cary thus depicts the radical discontinuity of mind and body which can result when a woman who desires to be free and responsible becomes convinced that her body is the slave of natural forces beyond her control.

These ideas lead to confusion in Amanda's attitude to sex. She finds farmer Harry very attractive, but she is filled with dismay at the life that she might lead as his wife. She watches in horrified fascination the worn-out wife of a farm labourer with many children, a woman younger than herself, fat, lame, wearing "an expression of resigned agony" (The Moonlight 209). Yet, although she realises the dire consequences of pregnancy by and marriage to a man such as Harry, Amanda evades the necessity to choose between her sexual desire for him and the kind of life she really wants. She has intercourse with Harry and throws the responsibility for the consequences upon fate and the life force. When she finds she is pregnant and becomes engaged to Harry, Amanda reflects that, after all, it may be best " 'to trust in the flesh, or nature, or the life force, whatever that is, and it will simply mold one into a wife — like dough' " (The Moonlight 260). Amanda would appear to have resolved her inner conflict of mind and body by giving in to the life force, sacrificing both freedom and responsibility in the process.

In his portrait of Harry, Cary considers the notion that the woman who is controlled by the life force uses marriage to make an economic vassal of a man. As Robin expresses it, marriage puts " 'the tiger in a mill and [makes] him grind . . . corn' " (The Moonlight 170). A debased and brutalised version of the competition waged by female procreativity and economic dependency with male lust and irresponsibility is presented by Amanda's father, Ernest, in a letter to Ella. Ernest depicts both men and women as "victims . . . of fate," the men seducing "poor cheap girls . . . because they had natural appetites and could not afford to marry," the women "half-prostitutes who blackmailed them into marriage" (The Moonlight 161).

A less sordid version of this competition is evident when Harry takes Amanda, at Ella's urging, to Pinmouth Fair, an annual event with a traditional harvest of seductions, pregnancies, and marriages. The country girls attending the fair are dressed in their best and eager for happiness, while the men are "reserved and watchful" and careful of their sixpences (The Moonlight 208). Amanda thinks of the fair as a device used by the life force to trap women into pregnancy and men into marriage. Yet she also realises that Harry is " 'an expert' " seducer, who is " 'cool and professional' " in his pursuit of her (The Moonlight 215, 216). Harry insists that she accompany him on the fairground rides and drink cider until physical exhaustion, crowds, noise, and alcohol reduce Amanda to "feverish, bruised shaken flesh," that is "tired not only in body, but will" and it is in this condition that she yields to Harry's sexual demands (The Moonlight 214, 215). Amanda has not been overcome by a life force that she is powerless to resist. Rather, Harry has been forced to go to a great deal of trouble to overcome the conscious will of a woman who is very attracted to him, but does not want the sort of life she would lead as his wife.

Moreover, far from being a passive agent of the life force, Harry is revealed as a man who considers his sexual life of secondary importance to his real passion, the creation

of a successful farm. This Lawrencian man of the soil plans to fit in his wedding date " 'after lambing and before the hay,' " and invests only five minutes of a busy day in love making, during which he fails to remove his cap (The Moonlight 30, 225). It is true that, for Harry, marriage is largely a matter of economics. His engagement to Amanda depends on whether or not she inherits enough money to prevent him losing his farm (The Moonlight 79-81) and he shows a callous indifference to Nelly, the village girl who bears his child, while he pursues and impregnates middle-class Amanda. However, rather than being enslaved by the life force to provide for a woman and her children, Harry considers his personal fulfilment as a successful farmer of greater importance than his responsibility to his sexual partners and their offspring. He therefore turns philosophically to immerse himself in farm work when Amanda deserts him.

For despite her original surrender of responsibility to " 'the flesh, or nature, or the life force' " (The Moonlight 260), Amanda eventually does leave Harry, refusing to submit passively to the life force, to hand over responsibility for important life decisions to contingency disguised as an abstract force. This change of attitude occurs when Robin accuses her of trapping Harry in " 'the woman's racket — the biggest bloody swindle of the lot,' " of using a man to further the designs of the life force whose vehicle she imagines she is (The Moonlight 267). Awakened from her dreamy passivity by this accusation, Amanda breaks her engagement, takes a research job in London, and becomes "a woman of the world, at grips with its lonely and mortal necessity" (The Moonlight 314). She is now a free woman with a great sense of responsibility both to her somewhat boring job and to her unborn child. She wonders if the birth of her baby will herald a "miracle," if her life will suddenly assume significant form with her child at the centre (The Moonlight 314-15).

Although Cary does not indicate the answer, he intimates that whatever form Amanda gives to her life will be of her own choosing. For Cary suggests that women are in

intimate contact not with a life force, but with life experiences which are repeated in every generation and in all cultures. Female sexuality and maternity are not the concrete manifestation of an abstract force, they are the experiential content of the feminine condition, two of those "universal" elements in human experience which Cary delights to trace beneath the diversity of social forms. But while "the fundamental quality of a woman's life [is] imposed on her by her sex, her natural powers," her individual selfhood is a mixture of "primary elements from nature and a secondary social . . . form" ("The Way a Novel Gets Written," SE 119). Any individual woman is therefore free to shape her response to her own biology by the power of her imagination. In an article published in Vogue in 1951, Cary explicitly repudiates the "Lawrencian" school which attempts to persuade women that they are the hapless victims of nature and welcomes the fact that women are now free to control their own sexuality and to decide whether or not they will have children. The power of choice, he says, has greatly increased the responsibility of motherhood, a responsibility to which modern women bring great abilities and a profound sense of duty ("The Revolution of the Women," MS 247 9-12; "Joyce Cary's Last Look at his Worlds," SE 241).

Therefore, Cary says, the women he depicts in The Moonlight represent different "temporary answers to [the] everlasting problem" of being a woman, different creative responses to the givens of female biology (5).²⁰ The creative freedom of modern women, as they find new forms for this eternal content, involves "insecurity and the endless anxiety of moral choice; and yet it is the most precious thing they have. It is the soul of their dignity" (The Moonlight 9). Sex and parenthood are universal human experiences, but they are shaped by the power of the free imagination. To mistake the necessity and contingency of biology for the manifestation of an abstract principle is once again to evade responsibility and to exchange freedom for slavery.

For this reason, The Moonlight and Herself Surprised share an important area of concern with Cary's African novels. For Cary suggests a fundamental relationship among a variety of notions which he depicts as rooted in the longing to see some teleological force shaping human experience: faith in divine providence, the "natural law" of the Social Darwinists, Rousseau's myths of the noble savage and the Golden Age as grounds for belief in the ultimate triumph of "natural goodness," faith in inevitable progress toward the realisation of a universal moral truth, culminating in the millennium, the limitation of people's responsibility for sexual behaviour by their own unconscious desires or by an impersonal life force, and Hegelian notions of the supremacy of a favoured race or nation as the *telos* of history. The common element in these ideas to which Cary objects is the attempt to justify subordinating the person to some "higher" principle, at once denigrating the importance of the individual and relieving him or her of responsibility for personal choice. In each case, Cary is arguing against an unnecessary self-limitation of human freedom, in which people mistake contingency (unplanned pregnancy, a drought, the death of a child) for the work of some powerful abstract principle (the life force, the rain god, providence) and fall victim to their own myth in needless self-sacrifice.

Despite his rejection of these notions, many of Cary's characters are involved in something "larger" than pure self-interest, which leads them voluntarily to subordinate their own needs and desires in order to serve other people. These novels justify duty and self-sacrifice as they are expressed in a concrete relationship of two individuals, rather than as the subordination of a person to a principle or to an abstract historical or natural force. Cary depicts proper sacrifice as freely chosen self-denial in the service of other individuals and, although in worldly terms it may not yield high returns, he notes that it can be a form of joyful self-affirmation (MS 257 N39). Amanda's decision to dedicate herself to her job and to her child is thus a form of creative and self-affirming sacrifice.

Similarly, Sara, who characterises herself as a "born servant," achieves great self-fulfilment in this role, because in it she finds the truest expression of her creativity and selfhood. Despite her dishonesty and manipulateness, she is essentially an attractive person, for the motives behind her "surprising" behaviour are more often generous than selfish. In the days of her prosperity, Sara's motivation is to secure the greatest possible comfort and security for herself, while doing the best she can to make those she manipulates happy. However, her "downfall" is accompanied by an increasing self-forgetfulness and self-sacrifice. In Sara, Cary presents a portrait of *useful* sacrifice, a cheerful giving that finds rich reward in serving others, a generous self-forgetting that leads to a deeper self-actualisation (MS 257 N39), for the fulfilment of her deepest artistic nature involves serving others, providing them with warm beds, clean socks, and good meals. Thus Sara derives real pleasure and self-fulfilment from cleaning, shopping, and mending for the Jimsons and in saving Gulley's son from a life of aimless delinquency. For, despite her frequent references to providence, Sara's strength is that she lives her life in service to individuals, rather than to abstractions.

Despite the harm Rose does to others she, too, is willing to sacrifice her own happiness in order to serve her family, and the concept of duty around which her life is structured even has a self-affirming quality. It is precisely because she has defined herself in this way that the realisation of the depths of Ella's resentment drives Rose to despair. Nor is the need for her to assume such a responsibility a figment of her imagination: she rightly feels she has a duty to protect the impulsive and unrealistic Ella. Moreover, her assessments of Tews and Ernest are essentially correct. The first dies of alcoholism and venereal disease, and the second is revealed as an embezzler and liar who, in the opinion of his own daughter, dodges all responsibility (The Moonlight 168). In addition, despite numerous miscarriages, difficult pregnancies, and ungrateful children, Bessie makes a

success of her marriage and on her death bed thanks God for " '[s]uch happiness . . . I didn't deserve — but God blessed me, so wonderfully, such great happiness' " (The Moonlight 303).

As Ella says, Rose has " 'fearful courage, to decide lives. She [isn't] even afraid to be unjust' " (The Moonlight 162). That is, she accepts the risk of assuming responsibility for others, although she is unable to control or to predict the contingency of life, or to grasp fully the complexities of even such a shallow personality as Bessie's. However, Ella's assertion that Rose is correct in believing that " '[d]uty, duty, duty is the salvation . . . one can escape from that misery of not knowing what is right and what is wrong' " (The Moonlight 207) is, in the end, unconvincing because of the enormous cost to individuals it entails. Having returned dutifully to her sexually selfish husband, Bessie dies worn out with child bearing, and Ella is forced in the name of duty to give up the illegitimate baby she so passionately loves. Rose herself comes to question the wisdom of some of her own decisions, wondering if she unconsciously sacrificed Bessie to the man she herself loved (The Moonlight 302). Rose's situation suggests that "duty" can become an abstraction to which individuals may be sacrificed and that it is sometimes very difficult to be sure of one's own motivations.

What is the sense of such a complex narrative? The Moonlight is consistent with Cary's notion that it is difficult to know one's "duty" in a world in which every situation is unique, and that people must be free to decide on the nature of their own particular duty. But Cary also suggests that people are compelled on occasion to accept responsibility for other people, and that this incurs a fearful risk: " 'is it safe to interfere in people's lives?' " (The Moonlight 102) First, like Rose, they may unwittingly sacrifice others whose actions threaten ideas fundamental to their own selfhood. Second, like Ella, they may evade conscious knowledge of their actions when they attempt to manipulate others. Third, they

risk losing sight of the contingencies of concrete situations, oversimplifying the complexities of personalities and personal relationships and taking refuge in some abstract and universally applicable "duty."

Cary addresses these problems in Power in Men. He emphatically (even dogmatically) asserts that people are responsible for the consequences of their actions and that if adherence to principle can be seen to entail unfortunate consequences for an innocent person, then principle must be sacrificed: "A man has no right to conceive of himself as the machine tool of a principle; he cannot get rid of the responsibility of moral freedom. He must study the facts and use his invention to devise the right means of obtaining from them the highest possible good" (69). Therefore, although Rose's ability to predict the ultimate outcome of her actions is limited, she has an obligation to weigh all the factors in each of the unique situations presented to her judgment, rather than treating them as instances to which an unvarying general principle can be applied. Yet, despite the fearful difficulty of making such decisions for others, the risk must be taken. People cannot, like the Venn parents, evade their duty of responsibility toward those who are entrusted to their care.

Rose errs in elevating this duty into an abstract principle to which she sacrifices those whom she believes she is serving. Self-sacrifice is owed to individuals, not to abstractions, and the mutual duty people owe one another is "founded not on an abstract idea, but upon a reality" which is unique in every situation (AF 51).²¹ Cary's notes reiterate his contention that, while duty for duty's sake is a pernicious myth, doing one's duty to some concrete good end is admirable (MS 258 S5P F2 3). Thus Cary retains the traditional values of self-denying sacrifice and of fidelity to duty, while rejecting any versions of them which are founded in an abstraction or which depreciate the supreme worth of the individual.

In his attempt to validate duty and self-sacrifice in a contingent, frequently unpredictable world, in which any attempt to interfere in another's situation is fraught with peril, Cary is the heir of Carlyle and Kierkegaard, who also attempt to preserve such traditional values by making them meaningful in the context of their own age. The rejection of providence in all its forms (natural, historical, psychological, or divine) is fundamental to Cary's existentialism, but he is also deeply concerned with preserving, transforming, and transmitting notions which he perceives to be of value to the contemporary individual. As Chapter III explains, Cary's notion of history grows out of his rejection of deterministic and teleological concepts, but it also reflects his sense of what the present owes to the accumulated experience of past generations.

NOTES TO CHAPTER II

¹ The conversion experience of characters in Aissa Saved strikingly resembles William James' "empirical" description of the phenomenon in The Varieties of Religious Experience. Cary owned the 1928 edition of this work, which was originally published in 1902, and he refers to it in the preface to The African Witch (9). Cary specifically mentions James' discussion of the phenomenon of conversion in his notes (Cary MS 293 S22K 12). According to James, conversion, especially among Protestant sects, often is followed by a sensation of ecstatic release (249-51) because subordination of the will to a higher power is seen as an escape from the burden of responsibility. Aissa's emotional excesses and extreme mood swings also resemble the "pathology" of sainthood described by James (333).

² See Mahood for a discussion of Cary's "self-sacrificing" and "self-reliant" characters (108-19). Mahood's discussion of Cary's notion of self-sacrifice as irresponsibility is valuable, but I cannot agree that the "self-reliant characters in the book are nearly all men, the self-surrendering women," nor that this is indicative of a "rather trying obsessive fear [on Cary's part] of what Blake called female domination" (117). Ojo and Mr. Carr are as irresponsible as Aissa and Hilda, while young Tanawe has as firm a grasp of duty as Ali. The notion that because Cary creates women like Elisabeth Aladai, who are strong and dangerous, or others like Shangoedi who are mad and sadistic, he has some deep-seated resentment against dominating women ignores the fact that he also creates strong, dangerous or mad, sadistic men, such as Chester Nimmo and Selah Coker.

³ Kanu, who sees Aissa's conversion as "escapism," regards Hilda's and Aissa's sacrifices as equally culpable in their willingness "to forego the right to deliberate choice and action" (14). James points out that sacrifices made in the name of obedience give the religious enthusiast a sensation of illusory freedom which stems from this cutting loose from responsibility (303-309).

⁴ Dennis Hall even goes so far as to say that Aissa finds that "true freedom, or perhaps the illusion of it, can only be found in complete, voluntary subjection to the will of God" (9). This may be Hilda Carr's view, but it is certainly not Cary's.

⁵ Thus the pagans are also wrong to use Abba as a means of redressing their terrible situation, to consider him as a means to an end. For, while Cary draws parallels between the Carrs and Aissa to reject the notion that individual suffering is a sacrifice to God's will, he also invites the reader to compare the pagans to the ants and to reject the sacrifice of the individual for the good of the community. In both cases the individual's sacrifice is seen as contributing to some general good, either God's providential plan or the relief of a drought stricken community. Both Christians and pagans mistake contingency for the will of conscious entities, avoid responsibility by throwing it upon transcendental authority, and sacrifice individuals to an abstraction ("providence") or a collectivity ("the community").

⁶ William James treats Christian Science as an outgrowth of Emersonian transcendentalism, and Cary depicts Marie as embracing both notions. James suggests that these notions are varieties of religious belief with a close affinity to Protestant ideas of providence, in that both depict union with the divine as the ultimate good and advocate

the resignation of responsibility to a higher power as the road to spiritual salvation (90-109). Such beliefs, he says, encourage the convert to "[g]ive up the feeling of responsibility . . . resign the care of [his or her] destiny to higher powers" and so to gain "inward relief" (108).

⁷ Cary apparently agrees with Abrams' contention that, because these notions so pervade contemporary "ways of organizing experience," people may overlook the extent to which "characteristic concepts and patterns of Romantic philosophy and literature are a displaced and reconstituted theology" (Natural Supernaturalism 65, 66).

⁸ Warren French (289-90) says that Marie "has lost faith in a succession of specific ideals, but not in the idealistic pursuit of a 'natural' order" which, she wants to believe, "can be trusted to run [itself]" without the need for human direction.

⁹ Cary admires Surtees for his unsentimental depiction of nineteenth-century English rustics as a "poverty-stricken and brutalised race" ("The Tough World of Surtees," SE 180), and in Art and Reality he contrasts the vision of peasant life conjured up by the "poets and dreamers of the romantic age" with "the real peasant's life, of poverty, squalor and superstition" (61-62).

¹⁰ In The Case for African Freedom, Cary compares well-intentioned white Kenyans who have a feudal sense of responsibility toward their black tenants to Irish landlords and remarks, "no trusteeship, however benevolent, can cure the wounded self-respect of . . . a people, condemned to perpetual dependence" (67; for more parallels between the European and African peasantry, see also AF 35, 41, 69, 96; CC 352).

¹¹ Cary tried for many years (1924-37) to give Jarvis a book of his own. At his death an immense manuscript existed which A.G. Bishop eventually edited, and several fragments drawn from this manuscript were published under the title of Cock Jarvis. Jarvis' ambiguity is far more strained in Cock Jarvis than in Castle Corner. He is arrogant, stubborn, and opinionated, allowing Daji to be riddled with corruption because of his personal loyalty to some members of the native administration in whose crimes he refuses to believe (CJ 65, 97-98, 141-42). There are many scenes in Cock Jarvis which appear to be ironic treatments of Kiplingesque romances of empire.

¹² In the preface to this novel, Cary explicitly states the central ethical problem of colonists in Africa as he sees it. Educating Africans in European ideas such as nationalism exposes them to "the impact of modern turmoil" and results in "more violence, more barbarities." But education "is the duty, the religious duty, if you like, for all of us to desire enlightenment for all men, for all God's souls." The Africans themselves, says Cary, desire education, for the same reason that any people desire it, "to satisfy need, to create some glory and dignity for themselves and those they love" (AW 12-13). Therefore, to expose Africans to European ideas is to risk social and political turmoil, but this is morally preferable to turning Africa into a game preserve for the noble savage.

¹³ Mahood says Aladai has become possessed by an "inner idol" of nationalism, which is the real African witch (154).

14 Cary would undoubtedly interpret Wordsworth's imperialist sentiments as confirmation of his own notion that all such ideas are fundamentally rooted in a romantic attitude to natural processes.

15 Cary made notes for a lecture on Freud, Jung, and Adler. Unsurprisingly, he is more intrigued by Jung's depiction of the unconscious as a source of creative energy than by Freud's highly deterministic notions (see MS 258 S5C, S5N, S5P F2 4-6; MS 251 P6 16v, 18r, 18v).

16 She is also an artist whose creativity takes the form of "nest building," the making of a home and a family, and Sara can be just as amoral, as manipulative, and as unscrupulous as her lover, the artist Gulley Jimson, in the pursuit of her own form of creation ("The Way a Novel Gets Written," SE 126). Therefore, the decisions Sara makes in the service of this art frequently surprise her own conventional consciousness.

17 It could be argued that this is the ground of existential tragedy, and that it marks a return to the essentially tragic Greek world view. Existentialism holds people responsible for all the consequences of their actions, while acknowledging that many of these are unpredictable. Greek tragic heroes inevitably suffer the consequences of their actions, even those committed in ignorance. This would explain why Cary's view has been called tragic (Rosenthal "Joyce Cary's Comic Sense," 339-40), despite the affirmative quality of his works. But there is an important difference between "existential tragedy" and Attic drama. For while a particular fate is marked out for Oedipus before his birth, no destiny is preordained for the existentialist hero. The only form of inevitability to which he or she is subject is that acts usually have consequences, however contingent.

18 It is suggestive that LaValley argues that Lawrence's valorisation of "instinctual heroism" is foreshadowed in Carlyle (7). Cary considers Lawrence a brilliant novelist whose work is marred by his obsession with the "evil" of self-consciousness, a wrongheaded idea dealt with in an unconvincing and "hysterical" manner (MS 251 P13 50r). He finds Lawrence's uncritical acceptance of the existence of a life force ridiculous and suggests that his notions are related to Nazi ideas of blood-consciousness (MS 229 244-45). But Cary does not depict human beings as severed from the rest of the natural world. He notes that Darwin's "will to live" is the same "will to experience" (MS 280 N119 "Nature") which Cary suggests is the principle motivation behind the development of human civilisation (see Chapter III). In Castle Corner he attributes the urge to richer experience even to plants (248). That is, he distinguishes between an abstract life force and a prehuman, universal urge to wider and richer experience as part of the "character" of all living things.

19 Ella herself perceives the irony that it is Rose who is responsible for this sacramental view of sex, although Ella extends it beyond the marriage bed to include all sexual activity which is sanctified by love (The Moonlight 146).

20 See also Cary's letter to Mark Schorer, quoted in full in Fisher (Theme 2-4), in which he refers to "the sexual relation which obliges us to create with certain given materials."

²¹ Cary considers that self-sacrifice, when performed for its own sake, is "pathological" (MS 257 N39; quoted in Mahood 116). Duty and sacrifice must serve concrete ends, rather than being elevated to abstract principles that become ends in themselves.

CHAPTER III

African Prometheus:

Carlyle and Joyce Cary's Myth of History

As Chapter II demonstrates, characters such as Marie and Felix err in placing their faith in what J. Hillis Miller describes as the " 'Hegelian' " view of nature and history, positing a "teleological spiritual drive" directing human experience towards a goal which is "the fulfilment of a total meaning" ("The Two Allegories," in Bloomfield 363). Cary repudiates any notion of "automatic progress, a providence in nature, which, if permitted free play, would certainly produce a richer, a safer, a happier world" ("Is the World Getting Anywhere?" 69). However, despite his rejection of notions of historical "providence," he does not exclude the possibility of development in human history.

Cary grounds his notion of development in the contention that time itself is not like a pre-existent river on which humanity journeys from past to future through the present, but that the present is added to the past in continuous new creation: "Real time does not pass. It simply adds to itself. It creates the present" (PM 85). Therefore, although the creation of the present may be conditioned by the past, the future is always undetermined. Human history is made by individuals enacting their ideas in order to satisfy their feelings. Since ideas are at least partly self-determined and emotions are highly subjective, history is not the result of forces acting through or upon people, but is created by them: "History is not an automatic progress hindered or helped by men. It is a true advance into novelty. . . . As we realize our ideas in concrete action, we make history" (PM 237).

This leads Cary to suggest that, because it is the product of human choices and actions, history has a direction, not a predestined one, but one which is potential in human

imagination and creativity (MS 267 N65 untitled ms 1-4; MS 239 207).¹ That is, although Cary goes so far as to declare that the idea of a "dialectic" that is "automatic" is "utterly discredited" by the events of the Twentieth Century, he suggests that history is evolving in a predictable direction ("Is the World Getting Anywhere?" 69). He explains this by positing the "advance into novelty" as an outgrowth of people's ability to envisage and their desire to experience new possibilities. History moves forward because it is part of the character of humanity to be "seeking always more richness of self-expression, more food for the imagination" ("Clothes As Expression," SE 238). In his notes, Cary speculates that since all individuals seek opportunities for new and richer experiences, their collective efforts will tend to push history in the direction most favourable to this (MS 239 207; MS 272 P52 18r).² Therefore, the "line of development which is approximating more and more to a final order of the civilised state" is impelled on its course by "the creative free mind . . . its everlasting drive for realization" ("Britain Is Strong in Herself" 32-33).

That is, Cary claims to detect evidence that human society is moving, by trial and error, toward a form that will endow the maximum number of its members with the greatest possible opportunities to realise their ideas and to satisfy their feelings: "For although there is no automatic progress in the Victorian sense of the word, though there is no principle or dialectic which will produce, by its own certain and unaided operation, a golden age of security and peace, there is a direction in human affairs" ("Is the World Getting Anywhere?" 70). Furthermore, Cary identifies this direction: because an increase in liberty puts greater power for actualisation of their ideas and satisfaction of their feelings into the hands of free individuals, history is a record of the slow spread of political liberty.³ However, he also notes that although this development in the direction of greater liberty to pursue richness of experience is potential in human nature, its growth is uneven and highly

unpredictable, and it is by no means inevitable (MS 271 N89 58v; MS 249 259; MS 206 123/12).

Furthermore, this process will not usher in an Edenic millennium. A world in which all people have greater power to realise frequently conflicting ideas is not one of perfect bliss, but of great turmoil (MS 206 141/30, 151/40). Like Carlyle, Cary posits the ideal world as potential in actuality and as dependent upon human creative effort for its realisation. However, this realisation can never be more than partial, for perfection is impossible. Cary represents society as tending toward a "final order," but the human story will not find closure in a preordained millennium of changeless peace. Even in this final state, history will continue to unfold, for change is an inevitable part of human experience.

As an example of development which realises an ideal but fails to halt change or to restore Edenic bliss, Cary cites "The Revolution of the Women." The increased liberty of women in western society is "probably the greatest social revolution" in the history of the world ("The Revolution of the Women," MS 247 11), but it has not brought women more happiness. What they have gained is greater liberty to work, to create, to realise their ideas, to shape their own lives and the society they live in, and thereby to generate more change (The Moonlight 9). This exemplifies, for Cary, the situation created by any increase in liberty. Since the creative imagination's urge to self-realisation tends to push history in the direction of increasing liberty, the world will always exist "in continuous creation and therefore continuous change and insecurity" ("Interview," SE 5).

However, Cary's notion of history treats the uncertainty and insecurity which free individuals generate as existing in a polarised relationship with necessity. One form of necessity stems from the consistent character of the real that holds the world in being, and, while placing absolute limits upon the number of possible directions open to human history, this also makes it impossible for God to intervene miraculously in order to alter the

course which humanity has created for itself. A second form of necessity, the limits placed upon one person's liberty to realise his or her ideas by their incompatibility with the ideas of others, is rooted, paradoxically, in freedom: it is a side-effect of the individual's ability to create a unique world.

Many of Cary's novels depict historical change as involving the conflict of the "ideas of life" of gifted and creative individuals with institutionalised notions held by the majority of the collectivity to which they belong. For while all individuals seek to enrich their experience, it is the visionaries, the iconoclasts in every society, who formulate ideas which reveal previously unsuspected possibilities. These "prophetic spirits" are often reviled and outcast by their fellows because, in seeking to realise their ideas, they threaten the established order of things. But they influence the direction of history by revealing the way in which the ubiquitous desire for richer experience can be satisfied.

In this respect, Cary's earliest novels are of particular interest, because they invite the reader to see Africa as a microcosm, "where every stage of the social development exists side by side" (PM 95-97). In choosing Africa as a background against which to explore the shaping of history by the clash of new and traditional "ideas of life," Cary implies that he can communicate a universal truth: "The attraction of Africa is that it shows these wars of belief . . . in the greatest variety and also in very simple forms. Basic obsessions, which in Europe hide themselves under all sorts of decorous scientific or theological or political uniforms, are there seen naked in bold and dramatic action" (AW 10).⁴

From his experience of African societies, Cary claims to detect a pattern in human history. All societies, he contends, evolve along generally similar lines, because all social relations have a common basis in the family: "It was in the family that all society took its spring and found its sanction, of authority freely accepted, of freedom realized under

protection of authority" ("Why They Say 'God Save the Queen' "). Family life in all cultures is fundamentally similar: "the natural family relationships" are society's "primitive natural elements." Therefore, all cultures have a common basis, and develop "highly flexible" but parallel institutions ("The Way a Novel Gets Written," SE 121).

Cary describes all human society as originating in "patriarchal" families which evolve into tribes as authority passes to tribal elders and "traditional law" (PM 95-97). Although a council of tribal elders contains the seeds of democracy, too often it degenerates into a conservative body bent on resisting any change, slavishly following tradition, and suppressing the individual who dares to imagine a different "idea of life."⁵ Because of their rigidity, such tribal structures are very fragile. Tribal life is too "boring" to retain people's allegiance when they are presented with a more interesting alternative ("Clothes As Expression," SE 234-35).⁶

The situation of the individual who creates these alternatives and thereby comes into conflict with tribal tradition and authority becomes, in Cary's novels, a paradigm for the struggle of all visionaries, prophets, and artists to change the world, to move history forward, to embroil humanity in liberating and frightening upheaval. Among the protagonists of his African novels are Promethean figures whose personal attempts to find self-fulfilment, to realise their ideas, and to satisfy their feelings threaten to destabilise their society, while holding out a promise of greater richness of experience to its individual members. But these novels are not allegories of universal history. Rather, they depict particular individuals striving to realise their own "ideas of life" in a situation that is of universal significance.

The situation of Cary's "Promethean" characters is that of individuals who wish to realise their own unique selfhoods while living in the midst of a society which defines self almost completely in terms of traditional roles within the group. Rather than celebrating

such cultures as Hegelian "organic communities," Cary characterises these societies as examples of "the primitive herd culture" ("Britain Is Strong in Herself" 33). Because he represents such societies as the original form of all human cultures, his Promethean protagonists re-enact the situation which, he implies, must have occurred at some point in the past history of every advanced society. That is, his novels frequently focus on the pivotal moment in the history of every culture when someone rebels against the tyranny of the group and seeks individual self-affirmation.⁷

Although he depicts this rebellion as the seminal choice which starts the process of historical development, Cary is not unaware of the attractions offered by life as a member of the "herd." In An American Visitor, Uli is a simple, rather unimaginative young man, who experiences perfect happiness and security in filling clearly defined and understood roles within his village, his family, and his marriage, until he attempts to introduce his wife, Enuke, to face-to-face love-making. In the village of Nok this is new and therefore a perversion, and the horrified Enuke runs home to her brothers. Uli has "broken the frame of things" by introducing ideas from outside for which there are no precedents in this narrow society (AV 58-59).

Uli loses the sense of what and who he is as a flood of new notions invade Nok: "war, money, Christianity, trade, soldiers, and the rights and the powers of the white men and the authority of their Gods" (AV 81). Alienated from his tribe, he experiences acute psychic fragmentation. He is filled with "self-disgust . . . emptiness within and without" because he is surrounded by people who are "nothing to him and he [is] nothing to them" (AV 169). Finally, Uli is reintegrated into a Nok war party and regains his selfhood when he rejoins his tribe: "to himself he seemed . . . once more Uli of Nok, a somebody in . . . his own world" (AV 205).

But the Africans are not the only people to experience the comfort of fulfilling customary roles within a community. Larsen observes that in Cary's world "[t]he thing that sets civilization above savagery is . . . its power to free the individual from the tyranny of the tribe," but that tribal or "herd" instinct lurks beneath many civilised exteriors (39, 52). Cary portrays the more complex European culture as offering greater protection to the visionary individual and more opportunities for ordinary men and women to realise their unique selfhoods, but he depicts the "herd" instinct as basic to both Europeans and Africans. This is made clear in The African Witch by the parallel fates of Dryas Honeywood and Osi, and those of Judy Coote and Elizabeth Aladai.

Dryas is a pretty, amiable, unself-conscious English girl, who has all the qualities deemed appropriate to her age and sex by the British colonists. She has internalised her culture's standards with uncritical acceptance: "she was profoundly convinced that the English were the best people in the world" (AW 158). In this respect, "her ideas were little deeper than any Rimi woman's, who concludes . . . that there is one way to do everything — to dress, to cook — and all others are bad" (AW 166). Under many circumstances, such standards serve her well, and Dryas impresses both Africans and Europeans with her kindness, her serenity, and her self-control. For instance, although Dryas is in love with Judy's fiancé, Rackham, she feels that to steal a man from an older and less attractive woman is unacceptable behaviour. And she gains Aladai's devotion when she does not humiliate him by public rejection. What Aladai does not know is that she is motivated by pity for "his inferiority" and by a code which demands consideration for the less fortunate (AW 165-66).

Dryas' generosity and her bigotry both stem from her adherence to what Rackham describes as "'sixth-form culture'" (AW 267). She is a decent but shallow person, who is suddenly placed in an extreme situation where, for the first time, her customary guidelines

fail her. As Rimi rushes toward civil war, Dryas' feelings about Aladai and his personal situation precipitate acute but inarticulable guilt with regard to the ethics of the British presence in Africa, even while she continues to loathe Africans (AW 251, 266-67). Since she is a simple person who reduces complex moral problems to unambiguous choices of good and evil, she feels compelled by this confused sense of guilt and responsibility to warn Aladai not to trust any official of the colonial government. Dryas defeats Elizabeth's and Judy's attempt to prevent violence by persuading Aladai not to agree to a crucial meeting with the Resident (AW 294-96). Going to Aladai's camp places Dryas in the midst of the ensuing violence and during the uprising she is killed. Thus it would seem that, while Dryas' adherence to "herd" mentality is very rewarding in her usual cultural context, it fails her in unusual circumstances.⁸

In many respects, Dryas resembles Osi, a pretty, young, happily-married African woman who is accused of witchcraft because her happiness arouses jealousy in some members of her close-knit family. Aladai, who is attempting to stamp out witch-trials, rescues her, but only after she has been broken in body and mind. Osi is a pathetic figure, her beauty and happiness destroyed, her personality almost obliterated, living in a state of permanent fear, ending in madness (AW 170-71, 289-90).

Osi does not question the norms of her society, and when cut off from the group, she cannot function. In contrast, Dryas is capable of a certain independence, when her personal code dictates that she behave differently from the other colonists. While Dryas continues to conform in her ideas (she loathes Aladai), she does act in ways that defy the "herd" (she is polite to him). Because she is the heir of a more complex culture, which fosters a certain amount of individualism in even the greatest conformists, her resources, however limited, are still more extensive than Osi's. Shortly before her death, Dryas is confused and troubled, but she does appear to be groping toward a new sense of selfhood,

whereas Osi, having lost her self, simply becomes "a living fear" (AW 289). It is significant that Osi commits suicide by giving herself to the sacred crocodile, Cary's emblem for all those forces which seek to subjugate the individual to some "higher" power (AW 291-93).

Osi's persecutor, Elizabeth Aladai, is a majestic figure, intelligent, shrewd, charismatic, and strong. She wields great power as a priestess because of these qualities, and because she is also a sensitive and intuitive psychologist. In any society, she would be an outstanding person. It is therefore ironic that, in Rimi, she is a witch-hunter, someone who identifies and destroys individuals who threaten the stability of the group by the mere fact of their superior intelligence, beauty, talent, or happiness.

For Cary describes the tribe as comparable to the modern authoritarian state, in that both societies strive to convince people that happiness comes from serving the group's interests. But any social group is a collectivity of individuals, and all individuals are unique. As an inevitable result, some will be more gifted or luckier than others and will have a greater opportunity for personal happiness. For their own security, therefore, such societies destroy their most promising young members: "The stagnation of Africa is chiefly due to that jealous tribal law which forbade any man to be wiser or cleverer or richer than his neighbours" (AF 119-20, 39). Africa "remained primitive" because she "wasted" or destroyed, "flogged and mutilated" her most talented individuals, labelling them as "witches" (AF 133; MS 206 153/42-154/43).

For example, one of Elizabeth's victims is Ibu, a ten-year old girl accused as a witch and repudiated by her family. Ibu's intelligence and good looks have exposed her to jealousy:

All intelligent, good-looking persons are exposed to jealousy, and jealousy is the subconscious source of the hatred which produces injuries — from injuries, fear; and from fear, an accusation of witchcraft. In this way Africa has destroyed, every year for some millions of years, a large proportion of its more intelligent and handsome children.

(AW 88)

Like Osi, Ibu suffers a loss of identity when she is cast out by the group in terms of which she has always defined herself (AW 86). However, Ibu resembles Elizabeth rather than Osi, in that she is an individual with exceptional abilities.

Elizabeth is quick to recognise her talents, and adopts Ibu as her apprentice because, ironically, of the very quality which led to an accusation of witchcraft: " 'You are different from other people' " (AW 230). Ibu assumes a new identity: "she [is] a different person," an apprentice witch-hunter (AW 231). It becomes evident that Elizabeth herself is a "witch," the most dangerous of all, for her formidable powers are pressed into the service of the tribe, to destroy or subvert others like herself. Only in this role can she find expression for her powerful individuality, without being set upon by the "herd."

Judy Coote, lame, plain, *different*, is the sort of person whom, until recently, European societies persecuted as a witch. However, her culture has evolved sufficient tolerance for individual selfhood to afford her protection from the "herd." Judy is self-conscious and imaginative, passionate, intelligent, and highly individual. Unlike Dryas, she is capable of seeing Louis Aladai as a person and she befriends him because she is attracted by his good looks, his intelligence, and his sympathy (AW 20). Judy, therefore, is something of a non-conformist within the group of colonists. But, although the colonists frequently criticise her, they accept her as a member of their society. Unlike Elizabeth, Judy

is not faced with the choice of being persecuted or joining in the persecution of others like herself. With all its faults, European culture is represented by Cary as superior to the African in one important respect: it permits individuals such as Judy to survive. In African society, on the other hand, *juju* is used to intimidate and to control all who aspire to break free from the "herd."

Akande Tom, a rather dim-witted but beautiful and ambitious young man whom Elizabeth takes as a lover, falls victim to the "herd." Tom resents Elizabeth's dominance and wishes to become an important person in his own right, so he decides to acquire the white man's powerful *juju* by wearing European clothes. Cary depicts this as a highly imaginative act, which "only the most enterprising [tribesmen], like Tom — men of ambition and ideals — attempt" (AW 149). However, at the end of the novel, Elizabeth, by virtue of her powerful personality and the fear inspired by her *juju*, reduces him to a mindless, sub-human state while a delighted crowd watches:

The people were shrieking and dancing with laughter . . . the nervous convulsions of the intoxicated. They were not drunk only with cruelty and its stimulation; but something much deeper and richer, full of their own pain; full of spite against . . . their own weakness.

They delighted in Tom's misery and terror, not only because he tried to escape from the herd, but because they were sunk in fear themselves; and also because of some fragment of spirit in them, which knew freedom and

had pride, was enslaved inside them, blind and helpless, and forced to eat humiliation every day.

(AW 306-307)

Under their eyes, Tom devolves from a man into a gibbering "baboon," to a lizard, crawling on his belly, to a frog, and ultimately to "a black jelly, protoplasm" (AW 307-308). But Cary makes it clear that Tom's rebellion and subsequent debasement is symptomatic of the frustrated desires of a whole society. His "herd" is a collection of individuals, who would like to be able to affirm themselves as individual selves, if only they dared, if only they knew how.

In Power in Men, Cary says that he observed that many Africans will break a tribal law which they "do not dream of questioning"(2). That is, they will assert their individuality to the extent of defying a law which they imagine to be immutable, much as Dryas defies convention to be polite to a man whom she considers to be "naturally" and inevitably her inferior. It is the rare iconoclast, the person who envisages the possibility of subverting or changing traditional law, who frees a people from the tyranny of the tribe. The eponymous hero of Mr. Johnson is such a renegade, a detribalised African who regards all laws as technicalities to be circumvented when they interfere with the realisation of his ideas or the satisfaction of his feelings. And although Johnson's profound ignorance of consequences, his naive belief that laws can be ignored with impunity, brings disaster upon himself, his actions help to liberate an entire society.

Johnson is Cary's African Prometheus, a liberator, a creative artist, a poet of soaring imagination, who "[l]ike a horse or a rose tree . . . can turn the crudest and simplest form of fodder into beauty and power of his own quality" (MJ 92). That is, all of

Johnson's works bear his special imprint, his powerful affirmation of himself as a unique individual. Johnson's greatest creation is the Fada road, which destroys the local tribal society when he lures the suspicious and apathetic pagans to work on its construction. In engaging in this work the pagans take "the first essential step out of the world of the tribe into the world of men" (MJ 160). The simple dirt track through the bush brings enormous change to Fada — economic, social, and political. And the road is financed, at Johnson's suggestion, by falsifying the accounts, by breaking the law of both the native and the British administrations. In ignoring the law, Johnson changes his world.

Cary states that it is in "the nature of rules and routine, of official life" to harden into "an obstructive mass blocking all creative energy" and that creative works such as the Fada road must " 'destroy' " in order to " 'make new' " (MJ 168-69). This need to destroy and make new applies not only to societies emerging from the tribal stage. It continues to be important in highly developed cultures, because the sophisticated institutions which protect individuals like Judy Coote from violence and exploitation can also serve as agents of repression, frustrating change (PM 88-89). And such change is essential, for all institutions inevitably undergo the "hardening" process, losing sight of the imaginative vision which brought them into being and becoming empty forms which exist only to perpetuate themselves immutably. This results in what Cary terms the "war in life between the creation and the creative," between one generation's dedication to preserving its own imaginative productions and the desire of the next generation to exercise its creativity in "making new" ("The Novelist at Work" 22).

Cary's "war" between the creation and the creative is found in Carlyle: "the very things that were once indispensable furtherances become obstructions; and need to be shaken-off" (Heroes 134-35). Many aspects of Cary's notion of history can be found in Sartor Resartus, but his "ransacking" of Carlyle's thought is governed by his rejection of

two notions which are central to Carlyle's vision, and the first of these is the idea of a divine providence. Carlyle insists on seeing a providence in history: "wild, waste, incoherent as it looks, a God presides over it" and furthermore, this God is just ("Chartism," Essays VI 133-34). Even wars of conquest which appear unjust, he says, manifest God's providence because they are ultimately "beneficial to the conquered as well as to conquerors" ("Chartism," Essays VI 134). Therefore, whereas Cary depicts the universe as amoral and unjust and necessity as something against which the creative free person struggles, Carlyle eventually proclaims that the universe is just and good and that the wise person submits to the will of God and chooses to accept what is necessitated, because "the stern thing which Necessity had ordered was the wisest, the best, the thing wanted" (Heroes 64-65). Yet Carlyle does not advocate social quietism. He is a vocal and persistent advocate of social reform who insists that English people have a responsibility to shape the future of their society. In this respect, Cary's notions are more consistent than Carlyle's, for he resolves the tension between a belief in providence and a conviction of people's social responsibility by rejecting the notion of providence.

Cary's most unproblematic borrowing from Carlyle is undoubtedly the notion of continuous creation stemming from the inevitable decay of once meaningful social institutions into empty formalities. Carlyle's clothing metaphor expresses his conviction that " 'in Clothes, as in all other external things whatsoever, no fashion will continue' " forever (Sartor Resartus 31). That is, the outward forms by which humanity satisfies its universal desires and permanent needs must vary with the times. As times change, these enduring requirements are manifested in particular situations and must be satisfied in appropriate ways.

For instance, Carlyle asserts that all people need and desire a sense of wonder and a living faith, but that traditional Church Christianity is hard-pressed to supply these in a

society dominated by the mechanistic philosophies of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries (Sartor Resartus 45-46, 76-80, 111, 148-49). A religious rebirth is needed: " 'first must the dead Letter of Religion own itself dead, and drop piecemeal into dust, if the living Spirit of Religion, freed from its charnel-house, is to arise' " (Sartor Resartus 79-80). Cary agrees with Carlyle that the "everlasting *substances*" (Heroes 198) of Christianity must be clothed anew to meet the specific existential situation of alienated modern people, or it will cease to have meaning for them. As Cary expresses this notion, "in a world so profoundly creative, what is not in creation withers away; and nothing, no church, no national idea or emblem, no institution, no political set-up, no human relation, can stay alive to the experience unless it be continuously reborn and re-created to the imagination" (EI 8).

Cary's depiction of this situation is somewhat more optimistic than Carlyle's. As Cary represents it, one of the advantages of a complex society is that its institutions have their sources in "Promethean" innovations, and therefore carry within themselves the germs of the creative and iconoclastic vision which gave them birth. For instance, the Christian Church, no matter how authoritarian and intolerant of dissent, preaches the words of Jesus of Nazareth, "the revolutionary Christ of the Bible, the man who rebelled against the Pharisees." Therefore, "one of the most conservative institutions known to man breeds continually the most extreme revolutionaries" ("Britain's Liberal Influence," SE 210-11). Tribal society, which has not yet taken the great, liberating step of actualising creative new ideas, has no such institutions. It simply repeats the old forms in every generation, until people of Promethean energy and imagination start it down the long road of historical development.

However, Prometheus does not change history single-handed. Creative innovation, on which historical development depends, often requires the active co-operation of a

number of people for its realisation. The Fada road is Johnson's vision, but he can only make it a reality by communicating this vision to others and persuading them to participate in its creation. Gulley Jimson, in The Horse's Mouth, brings his greatest artistic vision to actuality by enlisting the help of art students who share his defiance of authority in occupying a condemned building.

This is the ground of Cary's assertion that each person helps to shape history: "Not merely the actions of a great genius, but of every one of us, has effect upon the course of events" (PM 237). He suggests that although it is the visionaries, the Promethean individuals, who initiate radical change by indicating new possibilities, the prophet's vision only affects society when ordinary people bring these possibilities to actuality in their own lives. In The African Witch, the crowd is too fearful to support Akande Tom, the local administration frustrates Louis Aladai's dream of a modern Rimi, and these would-be iconoclasts' visions are not actualised. Johnson's road succeeds because it is a co-operative effort, participation in which depends on each man's individual ability to envisage the road as Johnson's songs depict it, as a work of power and imagination. Therefore, the freedom and responsibility of the individual cannot be evaded by holding the rare Prometheus solely responsible for historical development.

This is Cary's second important point of difference from Carlyle, who sees history shaped primarily by the decisions of (often unsung) specially gifted "heroes": "History . . . is at bottom the History of the Great Men who have worked here" (Heroes 1). Carlyle declares that, depending on circumstances, the hero may find his proper role as a poet, prophet, monarch, or priest, but that the poet is a form of hero found in all ages and cultures (Heroes 89-90). The poet is "*Vates*," who "has seized . . . sacred mystery" on the "aesthetic side," while the prophet grasps "the moral side." However, these vatic functions cannot actually "be disjoined." They are united in the supreme poet, Shakespeare, who is

an " 'unconscious Prophet' " (Heroes 92-93, 287). Nonetheless, Carlyle distinguishes between the "Hero-Poet" and the "Hero-Prophet" on the basis of their effect on the world. Dante is a poet who speaks to a few in all ages, while Mohamet was a prophet who acted on the masses (Heroes 114-15).

Cary's Promethean character, Johnson, combines the functions of prophet and poet, in that he has a direct effect upon the ordinary people around him and his songs endure long after his death. Furthermore, his influence is not limited to the "aesthetic" sphere, but has political consequences. Johnson's career exemplifies the manner in which Cary's Promethean or "heroic" artist shapes history. His songs inspire the road builders by communicating his iconoclastic vision and involving other members of his society in its realisation, by spreading discontent with the way things are and indicating new and richer possibilities potentially open to everyone.

For Cary is convinced that art is not merely self-expression, but serves to communicate ideas (A&R 9-11, 18, 57-58). The artist is "almost invariably a propagandist, he is convinced that his idea of things is true and important and he wants to convert others, he wants to change the world" (A&R 91, 109). Art "creates ideas, of which a very large proportion are, or become, ideas for action" (A&R 21). But, although it is the artist's task to envisage, to communicate, and to explore new possibilities, history is shaped ultimately by ordinary people who weigh options and make decisions. It is the function of the artist to serve as prophet and gadfly, to disturb, to provoke, and to enlighten, to point the way, but not to lead.

In fact, Cary's artists usually lack the sense of responsibility for others that such leadership requires. He does not share Carlyle's conviction that "the degree of vision that dwells in a man is a correct measure of the man" (Heroes 121). Carlyle equates great visionary capacity with moral superiority: "man's spiritual nature, the vital Force which

dwells in him, is essentially one and indivisible" and morality is "another *side* of the one vital Force" which includes "imagination, fancy, understanding" (Heroes 122). Mohamet was a flawed prophet, and his morality is somewhat suspect, because his vision was clouded (Heroes 128-29). In contrast, Cary distinguishes sharply between artistic talent or prophetic energy on the one hand and moral worth on the other. His artists, Gulley Jimson and Mr. Johnson, are Titans of Promethean energy and vision, but they are morally lacking.

Johnson's lawlessness, which originally leads to new and richer experiences for the members of his society, ends by infringing upon the freedom of others and results in his own destruction. Johnson is doomed by his inability to differentiate between laws that are merely obstructive and those that are essential to good order, between those representing temporary solutions to ever-changing contingency, and those expressing that great "imperative" which bids him to respect the freedom of others. When he steals money (and in the process kills a man, robbing him of all freedom), simply to salve his own wounded pride and to increase his sense of self-importance, he crosses the line between creative iconoclasm and anarchy. He is no longer defying the law because it obstructs his creativity, but because it stands between him and the satisfaction of his desire to pose as the "hero" of his own songs. Johnson has become caught up in his own heroic myth. However great the sympathy one feels for him, one cannot condone murder for a few pennies to buy beer.

Like Johnson, Gulley Jimson, the artist protagonist of The Horse's Mouth, errs when he passes from iconoclasm to anarchy. Gulley is an iconoclast who defends his right to paint as he pleases, but even he is aware that creative individuals in a complex society often benefit from the existence of a sophisticated social, educational, and technological apparatus (HM 275-76; A&R 38-40, 54; PM 89-90). He advocates state-supported academies of art, wishes his paintings to be publicly displayed, and sees in members of the

wealthy and privileged classes (Hickson, the Beeders, the Princess, and the Duke), potential patrons who will give him access to the resources he needs in order to paint (HM 148-49, 245-46, 275-76).

Gulley alternates between iconoclasm and anarchy, between wishing to change and to improve those institutions of a civilised society which benefit his art, and advocating the destruction of others, without assuming the responsibility for replacing them. For instance, because he dislikes the existing method of education, Gulley allows his son to avoid school, but is himself too busy painting, too caught up in realising his own vision and fulfilling himself, to embark upon the ideal scheme of education he has in mind (HM 255; HS 209-13). As a result, the child runs wild, like a little animal loose on the London streets, until Sara rescues him. Gulley also evades responsibility and infringes on the liberty of others when he beats his wives, deserts his children, steals, lies, defrauds, extorts, and commits man-slaughter.

The innovative and energetic Bonser of A Fearful Joy shows a similar lack of responsibility. Bonser is a consummate artist — a con-artist — and Tabitha spends a great deal of her life sorting out the problems he leaves in his wake. Bonser seduces Tabitha, who works in order to support him. When he discovers she is pregnant he deserts her in a boarding house with no money and the bill unpaid. She bears, supports, rears, and educates their child without Bonser's help. It is Bonser who has the imagination to envision the effect which automobiles will have on the English country-side, and the courage to invest in a derelict hotel on the main road. But it is Tabitha's money he invests and it is her hard work which consolidates their success, as Bonser insists on expanding the business at a frightening rate, indulging his most bizarre whims (FJ 253-58). Bonser is an unfaithful husband, an irresponsible father, an untrustworthy friend. Although Tabitha loves him " 'quite madly,' " and rejoices in the "secret abounding delight" he brings into

her life, she realises that he is " 'an idiot and a bounder, and . . . completely unreliable' " (EI 251-52).

Johnson, Gulley, and Bonser are all exceptionally imaginative and creative individuals, but these Promethean characters' irresponsibility creates problems which must be solved by pragmatists such as Rudbeck, Sara, and Tabitha. Somehow, children must be fed and educated, the liberty and physical safety of all individuals must be protected, and order must be maintained without stifling creative innovation. For, if Cary decries the stagnation of the tribe, he has an equal abhorrence of anarchy.

Cary insists that anarchy denies freedom and limits liberty as surely as the most repressive "herd" society. In his notes, he states that anarchists deny the reality of freedom, because they place their faith in a "providence" whose power over human history is "absolute" (MS 293 S22K 34). His depiction of Marie Hasluck in An American Visitor is a portrait of such a person, and, as we have seen, the consequences which flow from her faith in divine and natural providences are disastrous. Furthermore, a society existing in anarchy limits the liberty of the individual to realise his or her ideas, because of the breakdown of co-operative effort and the failure of the sophisticated apparatus on which prophetic vision often depends for its realisation. Therefore, anarchy can be as inimical to creative self-realisation, and to the historical development which flows from it, as the most conservative tribe.

Cary's African novels, particularly Aissa Saved and The African Witch, depict periods of anarchy during which old and new "ideas of life" battle for supremacy. The result of such violent confrontation is largely a victory for the conservative forces. Only a few advances are gained in Aissa Saved and no development at all occurs in The African Witch. In An American Visitor, a period of lawlessness opens up an area of Nigeria to development, but this benefits only the European developers: the African society is

destroyed and its members exist as refugees. Only in Mr. Johnson is radical change brought about, and Johnson's road is constructed, despite obstructive regulations, by exploiting the existing social apparatus. Paradoxically, Johnson's society can benefit from his iconoclasm because it maintains a certain stability, even in the face of great social change. This society does not tolerate anarchy, and when he kills Gollup, Johnson is condemned to be hanged for murder.

The distinction between iconoclasm and anarchy, between the enrichment of an entire culture by the defiance of obstructive authority and self-indulgent lawlessness, between destruction in order to renew and destruction for its own sake, underlies Cary's notion of history. In a striking metaphor, he compares human history to a floodplain on which people co-operate to build a great city. Periodically, urged on by the desire for new experience, the mass of people wells up and floods the land, and the existing structures are destroyed. But the mob then becomes a workforce and co-operates to begin new construction on the same site (MS 280 N119 "Dialectic").⁹

Cary's metaphor, like Carlyle's change of "clothing," involves the decay of inherited forms and the need to find new ones. It also involves submerged "Titanic" energies, which periodically break forth, destroying the existing order and rebuilding in its ruins. The iconoclast then becomes a conservative, committed to preserving his or her own vision, enshrined as a new tradition. Because all people, loving the things they have made, will strive to protect their creations, revolutionaries inevitably devolve into reactionaries. Therefore, Cary's myth combines circularity with forward movement, "return (but never to the same place)" (EI 7). Both Carlyle and Cary emphasise the forward movement and stress the role of conscious choice in directing this linear movement, the responsibility to choose wisely, and the importance of continuity from one turn of the circle to the next.

For example, Carlyle acknowledges that people are molded by their society but, like Cary, he suggests that they are free to choose the direction in which that society develops (Past and Present 177-78). For this reason, he is deeply disturbed by what he sees as the abdication of the traditional ruling classes. He fears that society is drifting toward the abyss of anarchy because no-one will assume the responsibility of leadership. The aristocracy, having devolved into a group of dilettantes who are unable or unwilling to assume command, continues to demand the same wages it received in the past. The manufacturing class denies all responsibility toward the poor and is interested only in enriching itself. The workers are mute, exploited victims fast nearing the end of their patience (Past and Present 194, 208, 205-206, 225-26). Someone must assume responsibility for shaping the future of British society, or chaos will ensue.

And Carlyle fears chaos. His vision, in Sartor Resartus, of a society which clothes itself anew in revitalised institutions, his insistence, in Past and Present, on the urgent need for social and economic reform, are in part reactions to perceived threats of anarchy: "Subdue mutiny, discord, widespread despair, by manfulness, justice, mercy and wisdom. Chaos is dark, deep as Hell; let light be. . . . Sooty Hell of mutiny and savagery and despair can, by man's energy, be made a kind of Heaven; cleared of its soot, of its mutiny, of its *need* to mutiny" (Past and Present 404; italics mine).

Carlyle relates his dread of anarchy, "hatefulest of things" (Heroes 142), to his doctrine of clothes. The greatest human achievements, according to Carlyle, are "aeriform, mystic, and preserved in Tradition only" (Sartor Resartus 118). Technology, laws, government, all are intangibles preserved only by tradition and their outward aspects at a particular time are merely temporary clothing. If a society clings to outworn "clothes" until revolution destroys them, there is a possibility that such precious traditions will be lost. The French Revolution was such a disaster. Because French Churchmen clung to outworn

forms and refused to give their people genuine spiritual guidance, Christianity was repudiated by the revolutionaries and became "a remote extraneous tradition." As a result: "the New, whatever it may be, cannot now grow out of the Old, but is severed sheer asunder from the Old, — how much lies wasted in that gap!" ("Chartism," Essays VI 147-48) Change which preserves tradition by responding creatively to altered circumstance, rather than by clinging to ineffective and outmoded forms, seems to Carlyle the only alternative to such a disaster.

Cary welcomes more profound change than does Carlyle, but he shares a sense of the terrible cultural cost of a period of anarchy which sweeps all tradition away. For this reason, he depicts historical development as a polarity of change and continuity, of new creation and preservation of what is worthwhile from the past, and he contends that both elements are essential. The new city on the floodplain is built amid the rubble of the old and is enriched by its presence. Civilisation rises above savagery as the city rises on its mound, reaching new heights because it is supported by the wreckage of past social experiments (MS 280 N119 "Dialectic"). Cary, therefore, tempers his sense of the need for constant innovation with something of Carlyle's notion of what may be lost if change is not responsibly carried out.

The desirability of responding creatively to change, but preserving what is of value from the past, is made clear in three of Cary's mature works, A Fearful Joy, The Moonlight, and To Be A Pilgrim. In A Fearful Joy, Cary uses Tabitha's metamorphoses to parallel those of her society. Tabitha has a life of unusually varied experience, during which she adjusts her outward appearance and behaviour to fill several different roles, from the figure-head of a literary salon, to a society hostess, to an hotel keeper. Yet there is a connection among these roles: each of them allows Tabitha to combine her deep yearning for stable domesticity with her conflicting desire for stimulation and excitement. Through

all these outward changes of "clothing," she remains stubbornly herself, uniquely Tabitha. The elderly woman of the last page, laughing helplessly at the very richness of life which is threatening to overwhelm her, is not much different from the greedy baby of the first page, laughing uproariously "at nothing at all" (FI 9).

Tabitha's outward changes and her inner core of immutable personal identity reflect the introduction of novelty and the preservation of continuity which Cary detects in the British past. In his preface to this novel, Cary states that: "in our experience of change, we are also aware of the permanent. We could not have the one experience without the other" (FI 6).¹⁰ In A Fearful Joy, he attempts to convey a period of English history by juxtaposing the immense changes wrought by a completely new possibility, the automobile, with the enduring human problems faced by Tabitha and her grand-daughter.

Cary makes Nancy recapitulate Tabitha's experiences as wife and mother, in forms reflecting the changes in British society between the 1890's and the 1940's. Tabitha's and Bonser's lives are shaped to a great extent by his shrewd assessment of the importance of road transport in the age of the automobile. Nancy's marriage is profoundly influenced by her husband's fascination with the possibilities of the airplane. Both women find ways of coping with difficult and frequently unreliable partners, and of constructing homes for their children. In this way, Cary emphasises that the underlying unity of human experience, the permanent need of humanity to find new and workable social forms for enduring experiences such as love and parenthood, lies at the roots of historical continuity. This is "the element of return (but never to the same place)" that he considers fundamental to the pattern of history (FI 7).

However, Cary depicts historical continuity as also dependent on the conscious will to preserve some lesson or insight which proves to be of permanent value. In The Moonlight, Cary uses the English farm to illustrate his notion of desirable historical change

as renewal coupled with the advance into novelty. Harry achieves self-realisation in creating a modern farm and he is keenly interested in advances in farming technology. However, he can afford only an antiquated threshing machine and because of this he nearly loses his wheat in a rainstorm. Despite his inadequate farm machinery, Harry's wheat is saved because, in traditional fashion, the community rallies around and helps him to harvest his crop before the storm breaks (The Moonlight 259, 262-63). But this community is not a traditional peasant one. The farm workers are joined by a retired middle class Colonel, lower-middle class clerks from the local Post Office, and village boys and girls attending a state-supported school.¹¹ The tradition of neighbourly co-operation has survived changes in the composition of village society.

In To Be A Pilgrim, Cary again uses the English farm to explore the need to find new forms in which to maintain valuable traditions. Tolbrook survives by changing with the times, yet its value resides in the very fact that it is a traditional English farm. Wilcher's iconoclastic nephew, Robert, realises his own "idea of life" by restoring Tolbrook to working order, taking it "back into history, which changed it once before from priory into farm, from farm into manor, from manor . . . into a country house" (TBP 328). In making Tolbrook a working farm again, rather than allowing it to degenerate into a country hotel, Robert preserves its essential character. Tolbrook's change is return, although not to the same place.

That is, Robert's creative self-fulfilment renews and preserves the tradition of the old English mixed farm, "so good for men" (TBP 328). Although Robert is an iconoclast who destroys some things of value, wrecking a perfect eighteenth-century drawing room and heartlessly uprooting ancient trees and hedgerows, his very iconoclasm is a fundamental part of Tolbrook's tradition. Cary implies that Robert's insensitivity matches that of the ancestor who changed a chapel into a byre and created the original farm (TBP

109). Wilcher eventually comes to realise that the loss of even dearly loved outward forms is made endurable by the knowledge that the intangible tradition survives — but Cary respects Wilcher's right to grieve for the passing of so much beauty and dignity.

For Wilcher feels deeply the pain of loss which change always involves. Wilcher's tragedy, says Cary, "is that he sees the good for ever being destroyed with the bad; especially that irreplaceable good, those graces and virtues of life that depend on tradition, on example, on that real education which lives only from mind to mind." But because the forms of even these "true civilized virtues" decay, become "hollow" and meaningless, they, too, must be constantly renewed (TBP 8). After a time, any institutionalised value will come to confuse its temporary "clothing" with its own meaning and the institution will interpret any attempt to change it as an attack upon the values of which it is the temporary embodiment. This is the source of Wilcher's confusion. He is acute enough to see that the qualities he once admired in Julie have become empty poses, form without content (TBP 264-65). But when he dreams of "coronets, ermine, and wooolsacks, without anything inside them at all" the empty clothes reproach him for failing them: " 'Why do you attack us, the harmless dignities of old England?' " (TBP 203) This quintessentially Carlylean image suggests that Wilcher is aware that many of the things he cherishes are empty forms, but that he nonetheless feels compelled to preserve them, because he sees the passing of his world as the death of all loyalty, courage, and fidelity to duty. He cannot perceive that these values have assumed new forms because he recognises them only in the "clothing" of his own youth. He can see them embodied in Sara, in her old-fashioned notions of good service and simple Protestant faith. But he doesn't recognise them in Robert's wife, Ann, a doctor striving to realise herself while fulfilling her responsibilities toward her child, her rather selfish and insensitive husband, and her difficult, elderly uncle.

Robert and Ann are cousins and Tolbrook is as much her ancestral home as it is his. Ann restores parts of Tolbrook farmhouse to their Edwardian condition, reinstitutes family prayers, and tries to create for her own infant son the sense of security which Wilcher enjoyed as a small child. Yet Ann's marriage is very different from that of her grandparents. Ann and Robert come to an "arrangement," whereby Ann is forced to tolerate the presence on the farm of Robert's lover and their illegitimate daughter, providing only that Robert does not make them all appear ridiculous by impregnating both his women at the same time (TBP 324-25). One of the reasons for Robert's marital discontent is that Ann is his intellectual superior. The "advance into novelty" in the shape of female emancipation has enriched Ann's life, in that she has been allowed to use her intellect in becoming a doctor, but it has not made her happy. At the end of the novel, Ann bleakly faces many more years of disappointment as Robert's wife (TBP 340, 342).

As a result of Robert's and Ann's efforts, Tolbrook is renewed as a farm and as a family home, although the outward forms of both are radically changed. Not every change is happy: Robert is fulfilled as a farmer, while Ann has merely effected the least painful compromise in her marriage. But, however painful, change is as necessary as continuity. Wilcher, who persists in dressing as he did in his Edwardian youth, must learn to accept both radical innovation (the mechanisation of farming, emancipated women) and new "clothes" for the values he wishes to preserve (Tolbrook without hedgerows, a family held together by Ann's sexual tolerance).

Cary invites the reader to apply Wilcher's hard-learned lesson to English history, for Tolbrook Farm is a symbol of Britain. England's strength, he insists, lies in the very qualities which seem to make her vulnerable. Britain's democratic institutions foster iconoclasts and prophets who seem to threaten her stability, yet her traditions endure because she exists in a state of continuous metamorphosis. England, says Wilcher, "was

born upon the road, and lives in such a dust of travel that she never knows where she is. . . . She is the wandering Dutchman, the pilgrim and scapegoat of the world." But although England may appear disorganised and weak, she will endure and renew herself "[b]ecause she is free. She stands always before all possibility, and that is the youth of the spirit" (TBP 342).

Cary was writing during World War II, when the capacity of a democracy to withstand a monolithic totalitarian aggressor was being called into question. In his non-fiction, especially in Power in Men, he suggests that the modern British-style democracies will survive because they combine the stability necessary for cultural continuity with responsiveness to the ever-changing needs of the creative imagination, which in transforming the world creates new problems to be solved, unforeseen contingencies that must be met with appropriate solutions. All of Cary's political writings centre on the notion that the traditions of British democracy are worth preserving and propagating. This appears to contradict his advocacy of constant evolution of social institutions only if one fails to grasp that he portrays democracy of the sort seen in Britain as the origin of the "final order" of society toward which history is moving.

In his notes, Cary observes that the "democratic ideal" is increased "richness" of experience for everyone (MS 280 N111 11) and that democracy is the form of government most likely to satisfy the universal desire for complexity and novelty of experience ("Mass Mind" 27). Furthermore, he posits that democracy owes its combination of stability and flexibility to the fact that it puts into the hands of the individual the greatest possible liberty that is compatible with public order. That is, he depicts as incipient in democracy all the characteristics that he attributes to the "final order" of society: democracy increases personal liberty, maximises opportunities for richness of experience, and encourages continuing development within a stable order. Therefore, in Cary's opinion, by trial and error, by

experiment and revolution, despite periods of anarchy and of tyranny, the direction of history leads to democracy. This is the form of government "to which all states tend as they develop" (PM 143, 238-43; PRF 4).

It is evident that Cary does not share Carlyle's distrust of democracy. In Carlyle's opinion, Britain needs "heroes" because she is facing a time of crisis and the leadership of gifted individuals dedicated to the common welfare is the only alternative to chaos and mob rule. The " 'just wages' " demanded by the working class ought to take the form of "a superior that should lovingly and wisely govern," for this class cannot govern itself ("Chartism," Essays VI 123-24). "Obedience" to such leaders "is the primary duty of man" and those who advocate democracy do so in despair of finding English "heroes" ("Chartism," Essays VI 172; Past and Present 294, 301). In contrast, Cary depicts his "prophetic spirits" pointing the way but not leading, in part because he has far greater faith than Carlyle in the ability of a collectivity of unique individuals to steer a safe course through even the most perilous times.

Cary depicts such a situation in a long narrative poem, The Drunken Sailor, equipped with marginal glosses which recall those of Coleridge's Rime of the Ancient Mariner. The poem describes the adventures of a ship crewed by a heterogeneous group of famous artists, all so engaged by their private visions that they ignore the battleship of totalitarian authority bearing down upon them until it is almost too late. The visionaries of The Drunken Sailor are "heroic" in the sense that they accept the responsibility for making their own decisions in a highly contingent world, but this very heroism can cause problems in an emergency. Significantly, Cary makes Carlyle one of the sailor's crew, placing him between Wordsworth and Browning among the poets, and Carlyle's "hoots and toots" add considerably to the "strange discord of sighs and cries" generated by the clash of poetic

visions (DS 41). The crew is finally galvanised into concerted action when each of them perceives that his own liberty is in imminent danger (DS 32-33).

Cary's poem is, therefore, both an affirmation of the ability of a collectivity of unique individuals to co-operate and to save itself (the crew defeats totalitarian might and saves the ship), and an ironic comment on those who wish the state to be steered by exceptionally gifted heroes (their individual talents are less important in the crisis than their ability to co-operate). Although he appreciates the difficulty of swift and effective response to a crisis on the part of a democratic state, Cary does not posit a need to give sweeping political authority to "heroes" in order to co-ordinate the activities of a complex society. He sees in the existence of associations such as "the British Legion, the Allotment Holders' Association, and the Agricultural Society" a method by which ordinary people of shared interests can co-ordinate their attempts to influence government decisions and to shape history (PRF 5). Furthermore, these "unions and societies" are more truly representative of the will of the individual than are political parties, because the voter does not merely elect a leader who then makes all the decisions (PRF 5, 7). The "democracy of groups" places more power and responsibility to influence directly the government in the individual's hands than does a single vote. For this reason "the democracy of groups . . . is probably, in a crude form, a shape of [the] final [form of] government," an approximation of the "final order" of democracy toward which historical development is tending (PRF 9).

Cary's notion of a "democracy of groups" derives from his insistence on the freedom and responsibility of every individual. The totalitarian battleship of The Drunken Sailor carries a group of fugitives who have bound themselves to obey "rulers and teachers who bear for them the fearful responsibility of guiding and forming whole peoples." The fugitives are willing to tolerate any abuse of power by these leaders, "saying that any oppression is better than disorder and revolution," and demanding "restraint upon the free

imagination" and its potential for chaos (DS 27, gloss). They have abandoned responsibility and sacrificed their freedom, recovering the security of the "herd" at the price of the tyranny of "heroes."

For Cary depicts the mid-Twentieth Century as a point in history at which humanity is offered three possibilities: individual liberty and responsibility within a democracy, a return to the security of "the pack and the herd" offered by communism, or the combination of "herd" mentality and hero-worship displayed by fascism (AV 152). He compares the mass indoctrination of school children under "dogmatic political parties, like the nazi and the communist," to the educational system of "primitive African tribes" (PM 21-22). Both fascist and communist doctrines, like tribal law, invite the abandonment of individual responsibility and of self-definition as a unique self in favour of obedience to authority and self-definition in terms of the group, whether this is defined as the proletariat or as the Aryan race.

To Be a Pilgrim, Marching Soldier, and The Drunken Sailor were all published during the 1940's and all make direct or implied reference to the battle between democratic and fascist states during the Second World War. In 1941, Cary read a paper by Dorothy Emmet (Fisher, Theme 213), which relates existentialism to the philosophy of the German Nazi party. In this paper, Emmet posits a relationship between Kierkegaard's insistence that there is no higher authority than "the decision of the individual, made in the concrete moment, above any objective or universal norm of ethics" and the Nazi "call of the sacred nation" (257, 262). At first these notions seem antithetical. However, if one makes the assumption (as the Nazis did) that most individuals are incapable of the responsibility freedom entails, then it becomes "a single act of pure freedom to surrender their wills to a leader who has this courage" (Emmet 257).

Carlyle adopts a position dismayingly close to that of the Nazis, when he states that "perfect government" is reverence for and obedience to the "Ablest Man" (Heroes 226) and that true liberty is being compelled to fulfil oneself in the manner which wiser people see as most suitable. The proper aim of life is not the pursuit of personal "happiness" but obedience to prophets such as Moses (Past and Present 290, 210-11). The situation of the fugitives in The Drunken Sailor suggests that this offers, in political form, the same release obtained by self-surrender to higher authority enjoyed by Cary's religious converts. Cary implies that returning to the "herd" and indulging in hero-worship are simply other forms of the desire to abandon responsibility, to believe in some "providential" force shaping history, to see history as "the Biography of great men" and the great man as "a Force of Nature" (Carlyle, Heroes 33, 129). To believe this is to abandon the difficult task of self-definition in terms of the unique self, for the comfort of "realization of one's destiny in race and Volk" (Emmet 262), the comfort of identifying oneself as part of the "herd," led by an inspired prophet in the grip of some "providential" destiny.

Cary depicts such a situation in the poem Marching Soldier. The German prisoners of war are men very like the British soldiers who have captured them. But the Germans have fallen under the spell of a "preacher" who has promised them "truth eternal . . . beauty that never withers, / . . . peace everlasting" in return for absolute obedience (MS 9). By suspending personal judgment, to the extent of allowing the preacher to redefine the meanings of words so that murdering Jews and children becomes "duty" and "virtue," these men lose their identities and become mechanical monsters (MS 11-13).

The German soldiers once succumbed to the comfort of the "herd" but, having discovered the preacher's "word was empty," they are now lost and directionless (MS 10). But the British soldiers, citizens of a democracy, also suffer from a certain amount of ambivalence and uncertainty. Unlike the Germans, they have not been given a preacher's

"word" which carries absolute authority, and as a result they are less certain of the existence and nature of an ultimate purpose for which they are fighting. Cary depicts the German and British soldiers as being closely bound by their similar situation, and suggests that it would be very easy for the British to seek comfort in the same sort of certainty the Germans found as members of Hitler's "herd" (MS 10, 13, 20, 26-28).

However, the British are not part of a "herd," but members of a collectivity who, like the mariners of The Drunken Sailor, are capable of co-operative effort in a time of crisis. The British accept the concept of military "duty" (as obedience without understanding the reason for their actions) as a necessity of wartime, although it makes them very uneasy (MS 13, 26-28). The difference between the British and the German concept of "duty" is important. Both involve a freely given surrender of autonomous action in obedience to authority, but in the case of the Germans this surrender is absolute, while in the case of the British it is partial and temporary, a necessary expedient which leaves them free to criticise and to judge their leaders.

The Germans have surrendered all power of judgment in obedience to something which has been defined for them by the preacher as their "duty." The British accept their "duty" to obey orders, but they do so without the comfort of an absolute truth, a "word" which explains and justifies everything they do. Their strength lies in their ability to function co-operatively despite this radical uncertainty, and without surrendering the responsibility for individual judgment. This is depicted by Cary as a situation almost devoid of comfort, but preferable to that of the Germans enslaved by the preacher's word.

Thus the principle difference between Carlyle's and Cary's notions of history is that, while both see a role for exceptional individuals, the nature of this role is very different. Carlyle advocates allowing such people to rule, to assume actual political power so that they may shape history according to their vision: "the man of true intellect" should

govern, for he "is the noblehearted man withal, the true, just, humane and valiant man" (Heroes 195). Cary sees his Promethean figures as prophets rather than as monarchs, as voices crying in the wilderness, who are frequently mocked or persecuted in their own lifetimes, but who leave behind them a vision of a richer life. He suggests that political power ought to lie in a prophet's ability to communicate his or her vision and to persuade other free individuals of its value, not to compel people to adopt it for their own good, as Carlyle advocates (Past and Present 290).

In his depiction of Gulley Jimson and Mr. Johnson, Cary points out the greatest flaw in Carlyle's "hero-worship," the assumption that great visionary capacity and superior moral sense are necessarily found in the same individual: "all talent, all intellect is in the first place moral" ("Chartism," Essays VI 135). History, Cary insists, "is made up of names at which the moralist holds his nose" ("Political and Personal Morality," SE 227). Johnson's and Gulley's moral shortcomings harm other individuals, but they inflict no long-lasting damage on their society because they do not acquire any political power. Hitler is an artist and prophet who inflicts suffering on millions of people because he persuades others voluntarily to surrender independent judgment and responsibility and to worship him as a "hero" (A&R 148). However, even a Hitler can succeed only if individuals choose to accept his invitation to self-surrender. In Cary's world no sane adult can escape ultimate responsibility by joining a "herd" or indulging in hero-worship.

Therefore, Cary's Promethean myth of history involves the same emphasis on the freedom and responsibility of all individuals that is seen in his rejection of the notion of "providential" forces at work in human destiny. Carlyle, who accepts the notion of providence, bases his myth of history on the premise that most individuals are incapable of bearing the responsibility for historical development, to the extent that he interprets the Chartist movement as an inarticulate cry to be governed on the part of those who cannot

govern themselves ("Chartism," Essays VI 144-46). According to Carlyle, democracy contradicts the "Law of Nature" that the "Universe itself is a Monarchy and a Hierarchy" in which "the Noblest" are the "natural" rulers ("The Present Time," Latter Day Pamphlets 19). Thus Carlyle's works exemplify Cary's contention that there is a fundamental connection among notions of providence, of the surrender of personal responsibility to authority, and of a "natural law" operating in human society.

In contrast, Cary passionately affirms that all individuals can and must assume responsibility for shaping history, that the virtue of democracy lies in the fact that it places the power to exercise this responsibility within everyone's reach, and that Promethean fire can only change the world if ordinary people choose to use it in their own lives. He interprets historical development as uneven, difficult growth toward a society in which people have greater opportunities to develop individual selfhood and to enrich their experience of the world. Furthermore, Cary's notion of the development of the individual psyche parallels his depiction of the emergence in historical time of the self from the "herd" and reflects the same fundamental concerns. He depicts the growth from infancy to adolescence to adulthood as a recapitulation of the development of democracy from the tribe, as the person gains increasing independence from the "herd," develops a sense of individual responsibility, and acquires the means of enriching his or her own experience. Cary's notion of the tribe as stifling creativity and inhibiting historical development is related to his contention that the tribe artificially prolongs the childhood of the human race, by severely impeding the individual's "normal" growth into a fully independent self.

NOTES TO CHAPTER III

¹ Cary's discussions of potentiality sometimes sound as if he is, after all, embracing notions of some innate force working through nature. For instance, in Power in Men, he writes of a "purpose in nature *which is always trying to emerge*," and which culminated in the evolution of purposive, self-conscious beings (261). However, a few pages later he states that such "purpose" is simply the existence of a given potentiality that becomes actual, not because of some force or power directing evolution, but because contingent conditions are favourable for its actualisation: "nature has no laws. . . . No rule compels a seed to grow. Seeds grow because of something inside them which looks for and finds something outside them which they can use." The "something" inside is not a vital principle, but the "character" of that seed: "[p]hysical nature is the character of life. . . . It does not need laws to make it behave like itself." Therefore, "[t]here is no law of evolution. It resembles a growth or development . . . [which] culminated, after much groping, in man's reason" (PM 265).

² Cary specifically rejects Rousseau's "general will," because a group of people is only abstractly a single entity. In concrete reality it remains a collectivity of individuals. Therefore, a group may have a consensus of individual opinions, but never a common will: "history . . . is made by men, all singular, all full of their private creeds and passions" ("Britain and West Africa," AF 146). He agrees with Kierkegaard's claim that "the public" is "a phantom . . . a monstrous abstraction" and he describes the notion of "the mass man" as "nonsense" (Kierkegaard, The Present Age 37; Cary, "Mass Mind" 25).

³ Although at times he uses them interchangeably, as a general rule Cary distinguishes between "liberty" and "freedom" on the basis of the power to act. Even the most oppressed slave is free if he or she can frame independent ideas. Liberty refers to the power of the individual to actualise the ideas and satisfy the desires arising in his or her freedom. Whereas "liberty" can be restricted by poverty or the state, "freedom" is lost whenever an individual is denied, by custom and education, the ability to form independent ideas, or when someone voluntarily surrenders the right and responsibility of independent judgment (PM 14-18). While "the ideas of liberty" vary from culture to culture, "the realities of freedom" are "eternal" (PRE 9). Any particular "idea of liberty" is a temporary form by means of which the "reality" of freedom is actualised in a given society (PRE 10). Therefore, "liberty" is not a political abstraction; it is the "clothing" of freedom. It is a real power, "creation in the act" (PM 7).

⁴ The rationale behind this choice of Africa as a setting is in the spirit of Wordsworth's defense of his interest in rustic life: "because, in that condition, the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity, are less under restraint, and speak a plainer and more emphatic language; because in that condition of life our elementary feelings co-exist in a state of greater simplicity, may be more accurately contemplated, and more forcibly communicated" (Preface to Lyrical Ballads in Poetical Works 734-35).

⁵ Cary's depiction of tribal society echoes some of the notions of William James and of A. N. Whitehead. James, like Cary, characterises primitive human society as intensely conservative and intolerant of dissent. He describes the desire to persecute religious minorities as a "tribal instinct," the result of "aboriginal human neophobia" (331). Whitehead compares primitive society to an "anthill," which stresses co-ordination at the

expense of individuality (Adventures of Ideas 56). Cary also compares primitive society to a beehive and an ant colony (MS 206 152/41; see also the discussion of Aissa Saved in Chapter II).

⁶ Cary reports that he witnessed the "spontaneous break-up" of the "culture of thousands of years" in a few days, when Nigerian tribesmen were introduced to a small market town ("Clothes As Expression," SE 234).

⁷ LaValley suggests that, in The French Revolution, Carlyle depicts history as a process moving "toward the realisation of the freedom, the recognition of the rights . . . of each individual" by overthrowing "out-moded institutions" (121-22). Furthermore, Carlyle depicts the revolutionaries as Titans assaulting Olympians. Prometheus is, of course, a Titan. In time, Carlyle's fear of anarchy and chaos led him to place more emphasis on public order than on individual rights.

⁸ Rackham reflects that Dryas' notions lack foundations, because they are not rooted in a creatively constructed individual "idea of life." Because she has simply accepted the standards and notions of her surroundings, her " 'sentimental sixth-form culture' " floats on " 'a crocodile swamp.' " When her notions are challenged " 'she might sink bodily into the mud' " (AW 267). This image gains great resonance from the parallels between Osi and Dryas, and from the fact that Osi sacrifices herself to the sacred crocodile.

⁹ Cary notes that evolution does not stop with the appearance of the human species, and that co-operation is as fundamental to the evolution of humanity as is competition (MS 267 N60 "Evolution"). This fits in nicely with his notion of historical development as the product, on the one hand, of competing "ideas of life" and, on the other, of co-operative effort to realise some idea which increases liberty and richness of life for everyone. In Power in Men, Cary states that competition arises directly from the freedom to create private worlds: "Competition and co-operation are both instinctive to men [sic], they are both rooted in the nature of his liberty and freedom, and they are both essential means of his realization and his progress. Competition is the field of individual liberty; co-operation is the field of social liberty" (128).

¹⁰ For one thing, unless a link with the past exists, there is no way in which change can be sensed for "only the persistent is changeable" (Heidegger, "Holderin and the Essence of Poetry," in Brock 279).

¹¹ Cary's description of the threshing machine vividly recalls the similar scene from Hardy's Tess of the d'Urbervilles. But whereas Hardy depicts the thresher as a mechanical monster served by exploited human slaves, Cary's machine is a useful tool under the control of the farmer. Harry does not complain of the heartless efficiency of his thresher; rather he insists that if he had a newer machine, he could be a better farmer (The Moonlight 258-59).

CHAPTER IV

Historical Recapitulation and the Growth of the Self: Maturity, Morality, and Memory

(i)

Cary subscribes to the notion of recapitulation, that is, he suggests that children pass through all the stages of their ancestors' historical development, until they reach the social level of the culture into which they were born. His novels depict pre-adolescence as the time when children of all cultures spontaneously create primitive tribal societies for themselves. But Cary's children outgrow the tribe, and their adolescence is a time of imaginative exploration of newly envisaged possibilities, of rebellion against custom and authority, and of "Promethean" self-assertion. Therefore, adolescence is a particularly difficult and even dangerous time for people living in an adult society which has not evolved beyond the tribal stage.

Cary's notion of recapitulation does not mean that he simply equates children and "savages." He considers an adult of any culture to have been thoroughly indoctrinated into the religious, social, and political organisation of a particular civilisation, and the traditions of even the most undeveloped tribal cultures to be more sophisticated than the notions of the untutored child. He represents the notions of small children not as an equivalent of these traditions, but as the germ from which they evolved in the far distant human past. That is, he insists that the small child of all races and cultures is a "primitive" of greater antiquity than any adult member of the most unsophisticated tribe (MS 233 "Child

Religion" 198, 204). This distinction is important, for while Cary refuses to idealise the life of tribespeople, his depiction of the world of tiny children is often idyllic. Adult Nigerians, says Cary, suffer as much from stress and tensions within their tribal society as any European and are just as likely to be the victims of neuroses. Pre-adolescent African children, on the other hand, are among the most secure and happy in the world (MS 233 "Child Religion" 204).

In An American Visitor, Cary draws a charming portrait of African childhood. Children in tribal societies, he says, are "the happiest children in the world," despite an appalling infant mortality rate (AV 158), in part because they enjoy the security of knowing that they can call upon any adult within their community for protection or comfort. Even as the Birri men, including the rascally Henry and the belligerent Fish, hold a council of war, they cuddle, play with, and watch over the babies and small children who are playing around them (AV 158-62). Cary also stresses the security which stems from a steady progression through traditionally defined stages to full adult status within a rigidly structured and conservative community. Obai's child-fiancée feels the "dignity and importance" of her status as his betrothed, and she is treated with protective tenderness by her future husband (AV 162). Paradoxically, because their future adult roles are so rigidly defined, the children are granted a great deal of freedom: "Children in an old and settled civilization . . . [have] much freedom. . . . perhaps because, seeing their places in society already prepared for them, with a regular gradation of accomplishments to be acquired, dignities, pleasures to be reached in due time, they [do] not need to be shown their places" (CC 250).

Cary's portrayal of European childhood is equally sanguine, perhaps because of his own experience. Although he was a sickly child, asthmatic and half-blind in one eye, whose mother died when he was nine and whose stepmother died when he was fifteen

(Bishop 28, 30, 53), Cary recalls his childhood as a time of great happiness. Significantly, his fictional rendering of his own childhood in A House of Children depicts an environment which resembles that of the African child in several respects. It is a world in which the security of the tribe is furnished by a large extended family, including not only three generations of the children's own relatives, but also servants and the tenants on their Irish property. Furthermore, the future stretches before young Evelyn Corner, as it does for a young tribesman, as a series of traditional social stages: "I saw in front of me a row of new lives, public school, university, a career, like doorways leading through some place, each room larger and more magnificent than the last" (HC 155).

And the Corner children are permitted a great deal of freedom within clearly defined and consistent limits. Cary recounts a vivid personal memory of himself, aged seven, destroying doorbells on several village houses and running in fear from the police to the haven of his mother's skirt. He recalls that he knew full well he had done something "dangerous and illegal" and that the adults in his world responded to both these qualities of his action. His family greeted him as "an adventurer, a dare devil, a true member of a sporting line," while the policeman warned him that if he did it again he would be punished (CMD 5-7). Young Joyce was not confused by these differing responses, because he realised that he had done something "both grand and bad" and that "to tear out bells and defy the law was a bold, a terrific act, but also a wrong one, not to be repeated" (CMD 7). That is, in his own childhood, "surrounded not only by affection but a lively family of cousins, aunts and uncles, full of energy and imagination, and also of very ready instruction in what was right and wrong," Cary sees a perfect blend of freedom to experiment with lessons in self-control and responsibility (CMD 8).

This ideal childhood world gives children the freedom to realise and to develop their potentialities that is necessary to normal development, for the child, isolated in mind, "has

to do his own learning and thinking" (CMD 8). The parallels Cary draws between Europe and Africa suggest that childhood the world over can be a joyful experience because many cultures recognise the necessity of imaginative freedom to the child, even if they suppress it in the adult. It is therefore ironic that when children use their imaginative freedom to constitute a world separate from that of adults, this child-world recapitulates the primitive origins of the "tribal" stage of society in all its savage intolerance. The cousins of the Corner family form a "tribe" with its own laws and values, distinct from those of the adults' society (HC 12, 15). When their former playmate Frances suddenly achieves adult status by marrying, the tribe turns against her (HC 113-14). Their disapproval of her decision to marry does not prevent the children being illogically angry with Frances when they decide that her attitude to marriage is unsuitably frivolous. Her "trifling spirit" offends against their most "conservative feelings." To them, "the family was the structure of society, the only one [they] knew. [They] felt it sacred as a savage feels the sacredness of earth and water" and they react as a tribe whose most cherished values have been violated (HC 116-17).

Frances is not the only person to be ostracised by a tribe. Robert also suffers from the rigid tribalism of the English public school. In his first term, Robert makes a fool of himself by behaving in an eccentric manner which, he has been told, is traditional within the school. He discovers too late that no such tradition exists and that, like a tribesman striving to assert himself, he has offended by making himself conspicuous (HC 16-17, 57). When his schoolmates persecute and ostracise him, he responds by directing his despair and hatred against himself, rather than at those who persecute him, and he tries to conform as closely as possible to the standards of his tormentors (HC 128). Robert experiences all the self-loathing of which a child is capable, until he is suddenly "promoted to play rugger for the house fifteen" and becomes "successful and happy" (HC 140). That

is, he is readmitted to society when he finds a method of self-assertion that conforms to tribal prejudices and that serves to enhance the glory of his tribe (his house) in competition with the rest of the school.

Robert's happiness at his re-instatement, and his tendency to blame himself rather than his persecutors, suggests that he is one of those who find security and happiness in defining themselves in terms of a group, to whom exclusion is misery and rebellion unthinkable. But the possibility of successful rebellion exists. Evelyn encounters, in his first term at public school, a "dictatorship" of three older boys, who conduct a "reign of terror," until a "rebellion . . . led by one bold and organising spirit, [breaks] the tyranny in half an hour" (HC 157-58). Evelyn and his friends, who have never imagined the possibility of such a revolution, benefit from the leadership of a "Promethean" iconoclast who envisages an end to tyranny and leads them in a successful coup. The children in this society have re-enacted the ancient rebellion that broke the authority of the tribal elders and started their ancestors down the long road of historical development.

Because no such liberating act occurred in their society's past, African children are encouraged to obey their elders without question. Cary finds much to admire in the sense of duty of the strictly educated, "old-fashioned" African child. In Aissa Saved, Tanawe is an innocent and gentle ten year old, raised in the security of a strict but affectionate family (33). She is sent by her grandmother to warn the district officer, Bradgate, that a violent confrontation between pagans and Christians is imminent. To do so, she must travel alone through five miles of Nigerian bush, cope with obstructive, greedy, and lecherous servants, and obtain an audience with Bradgate (AS 64-66, 77-82). Despite her terror, Tanawe's training dictates that she carry out her mission without complaint and persevere until it is completed: "She had learnt to be dutiful and to serve a common purpose. She knew that it was shameful to fail in one's duty" (AS 66).

However, this admirable attention to duty has its sinister side. The "eager small boy [,] intelligent and enterprising beyond his years," who brings the pestle to break the legs of Aissa the "witch," is not motivated by sadism, but by "pride and joy in doing a public and worthy service," by a sense of his duty to obey the dictates of his elders and to do his part in protecting the "herd" against all that is different (AS 86). This child has been thoroughly indoctrinated in the values of his tribe, just as the Corner boys of A House of Children receive a public school education dominated by "patriotic and imperial sentiments" designed to mold them into servants of empire. The boys are taught nothing of "the other side of the old Empire: the gold grabbers; the cotton lords of India" (HC 34). But just as Cary appreciates an African child's sense of duty, however mistaken its object, Evelyn believes that his schoolmasters' vision of empire is redeemed somewhat by its "romantic" stress on "duty and responsibility." These values have remained with him, and Evelyn feels that they represent "an atmosphere much more truly religious than anything I have known since; for it was one of real purpose" (HC 34). Cary stresses that a sense of duty in a child is a "virtue everywhere," in all cultures (AS 65-66). But each culture defines the nature of duty differently, and in societies in which the individual's prime "duty" is to defend without question the traditions of the group, this virtue may be misdirected. This danger, Cary insists, can be minimised by teaching children that they are responsible not only for doing their duty, but also for discovering what it is, and this entails giving them freedom to judge for themselves.

It is with respect to this freedom that the difference between tribal and more developed societies becomes especially apparent at adolescence, when Cary's African children are expected to conform to the values of the "herd," and savagely punished if they do not, while the Europeans are offered far greater opportunities for self-assertion and more freedom to question traditional wisdom. Cary implies that adolescence corresponds to

the stage in human history at which individuals were no longer content to be defined solely by tribal categories, such as age-class and kinship roles. The desire for independent self-realisation on the part of adolescents is therefore a source of considerable tension in societies which remain at the tribal stage. This situation is represented in An American Visitor by a conversation between Henry and Fish, in which Henry raises the scandalous possibility that Fish might marry a woman from the same totem group as himself. This is forbidden as " 'a very wicked thing' " and the rule is enforced by the *juju*-men " 'with fines and beating' " (AV 161-62), because the recognition of a person as a unique individual who transcends his or her preordained social role is prohibited by the tribe. However, the severity of the punishment is a measure of the persistence of the desire for self-assertion.

Cary is not arguing that adult tribespeople are child-like "primitives" who have not yet achieved the desire for independent self-realisation, but rather that they are fully adult beings whose society's historical development has not kept pace with human psychic evolution. That is, the adolescents of all cultures recapitulate a crucial stage in the history of the emergence of the individual self from the "herd." Tribes are, in one sense, profoundly "unnatural," in that they represent an outgrown stage in the development of the human race, a social order which suited humanity before the evolution of the notion of individual self-realisation. While the tribal structure meets the infant's need for emotional security and exempts the small child from otherwise pervasive restrictions on imaginative freedom, it conflicts with the adolescent need for individual self-realisation. Therefore, the tribe is a social structure that all members of the human race outgrow at adolescence, and this is one reason for the adult tribe's fragility in the face of a culture with more developed notions of selfhood.

It is significant that Cary's adolescent Africans are among the first of their people to adopt exciting new European notions of personal autonomy and to rebel against the

restrictions of the tribe. For example, in Aissa Saved, Ali is a sixteen year old African infected with European ideas of self-assertion. He adores Bradgate, because the British officer has assured him "that he [Ali] was a person of value, a somebody," even though he is the son of a slave, and therefore a person of no consequence in his own rigidly hierarchical society (AS 87-88, 119). Because Ali wants to be a hero, he acts courageously in a desperate situation during the riots. Eventually, a tired, frightened boy, he is cornered by a pagan mob. He attempts to sustain his heroic self-image and to die with dignity, but his torturers deny him even this much self-affirmation (AS 165, 170, 191, 193).

Aissa is another adolescent who is far more self-assertive than is acceptable in her society, and who dares to defy custom and tradition. Instead of being modest and obedient, she is noisy, unruly, and opinionated. She refuses to believe that Abba is a witch, although his was a breech birth and he has an umbilical hernia. She resists all advice to have her child destroyed and rejects the good offices of those who are willing to pay the witch-killer for her. These good people are astonished and disgusted by the "stupidity and violence" with which Aissa rejects both advice and offers of help (AS 46). She demands special treatment for herself. Not only must her witch-baby be allowed to live, but his hernia must be healed, and her lover must be released from jail: "she thought that the world must be turned upside down to give her sunshine at midnight" (AS 46). She has the bad taste to be conspicuous even in misfortune, and she becomes notorious for her bad luck. As Aissa suffers one set-back after another (she loses her job, she is placed in the village stocks), she becomes the butt of the village, pelted by children and laughed at by everyone (AS 47). In a tribal society, to be in any way outstanding, even for good or bad luck, is very dangerous: "To become known, talked about, for whatever reason, is dangerous in Kolu. It attracts attention" (AS 35).

Aissa and Ali both attempt to call attention to themselves, both claim that they are unique individuals who cannot be limited to the categories within which their society attempts to confine them, and both are severely punished for such *hubris*. They have sinned against the tribe in the same way as Robert, by making themselves conspicuous. But the penalties exacted by their society for this behaviour are more severe than those imposed by English schoolboys. Consequently, in their "pre-Promethean" culture, adolescents are under a great deal of pressure to pass directly from the children's tribe to the adults' "herd."

Since Cary depicts the adolescent longing to rebel against the standards and values of the previous generation as common to all cultures, he suggests that it is the source of a suppressed energy that may break out in anarchic, wantonly destructive action. He calls adolescent volatility a universal condition "as old as mankind." European teenagers are like "[s]avages . . . in their harvest feasts, [who] stay up all night, form suddenly tender warm friendships . . . or suddenly they take a fancy to go and burn somebody's house" (*HC* 96). If the desire for self-assertion is suppressed, the emotional energy of adolescence finds no outlet. As a result, the sudden breakdown of the tribe generates social anarchy when it entails the loss of "tribal sanctions" that function as external controls over the repressed "passions and neurotic panics" of a "herd" whose members have never learned to control themselves ("Catching up with History," *AF* 223). The notion that tyrannical tradition cannot erase the longing for self-realisation and rebellion, but can only force it "underground," underlies Cary's depiction of tribal life as stagnation punctuated by violent outbursts of frustrated energy.

In Europe, as in Africa, the child-tribe is broken up during adolescence. Furthermore, as in the case of their African counterparts, attempts at self-realisation bring European adolescents into conflict with the values and standards of the adult world which,

until then, has nurtured and protected them. However, because individual judgment is tolerated, European adolescence becomes a time of semi-licensed rebellion, a "romantic, revolutionary" period, when children develop a "taste . . . for breaking the conventions" (HC 96). Children living in a society which allows greater expression of their individuality than is permitted in tribal cultures have fewer external constraints upon their conduct. It is therefore essential that they develop self-control, "the most important ruling agent in the world" ("Britain's Liberal Influence," SE 216). In these societies, it is too little voluntary self-restraint, not too much external control, that leads to anarchic behaviour, and delinquency is less often the result of innate viciousness than of "powerful imaginations and weak control" (CMD 8). It is this lack of self-control that is the downfall of two adolescent boys, one European and one African, the eponymous heroes of Charley Is My Darling and Mr. Johnson.

Both Charley, whose father is in the army and whose step-mother neglects him, and the de-tribalised and half-educated Mr. Johnson are adolescents who have not been taught to exercise self-control. Charley is a Cockney child evacuated to the countryside during the Second World War, Johnson is a stranger in Fada. Each boy must establish a place for himself in a highly tribalised and xenophobic society. Charley spins stories that capture the imagination of the tribe of village children. Johnson creates an heroic myth for himself by turning his experiences into songs and dances with which he entertains the local people. But because they cannot distinguish between imaginative freedom and liberty of action, Charley's and Johnson's considerable creative powers lead them into anarchy, when they attempt to act out the heroic myths which they have created to entertain others and to make an identity for themselves.

Both boys are challenged to prove their worth by undertaking increasingly daring and destructive acts that validate their heroic self-image. Finally, Charley leads his gang on

a spree of vandalism in a country house in an attempt to re-enact one of his own stories; Johnson attempts to rob his previous employer and kills the white man when he is discovered. Both Charley and Johnson know that the acts they commit are forbidden, but they have not developed an internal prohibition against such actions strong enough to overcome their need to impress other people. Perhaps even more important is their desire to sustain their imaginative vision of themselves. Charley has cast himself as a Hollywood "gangster," and Johnson, who has posed as an important person in the colonial administration, has been humiliated by being dismissed from his government job. Both pay for trying to live out their imaginative visions: Charley is sent to a correctional school, Johnson is executed.

Neither of these unfortunate adolescents has had the opportunity to learn the valuable lesson impressed upon seven year old Joyce Cary by the incident of the doorbells. Neither has been taught that freedom of imagination must be coupled with responsibility of action, that it is not morally permissible to do all that is imaginable, that while imaginative freedom is boundless, the "absolute" limits of liberty of action are set by behaviour which infringes upon the freedom of others (MS 257 N39). That is, neither has been taught self-control. For while tribal adolescents suffer under the tyranny of the adult "herd," the adolescence of less strictly controlled children is a time of "Promethean" iconoclasm which may decay into anarchy. To prevent this decay, children must be taught both to recognise and to respect the absolute limits to their own actions set by other peoples' right to freedom.

Therefore, the danger inherent in the educational non-programme of an anarchist such as Gulley Jimson is that it fails to provide children with the guidelines they need to live in harmony with others. The adults in Charley's world neglect to inculcate moral precepts. His step-mother is a cheerfully anarchic young woman, deeply distrustful of all

people in authority, who "consider[s] it part of her duty to Charley to warn him against all persons who wished in any way to control him and interfere with his freedom of action" (CMD 40, 45). His billeting officer, Lina, turns a blind eye to Charley's activities, allowing him to escape (temporarily) the consequences of his actions, until his crimes escalate to the extent that he is regarded as a serious delinquent (CMD 237). Johnson, detribalised and (half) educated in a mission school, has not had the benefit of an "old-fashioned" African childhood. Cut adrift from the tribe, existing marginally in the colonial administration, he has received no training in duty. His personal loyalty to his "friend" Rudbeck does not prevent Johnson stealing from and lying to the district officer.

But Cary suggests that education should not only teach a child that choices of action must be made in a responsible manner which respects the freedom of others. It should also serve to stimulate the child's talents and intellect, because children need help from adults in order to develop their latent abilities. Whereas Johnson's culture provides him with many ways of exercising his creativity, in composing songs, dances, and stories, Charley is not as fortunate. Charley is initially a "sensible, good-natured citizen" (CMD 16), but the adults he encounters do not help him to develop his talent as a painter and, as a result, his imaginative energy finds outlet in anarchic rebellion. Lina dismisses his crude but evocative picture of a bull as out of proportion and "unpleasant," because its unconventionality and sexuality offend her (CMD 51-52), and she has Charley's "masterpiece," a picture of the Garden of Eden, sand-papered off the table top. Charley is bored by Lina's pretty and orderly home, which cannot nourish his imagination and leaves him feeling "as if he had been a hungry Eskimo in a vegetarian restaurant" (CMD 252-53).

The artist, Lommax, offers Charley no help because any attempt at instruction, he asserts, can only ruin children's natural artistic sensibilities (CMD 154, 157). Lommax puzzles and frustrates Charley by discussing paintings, which have caused a revolution in

the boy's soul, in language which he cannot understand (CMD 155-56, 160-62). It is this frustration, "of a starved imagination," which Cary sees as the source of a great deal of delinquency (CMD 10). It is significant that the house which Charley's gang vandalises is the one containing many of Lommax's pictures, and that several valuable paintings are attacked. Charley realises that these paintings are important to him, that they hold the key to something he needs to understand. He cannot articulate, even to himself, this need, which is that of an artist to realise his true self, *as* an artist. His frustration finds vent only in destruction, in an expression of his "rage" at a world "which obstinately closes itself to his imagination" (CMD 9). After staring at the paintings for several hours, trying to understand the message they hold for him, Charley at length "sees what can be done with pictures, expensive pictures, to produce a definite and glorious sensation" when he destroys them (CMD 283).

The problem, as Cary's novel depicts it, is to find a middle course between Lina and Lommax, between a conformity that stifles all original creativity and a license that fails to teach the techniques by which imaginative energy may find creative expression. Cary is acutely aware of the dangers of conformity, of the power of education to shape people's minds. He depicts the functions of education in a tribal society (Marxist, fascist, or African) as indoctrination in the values of the "herd" and tyrannical suppression of individuality. But he is convinced that any attempt to impose uniformity of thought is doomed to ultimate failure by the inherent uniqueness of every person: "Schemes to avoid the conflict of ideas by teaching all children the same things are based on a fallacy." As always, the danger is that the repressed energy of creative self-expression will find its way into self-destructive channels. Children educated in the tribal/totalitarian manner will exhibit "the same diversity of morals, manners . . . as [in] democracies, as well as cynicism, hypocrisy, and despair peculiar to themselves" (PM 215).

Cary suggests that education, therefore, ought to respect the inescapable fact that each child is "a free and distinct person, who cannot be deprived of his own private idea of the world" (PM 216). But this uniqueness coexists with both the need for help in realising the self by developing a child's personal creativity and the need for moral guidelines that will enable him or her to live with other people. Therefore, Cary advocates an education that combines encouragement to develop one's selfhood and creativity with lessons in duty and self-restraint. That is, education ought to reflect a polarity of values, a tension of individual creative freedom with respect for the rights of others, because a person so educated is armed against both the imposition of tyranny from without and the temptation to anarchy from within. Cary depicts education, as he does almost all areas of human social experience, as most fulfilling when it steers a middle path between tyranny and anarchy.

Obviously, this programme of education will contribute to the development of the "final order" of society. Cary credits his own early education with stimulating his imagination, giving him freedom to experiment, and teaching him to accept responsibility for his actions. This combination makes his childhood world a paradigm for his notion of the "final order" of society, in which creativity and personal freedom are maximised, richness of experience is increased by unceasing experimentation with new ideas, and every individual accepts the responsibility for shaping society through participation in the democracy of groups. Thus although Cary puts forth his views on education as a pragmatic programme for a democratic society, underlying them is the notion that the "ideal" adult society is one which embodies the principles of the lost world of an idealised childhood, a transposition into social and political terms of a distinctly Wordsworthian notion.

Cary's notions of childhood development resemble those of Wordsworth in several respects, although as in the case of his relation to Carlyle, what is most interesting about this resemblance is his adaptation of Wordsworth's notions. And, as with Carlyle, this

adaptation moves in the direction of an attitude that is manifestly "existential." Cary, like Wordsworth, depicts the maturation of the psyche as the progressive separation of self from the not-self, and in his notes he quotes extensively from Wordsworth's "Immortality" Ode to illustrate this notion. He agrees with Wordsworth that only in infancy does anyone experience the world as "*undivided*" (MS 238 191). Wordsworth attributes this undivided quality of experience to the infant's intimate and harmonious integration with all that is not self, so that the baby is "An inmate" who is very much at home in "this active universe" (*The Prelude* II 254). In contrast, Cary speculates that the baby is incapable of relationship because it perceives its own ego as encompassing the whole world (MS 233 "Freedom of Mind" 214).

Cary suggests that the slightly older child infers the existence of its own self (as distinct from its ego) when it begins to distinguish between itself and the rest of the world, as "objects or other selves" (MS 206 16/17). The first step in this process occurs when the baby begins to sense a distinction between its subjective experience of itself and its objective experience of other existents (MS 233 "Freedom of Mind" 214). The baby, gazing intently at some object in its environment, apprehends the thing *as* a thing, in all its "thinghood," as solid, opaque existence separate from its own incipient self, by means of a "pure intuition of the [object] as object, as an individual thing at a specific moment" (*A&R* 32; MS 238 198). But the infant is also filled with a sense of wonder and mystery. This, says Cary, is what Wordsworth meant by "the common sight, / . . . / Apparelled in celestial light" and this is the "true intimation of immortality" ("Intimations" Ode 3, 5; MS 238 198). This intuition is the apprehension of the "*thing in itself as itself*" (MS 238 198), and Cary's child, like Wordsworth's, sees into the heart of a mystery, the "real" in its proper "character." It is important to note that, for Cary, intimations can only occur when the

transcendence of the ego has been initiated, so that the self can relate to something outside itself.

Cary depicts the small child's experience as still fundamentally self-centred, despite its growing ability to relate to something outside itself, because the child interprets all its interactions with things and selves in terms of emotions of love and hate, of desire and repulsion, based on the immediate emotional or physical gratification which they afford it (MS 233 "Child Religion" 197, 211). However, the small child soon begins to credit all other existents with emotions similar to its own, and through this emotional bond it enters into sympathy with them. It is this sympathy that leads a child to treat an inanimate toy with unselfish love and care (MS 233 "Child Religion" 214). Thus a sense of separation includes the possibility of sympathetic identification, and the ego which sees itself as including the world is superseded by a self capable of entering into a compassionate relationship with the not-self.

This "animist" stage is a step forward in what Cary sees as the fundamental process in the evolution of the human psyche, which at every stage of development achieves a greater separation and independence from what is not-self, and simultaneously becomes capable of greater relationship with and more imaginative sympathy for that from which it is increasingly isolated. However, the world of small children continues to have a kind of unity, in that external reality is not seen as inanimate and therefore as ineluctably divided from the living, feeling self. For this reason, small children exploring inanimate objects, such as toy blocks, do not experience these objects as totally separated from themselves. Instead, they experience these subject-object relationships as existing within a greater unity, "the order of nature" (MS 272 P43 3r-3v). It is at this stage that Cary's child most closely resembles Wordsworth's, for both inhabit a unified world, in which the boundaries

between animate and inanimate are largely ignored, and subject and object are harmoniously attuned to one other.

After the "animist" stage comes that at which the child begins to distinguish the privileged status of self-sentient existents and to discover the possibility of a special kind of relationship with them. In A House of Children, young Evelyn, as a child of six, realising another child "as a being, a person" for the first time, experiences "an indescribable feeling of difference and community in one. It was, I suppose, as if one blade of grass should touch another and feel it and think: 'It is not me, but it is very close to me.' " Evelyn's sense of the little girl is compounded of "sympathy . . . curiosity . . . wonder," and a feeling that they are "tribal allies" (HC 14-15). At this stage of development, Evelyn feels as close to another child as one blade of grass to another, yet distant enough from her to excite curiosity and wonder. The sympathy he feels for her is a delicate balance of separation and identification.

Similarly, Evelyn's idea of his self is compounded both of what he is not (a girl) and what he is (a member of the Corner tribe). At eight, his sense of himself as not-girl has progressed so far that he proposes to Kathy (HC 62). In proposing to enter into a special, unique relationship with one of his cousins, Evelyn is signalling out one individual from the homogeneity of the tribe. This choice exemplifies Cary's notion of the desire for increasing richness of experience, which is satisfied in this case by elaborating a relationship with a group of people into particular relations with individuals. Therefore, the incident is an example of the compensation for increasing separation by the opportunity for richer relationship that Cary depicts as underlying every stage in the development of the self. This is not unlike Wordsworth's depiction of the growing boy, "left alone / Seeking the visible world," but sustained by the knowledge that he is growing more susceptible "to

finer influxes": "The mind lay open, to a more exact / And close communion" (The Prelude II 277-78, 282-84).

Nonetheless, Cary's notions differ in one important respect from Wordsworth's depiction of the development of a mature psyche as a process of passing from a sense of undivided intimacy with nature, to love of nature as something separated from but closely related to the self, to an elegiac sense of loss and exclusion, compensated for by love of humanity. In most of Wordsworth's poems the elegiac note outweighs the sense of compensation. Not so for Cary, for whom the passage from childhood to adulthood is not merely the replacement of "aching joys" and "dizzy raptures" of communion with nature by an appreciation for "the still, sad music of humanity" (Wordsworth, "Tintern Abbey" 84, 85, 91), but rather a progressive enrichment of possibilities for relationship with others on the part of the increasingly independent self. The loss of a sense of oneness, of the undifferentiated ego which contains the world, is a natural inevitability which it is inappropriate to regret, since it opens up the possibility of genuine sympathy and love in relation to the not-self. The development of these capacities is essential to the health of the psyche, for all neuroses are ultimately grounded in a failure to escape the confines of the self in love for others (MS 233 "Freedom of Mind" 216). Therefore, whereas Wordsworth's view of childhood development stresses the movement away from primal unity, Cary emphasises the growth toward self-completion and relationship with others. Paradoxically, Cary idealises his childhood world because of the very properties which he depicts as helping him to develop an independent self and to form fulfilling relationships with others — that helped him to grow out of childhood.

Because he views the growth in the capacity to form relationships with the not-self as essential to the healthy psyche, Cary depicts children as equipped by nature with eager curiosity, a hunger for new experience, and an insatiable desire to learn, all of which

ensure that children will be stimulated to explore the not-self: "Nature, for [the child's] own necessary good" makes "the joy of discovery evanescent; the imagination, like the appetite, perpetually greedy" (CMD 8). But this immersion in experience carries a cost. Cary describes the joys of childhood as very real, but the child as too unself-conscious to appreciate its own happiness. Young Evelyn Corner lives "like an ant in the grass or some small busy creature under a hedge, scarcely yet aware of myself or of my happiness. So I did not enjoy it then" (HC 104). All the children of A House of Children live in a fever of expectation, convinced that every day will yield some new and exciting discovery, too caught up in the excitement of the day and the expectation of tomorrow to be fully aware of their own joy, or to envisage the possibility that it might end: "we were confident of happiness because we had had it before." Their childhood is not a journey from Eden to "the prison shades of grown-up disillusionment," but a headlong, exuberant rush into the future (HC 28).

According to Cary, as the child's experience increases in complexity and richness, a greater self-consciousness begins to distance it somewhat from its own immediate experience. This distance permits the self to be free and to manipulate creatively the raw stuff of experience, and hence it is a very necessary part of maturation (MS 239 203). A child's increasing separation from the rest of the world is compensated for by the creation of a private world constructed around an idea of his or her self, ideas which the child then attempts to realise in interactions with other selves and things. That is, once again, there is greater separation (of self from others and of self from immediate experience) which is compensated by the possibility of richer relationship. The child's relationship with its own experience is enriched by its ability to use this experience as the raw material of imaginative creation, and its relationship with others is enriched by the development of a more complex and independent self. And the process of world creation, which is fundamental to this

enrichment, is so vital to development that nature uses the child's insatiable curiosity and growing appetite for self-assertion to ensure that it will occur.

These desires for self-realisation and for richer experience lead Evelyn to write some childish poetry, which is judiciously commended by his adult relatives. Suddenly a dazzling possibility opens before Evelyn, "the sudden appearance and expansion of a private world, probably my first to be realised." He will be "a grown-up poet, a member of the grown-up world, which [is] all-glorious" (HC 207). That is, the recognition of one aspect of his half-formed personality by adults prompts Evelyn to make it central to his conceptions of his mature self and of his private world, for he is still young enough to accept "without question the judgment of grown-up critics" (HC 205). This incident illustrates an important difference between Cary's and Wordsworth's notions. Wordsworth also sees the creation of a private world as a vital step in the process of the separation of the self from the not-self (*The Prelude* III 127-43). But whereas Wordsworth sees the essential relationship of the developing psyche to be that of the individual with nature, Cary suggests that the developing sense of self comes increasingly to depend upon recognition by other people. That is, the formation of a self depends upon a relationship with other people who reflect this identity back to the child and, therefore, the separation of self from others inevitably involves relationship with these others. During adolescence, children's mood swings are violent and their emotions complex, because their sense of who they are is largely dependent upon the reactions of the very people from whom they are attempting to establish their autonomy — the child-tribe and the adult world.

Although children do respond to their peers' opinion of them (for example, Charley and his gang, Robert and his schoolmates), the relationship with adults is absolutely crucial. Evelyn's family presents him with an image of himself which reflects his particular interests and talents, rather than imposing their own notions upon him. In *Charley Is My*

Darling, Lina, whose lack of imagination leads her to categorise individuals, never sees Charley as he really is, but only as her own idea of him. Charley is therefore subjected to a confusing reflection which does not correspond to his own sense of himself. He finally rebels when Lina, discovering that Liz is pregnant, classifies Charley as a wicked boy who has taken advantage of a half-witted village girl. He feels that this is very far from the truth of his relationship with Liz, and he resists Lina's attempts to make him feel guilty for his sexual "crime," to degrade the one aspect of his delinquent career for which he feels no remorse (CMD 316, 323).

Lina's depiction of his relationship with Liz amazes and disturbs Charley: "All his love-making with Lizzie, which an hour before had the beauty of its happiness, now suddenly takes ugly and squalid shapes" (CMD 325). Although he cannot articulate his sense of violation, he is deeply angered by such "a lie, and a defilement" (CMD 329), by a vision of himself and of his relationship with Liz which categorises them as criminals, rather than recognising that their sexual relationship is an expression of their sense of each other as unique and loveable individuals (CMD 207-208). For whereas Lina always sees Charley and Liz in terms of the idea she has of them, they see and accept each other as persons. For this reason, Charley "feels that with Liz he has become a mature being, that he has lived like a grown-up" (CMD 316). Lina's categorisation of their relationship as shameful thus degrades the most important relationship of Charley's short life, the one by which, given time, he could define his mature self.

Cary leaves the reader in no doubt that in his relationship with Liz lies Charley's best hope for self-fulfilment. As Liz's lover, Charley has achieved both self-definition and relationship, a sense of himself as a person and the capacity for sympathy and love for another whose selfhood he respects. Whereas Lina regards Liz as "a poor country girl," a member of a forlorn band of seduced simpletons, to Charley she is "the unique being with

whom he has enjoyed happiness," and "a person full of odd and interesting characteristics" (CMD 316, 323). Furthermore, Lizzie's kindness has aroused Charley's tenderness, and when she is beaten by her father he suffers acutely for her. They have "entered, as if by accident, into an existence together, where everything — work, play, the most trivial tasks and objects, such as pots, scrubbing-brushes, have suddenly become beautiful and dignified," because Charley "has made the discovery which transforms the world, that kindness is the dignity of living, which transforms the most grotesque gesture, the ugliest face into the expression of eternal beauty" (CMD 316). That is, he has grown to see that a compassionate relationship with another person can enrich both his world and his sense of himself.

Because they have helped each other to grow, by the time the law decides to punish them neither Charley nor Liz is a child any longer. Indeed, they are such different people that they feel they are being made to suffer for crimes which they did not commit. But they are not yet adults. Charley's sense of himself is so fragile that Liz raises the very real possibility that, in the remand centre, he will become in fact what Lina imagines him to be, that he will accept as his identity her categorisation of him as a delinquent. At the novel's end, the reader is left with the impression that, separated from Liz and surrounded by people who share Lina's estimation of him, Charley's fate hangs by a very thin thread. If by luck he encounters even one person who responds sympathetically to him, who reinforces the idea of himself that he has forged in his relationship with Liz, Charley might be saved. His predicament reflects the fact that the increasing need for personal recognition by others comes at a time when individuals must learn both to define themselves as unique selves and to find some method of living in harmony with others. Cary depicts adolescence, that uneasy interval between childhood and adulthood, as a time at which

increasing definition of the developing self brings both conflict with adults and an intense need for recognition by them.

These notions are closely related to Cary's concept of historical development as the increasing realisation of the free and creative self by separation from the "herd." European and African adolescents recapitulate the moment in the ancient past when humanity outgrew the tribe, and African teenagers exemplify the historical situation of individuals attempting to break free of the no longer appropriate adult tribe. Cary's notion of recapitulation links the social and psychological development of the child to the evolution of whole societies toward the "final order." Both depend upon the growing independence of the person, who is then able to enter into increasingly complex relationships with others. The extremely complex nature of the "democracy of groups" stems from the number of possible relationships into which one person can enter. She or he may be simultaneously a member of a professional association, a political party, an athletic club, a literary or dramatic society, and a discussion group, in addition to participating in familial, sexual, and friendly relationships. As we have seen, the increased richness of experience which such social complexity offers comes about only when the individual can liberate him or herself from the homogeneity of the "herd," and this liberation is recapitulated by every individual in breaking with the child-tribe. Therefore, both the historical development of whole societies and individual social and psychological development compensate for the self's growing separation from the not-self by increased richness of experience, afforded by more complex relationship with others.

(ii)

In the course of recapitulating human social history, Cary's adolescents experience the psychological difficulties of young people trying to forge independent personal selves. Furthermore, the social and psychological problems frequently converge. The conflict between Liz's responsible "husband" and the anarchic delinquent of Lina's estimation represents both a social and a psychological problem for Charley. Denied self-realisation as an artist, Charley's definition of his mature self will be in terms of one of these social roles: "good citizen" or "criminal." His predicament exemplifies Cary's notion that one's social role, what one is to other people, is intimately connected to (although never congruent with) one's selfhood, what one is to one's self. Because of the intimacy of this connection between one's relationship with others and one's selfhood, the development of a moral sense becomes a vital part of the process of self-realisation. The point at which a child ceases to be "a piece of common reality of which the differentiation is simply that of one creature from another" and becomes "a true, individual soul" is also the moment at which it begins to "form moral ideas" (*A&R* 13). And, unsurprisingly, Cary depicts a mature moral sense as an enrichment of the relationship of self and others, developed through the increasing separation of self and not-self.

A baby has no concept of good or evil because in its egotism it envisages no existent other than itself ("Morality and the Novelist," *SE* 158). As the child learns that its own identity is limited in space, that there exists an "outside" and an "inside" to its experience, it finds that its own discomfort often has external causes. Those who protect and comfort the child evoke feelings of affection that reflect this self-centred concern. For at this stage, a child's knowledge of evil and good is limited to feelings of repulsion and attraction, to "terrifying dangers, ecstatic delights" ("A Child's Religion," *SE* 22). It is true

that tiny "animists," who treat even inanimate objects with tenderness, appear to possess an inherent capacity for sympathetic relationship, "the common instincts of love and compassion" (PM 233). But these infants are performing a kind of *juju*, entering into a relation of devotion and duty that reflects the relationship they have with the adults around them, "a reciprocity of duty and affection" to beings above and below them in a hierarchy of power to deal out pleasure and pain ("A Child's Religion," SE 22).

Thus the morality of the small child is grounded in its dawning sense of itself as an existent among other existents, in its fear of anything which threatens its own integrity, and in its gratitude to those who protect it from harm. As the child's self continues to develop, the area which must be protected becomes that of the self defined in terms of the tribe, and anything which endangers the continuance of the group is seen as threatening to the self. Therefore, any member of such a society who puts its continuance at risk is seen as a threat from "outside" and is defined as "evil." Conversely, those set apart from the group in any way are perceived as being "outside," in the position of threat.¹ The child learns from the example of adults that those who have power owe a duty to those who are under their protection, but it does not extrapolate from this to extend its sympathy to any being outside this hierarchy, or to those who violate its rules. Cary describes a three year old who did not flinch from the notion that "bad" horses would be thrown down a well, because "[a]t the back of her mind was the thought: 'Badness can expect no mercy' " ("A Child's Religion," SE 22). A young child's morality recapitulates that of the primitive human tribe, "the brotherhood of the pack and the herd, expressed in fraternal love for the like, in hatred of the unlike" (AW 50).

Therefore, Cary suggests that although children have an instinct for compassion and can behave sympathetically towards even inanimate objects to which they attribute their own emotions, they are capable of callous cruelty to other people whom they exclude from

the group on which their sense of themselves depends. In contrast, mature compassion is based not upon a high degree of identification with the other person or object, but upon sympathy with others who are seen as entirely distinct from the self. As the child's sense of itself contracts from that of an ego which fills an entire, if tiny, cosmos, the boundaries marking off the limit of the child's universe simultaneously expand beyond its own ego to include first the child-tribe and then other people. Furthermore, as the child matures there is a transition from sympathy based only on a sense of identity with another, to compassion based on an appreciation of another as a unique being, separate from itself. Maturity, therefore, comes about through a polarity of simultaneous contraction and expansion. The ego which contains the world condenses to a self-as-part of a tribe, and then to a fully realised, independent self. At the same time, a sense of morality develops by an expansion of concern, from the need to preserve one's own existence, to the desire to protect the tribe with which one identifies, to compassion for other selves.

Furthermore, the expansion and contraction facilitate one another. In A House of Children, Evelyn's cousin Anketel, who is initially a self-centred, "bored, peevish, affected child," becomes "friendly and sensible" because of his interest in an Irish peasant boy (HC 211). Through his interest in another person who is not a member of his tribe, Anketel seems to have "grown a new mind and a new heart," for "[a]ll human sympathies had come upon him at once, as if with accumulated richness, through his passion for Oweny" (HC 212-13). This relationship both enlarges Anketel's world and fosters his greater independence within it: he is the only child to question the Corner adults' acceptance of Oweny's extreme poverty as part of the inevitable nature of things. Anketel's capacity for compassion develops out of the original childish sympathetic "instinct" because Oweny excites his curiosity and engages his imagination. Cary makes it clear that Anketel's sympathy "had no general idea" of charity as its basis, but was "prompted by interest in

Oweny," stemming from the child's natural curiosity (HC 213).² Cary's linking of this imaginative curiosity with the growth of a capacity for sympathy is another instance of his "Wordsworthian" quality. In The Prelude, for example, Wordsworth's narrator describes his childhood fascination with a shepherd who engaged his imagination, and through whom "my heart was early introduced / To an unconscious love and reverence / Of human nature" (VIII 277-79).

Anketel's encounter with Oweny differs in several important respects from that of Wordsworth's child with the shepherd. Wordsworth acknowledges the hardships of the shepherd's life, but he still persists in seeing him as "a lord and master, or a power / Or genius, under nature, under God, / Presiding" (The Prelude VIII 219-35, 258-60). The shepherd's image is magnified by the fog, so that he seems a "giant," and his "form" is "glorified / By the deep radiance of the setting sun," so that he is "Ennobled" in the child's eyes (The Prelude VIII 266, 269-70, 276). In contrast, Cary depicts Oweny's grim poverty without alleviation. He is filthy and flea-bitten, and at sixteen he is already losing his teeth and hair, probably because of malnutrition (HC 134, 110). Yet Oweny has an eccentric dignity that fascinates Evelyn as well as Anketel. For example, although Oweny refuses to work for pay, he will work hard as a favour to a friend. Furthermore, this dignity belongs to Oweny, rather than being a glorification lent to him by nature. It stems from what Evelyn describes as a " 'power of getting along with life' " that is uniquely his own (HC 135).

Another important point to note is Cary's suggestion that although imaginative curiosity ultimately fosters a sense of compassion, at the "tribal" stage of personal development the urge to experiment may actually lead children to inflict suffering. A dawning sense of separation from the world may lead a child to satisfy its curiosity by attempting to manipulate the reality which it discovers to be external to itself, and any being with which the child does not identify may be manipulated without sympathy. When the

Corner children conspire to humiliate their cousin's innocuous suitor, they are perfectly aware that, by adult standards, they are "doing wanton evil," born of a desire to exercise power, or "simply for the pleasure of seeing the creature of our imagination taking its place in the real world and acting upon real people" (HC 84). Nonetheless, when the younger children tip the hapless Mackee (and his new suit) into the water, they are unrepentant (HC 87-88). Because the children's sense of sympathy depends upon identifying with the victim, rather than on experiencing compassion for him as a unique and independent other, the discomfort of Mackee, the outsider, does not touch them.

Cary's novels represent a great deal of the world's evil as stemming from the fact that some people never make the transition to a mature morality, to the ability to feel compassion for another while respecting that person's otherness. All those who, like Honeywood of The African Witch, indulge in the narrow tribalism of racism or nationalism, limiting their sympathy to those with whom they can identify, are fundamentally immature. Honeywood never grows up enough to escape the mentality of the English "herd," in part because he does not respect the selfhood of others. He refuses to recognise Aladai's right to affirm himself as an individual rather than as a "nigger." Significantly, one of Honeywood's chief objections to Aladai is that he does not dress like an African, that, like Akande Tom, he is trying to separate himself from his own "herd." Honeywood also bitterly resents Aladai's Oxford education and obvious ability, because his sense of himself is dependent upon the existence of an "inferior herd" to which, as a member of a "better herd," he can feel superior. Because Honeywood has simply extended the boundaries of the child-tribe to those of the scarcely larger adult "herd," and because mature self-realisation is only possible to those who define themselves separately from the group, he is not a true self. Even Dryas, who is a much more attractive person than her

brother, cannot develop a fully realised self while she embraces a narrow " 'sixth-form' " morality which encourages her to see Aladai as "naturally" her inferior (AW 267).

All those who seek, like curious children, to manipulate others as things, rather than respecting them as persons, are also culpably immature. Cary carries into the realm of personal morality the same principles which lead him to criticise the notion of providence, nationalist ideas, *laissez-faire* economics, and the life force, notions to which he objects because they reduce the individual to a tool of a higher purpose. He clearly agrees with Wordsworth that "Our life is turned / Out of her course, wherever man is made / An offering, or a sacrifice, a tool / Or implement, a passive thing employed / As a brute mean" (The Excursion IX 113-17). In Marching Soldier, Hitler is presented as a great manipulator of people, whose speeches persuade others to help him achieve his "artistic" vision. Significantly, in The Horse's Mouth, Hitler is depicted as an artist who " 'wants to see [his vision] on the wall' " (71), as a man who, like the Corner children, is eager to see "the creature of [his] imagination" having an effect upon the world.

Cary's artist figures often have a child-like quality, which can be traced not only to their intense curiosity about the world, their desire to experiment with it, their urge to realise their intuitions about it, but also to the single-minded ruthlessness with which they manipulate others to achieve these ends. Gulley Jimson, for example, uses blackmail and fraud in order to manipulate Hickson, the Beeders, Sara, and Wilcher into giving him the means to continue painting. Hitler, therefore, is an example of an artist in whom the child-like desire to enact his vision in the real world combines with a childish ruthlessness in manipulating others and an infantile narrowness of sympathy to a national and racial group, with catastrophic results for vast numbers of people. The Wordsworthian valorisation of the artist, as one who retains a child-like sense of wonder and vision, is qualified in Cary

by a concern that youthful vision may be accompanied by a childish narrow range of sympathies.

Cary suggests that such manipulation diminishes the actor as much as the person who is its object, even though it may stem from the best of motives. In The Moonlight, Ella's child-like quality depends in part on her secretiveness and ineptitude as she tries to manipulate others. Like a child playing with dolls, imagining adventures for a favourite toy, she lavishes great affection on those whose lives she interferes with, sublimely assured that she knows what is best for those she loves, better than they themselves know. Ella, in fact, projects her own frustrated desires for romantic love, marriage, and maternity upon every woman she meets, failing to appreciate that they are other than she, and may have different goals in life. Like a new-born baby, she is unable to detect the limits of her own personality and she confuses her personal desires with those of abstract Womanhood. This confusion places her among the morally immature who have failed to achieve that full degree of separation upon which adult social, psychological, and moral relationship with others is dependent, a separation which (paradoxically) is the ground of the recognition of the freedom of all other selves.

Thus to be fully mature, the individual must not only recapitulate the social and psychological development of the human race, but must also pass through all the stages of moral development from the undifferentiated, solipsistic ego to the separated self capable of compassionate relationship. But there exists another form of recapitulation that remains possible throughout life and can be a means of great satisfaction to the mature psyche — memory. Cary's notion of memory has a striking resemblance to that of Wordsworth, but it is stripped of Wordsworth's longing for return to the past. Both see memory as a source of happiness, but for Cary this happiness is not merely the shadow of irrecoverable childhood joy. Mature memory is the source of a self-conscious delight unknown to childhood:

"Small children are thought happy, but for most of the time they do not even live consciously, they exist" in a welter of sensation. For the more self-conscious adult, a "moment . . . grasped out of the flux" of childhood experience by memory becomes "a piece of life, unique and eternal" and a "living delight" (HC 9).

Although as a child he was too unself-conscious to enjoy his own happiness, Evelyn Corner's memory of childhood is a source of great joy: "I did not enjoy it then and thank God for that sweet life as I have enjoyed it since," in memory (HC 104). While Wordsworth laments the passage of unself-conscious childish happiness, Cary celebrates, in the adult's imaginative reliving of these experiences, a deeper and more lasting joy. This is consistent with his notion that separation brings richer relationship, for memory is a relationship with the past which is only possible because of one's separation from it. It is the ability of the adult self to look back upon the experiences of the child self which makes possible a more complex, because more self-conscious, relationship with the thing that is remembered.

Cary differs from Wordsworth and approaches a stance that is fundamental to existentialism, in that he privileges the present over the past. The memory of childhood is not the supreme experience of adult life, but merely one component of its richness, all of which is made possible by separation — from things, from other selves, even from one's own past. Cary suggests that maturity offers an increase in creative freedom and meaningful relationship with others that outweighs the loss of security and of the unthinking joys of childhood. Moreover, whereas Wordsworth expresses fears of a loss of creativity as age distances him from his childhood "intimations," in Cary's world adult creativity does not depend upon memories of childhood intuitions. As a result, only adults who have stifled their own creativity (such as Wilcher of To Be A Pilgrim) are plagued by

memories of a lost felicity. Gulley Jimson's capacity to intuit the real and his joy in the beauty of creation are undiminished.

Cary's notion of memory is illuminated by his discussion, in the preface to the Carfax edition of A House of Children, of some personal childhood memories. He says that his memories have two components, on the one hand physical sensations and emotions and on the other visual images. The first component is closely associated with, but somehow distinct from, the second. Whereas in some of his memories (sitting with his aunts on the deck of a steamer), sensation and emotion are connected closely to visual memory, in others (holding his baby brother for the first time), the distinction is clearer. In the latter case, Cary's visual memory is external to his younger self, for he can "see" young Joyce, sitting on a chair with the baby in his arms. But his recall of the sensation of the baby's weight and a feeling of anxiety is much more intimate (HC 5-6). That is, while the visual images of scenes and events are often remembered only as seen from outside by the adult consciousness, sensations and emotions, "the very sense of childhood" (HC 9), can be recalled almost as they were originally experienced.³

This accords with Wordsworth's suggestion that the emotional content of an experience is separable from the actual event which originally gave rise to the affect, so that, while the past experience itself can never be recovered, an emotion, closely if not exactly corresponding to that originally associated with it, can be recreated (Preface to the Lyrical Ballads, in Poetical Works 735, 740). Since this emotion serves as the source of the poet's creative energy, the partial recall of affect affords even Wordsworth a measure of compensation for the irrecoverable loss of immediate childhood experience. Furthermore, for both Cary and Wordsworth, it is emotion which seems to determine which visual images are remembered. Evelyn cannot recall the face of any clergyman from his youth, except that of "huge red-bearded canon P., who loved my mother, and after she died came

to see me at my English school." Although he cannot recall the Canon's words, he remembers clearly the music of the man's voice as "the experience of compassionate love; a true intuition of goodness in its own spirit" (HC 223-24). It was young Evelyn's emotional response to the sympathy and compassion revealed in the Canon's tone of voice that engraved his face in the boy's memory.

Wordsworth also depicts powerful emotions becoming attached in memory to visual images. In many cases, he describes negative emotions of fear or panic attaching themselves to neutral images, like that of the young girl carrying a pitcher, when terror defamiliarises the landscape around the child and invests it with heightened significance (The Prelude XII 224-61). The emotions which Cary recalls in connection with his childhood memories are often similar feelings of "fear," "anxiety," or "tension" (HC 6). The mature Evelyn vividly recalls an occasion when as a young boy, swimming alone at night, he experienced a feeling of defamiliarisation which endowed the sea that he had played in all summer with sinister qualities of evil and treachery (HC 90). For Wordsworth and for Cary, it is the strength of the emotions associated with them, however inappropriate or unwelcome, that impresses visual images upon the memory.⁴

The moment of defamiliarisation that lives in memory is, of course, Wordsworth's famous "spot of time," the forerunner of a variety of privileged moments, from Thomas Hardy's "moments of vision" to Virginia Woolf's "moments of being" to (in a somewhat extended form) Sartre's "adventures."⁵ In A House of Children, Cary depicts experiences that could be termed "moments of seeing." These experiences have a special quality typical of Cary, for these are moments at which Evelyn, often through the agency of an adult, comes to see a significance that has previously escaped him in the world of his experience. The adult who most frequently makes such moments possible is his adored father. For instance, when Mr. Corner tells him that a sea cave has existed " 'a long time before there

were any people at all, or even fish,' " the words make Evelyn "see the cave as not merely ancient, but different from any other, a survival from another world" (HC 39). Pointing out a whale, his father introduces the astonished boy to the notion that the animal, a mammal like himself, also needs to swim in order to cool off. It is the phrase, " 'he's ocean bathing, too' " which excites Evelyn: "I felt the magnificence of sharing bathing-places with a whale. We both used an ocean. That whale still lives in my idea with his enormous beating heart and pumping veins, a torpedo of fiery life as big as a mountain, sliding through the small summer waves where we had bathed that morning" (HC 11).

It is either Evelyn's father or his tutor who points out to him that the white house on the shore reflects the sea waves by sunlight and moonlight: "The house seemed to be full of sea; until, of course one turned round and saw the real sea so miraculously real in its metal weight and powerful motion, its burning brightness, that it startled. One gazed at it with astonishment as if one had never before seen such an extraordinary and glorious object" (HC 53). Such "moments of seeing" are moments of happy defamiliarisation, which reveal the world to be more interesting, significant, and surprising than the child has envisaged. Where Wordsworth laments the loss of childhood as a passing away of "a glory from the earth" ("Immortality" Ode 18), Cary sees a growing insight into and appreciation for the wonder of creation as part of the maturing process.

Significantly, "Taste of Glory" is the title of a Cary short story, one of a series of insightful, unsentimental vignettes drawn from the world of children. In this story, a "moment of seeing" supplies a child with the vocabulary he needs to articulate his own experience, by charging a previously mundane word with new significance. Young Antony has slipped out of the house late at night for an "adventure" and is dazzled by "that indescribable experience of the midnight world; where even the sky and the familiar stars, had a strange look; a new still world full of something he had never felt before, and the

word 'grand' came into his mind. But the very word had a new meaning" (SS 312). This is similar to the heightened significance that the words "ancient," "whale," and "sea" come to bear for young Evelyn. Looking back on such memories, Evelyn is not filled with a sense of loss, of regret for the passing of "the hour / Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower," but rather with the recognition that these were the moments at which he first truly saw the splendour and the glory around him and felt the real "life and meaning" of words ("Immortality" Ode 181-82; HC 234).

Evelyn's wonder is increased by his sense of the heightened significance of words because, by giving names to portions of reality, words mark differences and separations among things: "As a small child, like other small children, I had thought of my toys as living creatures." But this sympathy for inanimate objects "was an extension of my own self. I assumed that everything was me in some form or another. But now I was wondering at the difference and the mysterious character of things. . . .[their] unique and separate quality" (HC 234). To realise the words "sea" and "whale" is to experience these things as existing apart from himself, in wondrous independence. This, it will be recalled, is what Cary characterises as a true intimation of immortality. Such wonder, an expression of "the sense of man's apartness from things," is also "the acknowledgment of his community with everything" (HC 235). This imaginative wonder expresses the child's appreciation of its paradoxical participation in a universal isolation, "a common solitude which [is] a fellowship — the community of travellers in time" ("Christmas in Africa," AF 217).

And this sense of wonder is intensified, not lost, in the process of maturing. Nothing excites the wonder of the ego which thinks it contains the world, because it is aware of nothing existing over against itself. Wonder only becomes possible as the self develops and enters into a polarised relationship with the world from which it is separating.⁶ Moreover, unlike Wordsworth, Cary depicts the end of childhood not as a

loss of "at homeness" in a world with which the child exists in a perfectly polarised relationship, but as the gain of a sense of participation in a reality more complex and interesting than the infant supposes when it mistakes its own ego for the whole universe.⁷

Cary suggests that words facilitate this process by creating distance and exciting wonder. While Wordsworth's poetry is suffused with a sense of loss attributed to the wedge which words drive between the self and its own experience, Cary intimates that words infuse experience with richer, more complex significance. Wordsworth is concerned that words, by embodying self-conscious reflection, distance the child from the emotional content of its own response to nature, disrupting childhood experience that is fully significant without the addition of thought: "The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood, / Their colours and their forms, were then to me / An appetite; a feeling and a love, / That had no need of a remoter charm, / By thought supplied" ("Tintern Abbey" 78-82). In The Prelude, the hanged man's name cut on the turf comes between the child and nature and generates powerful emotions which colour the child's response to the landscape. The name, embodying an idea (significantly, an idea of human iniquity), alienates the child from his natural surroundings by investing them with "visionary dreariness" (XII 256).

Cary describes thought interacting with emotion in every experience of quite young children (see Chapter I), and words as the means by which appropriate emotions are joined to ideas. Thus the emotional response to the majesty of a star-lit night is connected to an idea of immensity in the word "grand." Such connections are necessary to the development of a healthy psyche. Young Evelyn's confusion and fragmentation, when his "feelings about things" are separated from his "idea of them" (HC 216), are resolved by a performance of The Tempest. The adult Evelyn remembers that this performance brought home to him as never before the reality of the word "death," because Shakespeare's poetry, "carrying both feeling and idea," acted upon the child's psyche as "directly as warmth and

cold" (HC 223-24). Therefore, Cary depicts words as the locus of the integration of unfocused and confused emotions with the thought which is appropriate to them, and this integration as providing an experience as immediate as even Wordsworth could desire.

Words, therefore, help the child's growing senses of both separateness and relatedness. First, words distance the child from other existents, exciting a sense of wonder which reminds it of its community with everything that is. Second, words connect emotions and ideas, helping the child to integrate its increasingly isolated psyche, and allowing it to articulate to itself the nature of its own response to the not-self. In a sense, every child "discovers" language for itself, recapitulating the historical development of the human psyche's awareness of its own isolation and of the compensatory richness of relationship this brings.

As the self condenses within an expanding sphere of concern, becoming more isolated while developing more complex relationships, it also acquires greater powers of both self-realisation and self-transcendence.⁸ What makes Cary interesting, and betrays his debt to Wordsworth, is that he responds to the danger of increasing isolation in an imaginatively created private world by positing that imagination fosters self-transcendence at every stage of the child's development. Once it becomes aware of itself as an existent among existents, the child "grasps and synthesises experience" of the external world by the power of the imagination ("Morality and the Novelist," SE 157). It is imaginative curiosity which leads the child to explore the world and to become interested in other people and things as beings separate from itself, with mysterious and interesting lives of their own. It is imagination which enables a child to achieve sympathetic identification with other existents. It is the empathic ability of the imagination and its power to visualise the probable consequences of actions (MS 206 46/21) that lead to the development of a mature moral sense. It is imaginative wonder which discloses the universality of the individual's

isolation. Since it is largely through its relationships with other people and things that the child forges its sense of itself, these acts of imaginative self-transcendence are of fundamental importance to the creation of a self.

Attributing an important role to the imagination in both self-creation and self-transcendence is typical of Cary, for he consistently links the activity of the creative imagination to some variety of transcendence. His myth of history depicts the "Promethean" individual transcending the existing world in order to visualise new possibilities. His notion of personal development is that it is a series of stages in which the increasingly defined self transcends itself in more complex relationships with other people and things. Chapter V explores Cary's notion of artistic creation, which involves acts of transcendence in both senses, as a going beyond what-is to bring new possibility into being and as a going beyond the self in relationships with things and other selves.

NOTES TO CHAPTER IV

¹ Tribespeople who regard with suspicion iconoclasts, the especially fortunate, or even the unfortunate, are reacting out of the limitations of the self which has been frustrated in its attempts to define itself apart from the group, and which therefore feels threatened by any danger to the tribe. The crowd which watches Akande Tom's punishment is made up of adults who fear his iconoclasm as a threat to the integrity of the group, yet who are also motivated by a suppressed desire to behave as he has done. However, Cary's frequent contention that African tribespeople are not children must be remembered. The child-tribe begins to break up in the face of a similar desire for self-assertion, which it is powerless to stop, at adolescence. In contrast, the adult tribe, with its far more sophisticated social resources, "artificially" prolongs the tyranny of the tribe in the name of custom and tradition long after, in the "natural" course of development, the adult psyche is eager to escape from it.

² As we have seen, Cary depicts curiosity as the means nature uses to ensure that the child will exercise its creative imagination in exploring the world around it and in building a private world. Clearly, imaginative curiosity also has an important role in the development of a moral sense, in expanding the child's area of sympathy and concern.

³ Cary distinguishes memory from a Proustian variety of total recall that he claims is a "common enough phenomenon" ("Carrig Cnoc," SE 29). He asserts that his own experience of total recall, arising "direct from the unconscious," transported him "back into childhood itself, into a quite different world than that of memory" ("Carrig Cnoc," SE 29-30). In this state, "the present world all about me suddenly grew insubstantial," so that "for those few moments the only real solid thing was my own existence, or, rather, that of my feelings" ("Carrig Cnoc," SE 30-31).

⁴ It is worth noting, however, that young Evelyn's panic is triggered by the realisation that he cannot see or hear his companions. Whereas it is the mark of human crime upon the landscape that frightens Wordsworth's child, it is the absence of human company that makes Evelyn's sea look treacherous and cruel. As always, for Cary, the relationship with other people takes precedence over that with nature.

⁵ Cary interprets Wordsworth's "spot of time" as an attempt not merely to render the emotional content of a momentary experience, but also to relate that particular experience to his notion of "the nature of universal life" (MS 239 212).

⁶ Cary suggests that any relationship of any kind between two existents involves "community," common ground on which they can meet. But there must also be "difference," in that relationship is only possible between non-identical entities (MS 272 P43 8v). Therefore, like Wordsworth, Cary adopts polarity as a means of resisting both a complete dualism of subject and object and the annihilation of the tension between them.

⁷ Cary does not depict adulthood as the end of growth, but as the maturation of one's powers to enrich one's experience of others and to realise the self. The continuing elaboration in number and complexity of polarised relationships with different aspects of the not-self serves to ensure that change is a constant feature of the mature psyche. Therefore, whereas Cary depicts childhood and adolescence as a recapitulation of the

human past, his notion of the mature psyche resembles the "final order" of society, in which a delicate balance of polarised opposites ensures the continuation of creative change.

⁸ Cary's notes reveal his conviction that all experience involves some sort of self-transcendence, from a simple act of "feeling" that links subject and object, to the greatest act of compassion (MS 271 N100 15r-15v). In even the simplest act of perception, the isolated mind goes out to the reality from which it is separated (MS 271 N82 13r).

CHAPTER V

Intuition and Symbol in The Horse's Mouth

According to Cary's notion of psychic development, as the child matures it learns to transcend immediate experience through memory, reflection, and intuition and to transcend the self through relationships with other people and with things. His notion of artistic creation is that it depends upon both varieties of transcendence. His myth of history involves "Promethean" artists who are capable of transcending their immediate situations to envision new possibilities. In The Horse's Mouth and Art and Reality Cary suggests that this visionary capacity is fundamentally dependent upon intuition, and that the realisation of creative vision in a work of art is enriched by memory and reflection. Furthermore, he depicts this realisation as dependent upon the artist's ability to engage with objects which can be manipulated to create a work of art that communicates his or her personal experience and intuitions to other people.

Cary offers two portraits of the artist, one as a youth in a developing culture, the other as a mature man in a sophisticated western European society. Mr. Johnson is an immature artist, an adolescent with only a limited ability to transcend his immediate situation and to go beyond the confines of the self. Johnson's immersion in his own immediate experience leads him to misinterpret the actions and attitudes of others, to the extent that he does not respond appropriately to people and situations. He is oblivious to Ajali's jealousy and hatred, and it is Ajali who betrays him to Gollup, precipitating the situation in which Johnson kills the white man. At his trial, Johnson senses Rudbeck's good will, but fails to realise that his life depends upon responding appropriately to the alternatives that Rudbeck offers him, on pronouncing a formula of words that will enable

his judge to sentence him for manslaughter. He does not listen carefully, being too involved in emotions of gratitude and affection, and in creating a story, a version of his experience that he thinks will please Rudbeck, to give the correct answers to the questions. In this crucial act of creation Johnson's art is limited by a failure of transcendence. Rudbeck has no choice but to find him guilty of a capital crime (MJ 210-11).

Johnson is a "Promethean" iconoclast who, in intuiting a new possibility of which others were previously unaware and in realising this intuition in the concrete form of a road, enriches the experience of an entire society. But his intuition is limited to the possibilities inherent in the immediate experience of road-making. It is Rudbeck who envisages the social potential of the road, while Johnson is inspired by the aesthetic pleasures of road-building. Accordingly, the songs he creates during the road-making celebrate the conquest of giant trees by human will and muscle (MJ 157, 162). Johnson resembles a romantic poet immersed in his own sensations and emotions, whose songs, when "overheard" by others, change the world.

Johnson's poems, like children's art, are lyric "cr[ies] of exhilaration" celebrating the experience in which he is immersed, and they are nearly devoid of conceptual thought (A&R 50). Cary asserts that a child's "Intimations of immortality" come without the mediation of concepts, as pure "feeling" (MS 290 P113 4v). But the mature artist passes "from the age of true childish inspiration, through years of conceptual and technical training, back to the original vision which is not childish, but has all the originality of the child's eye, combined with the far greater depth and richness of a man's experience" (A&R 34-35). Mature art of necessity involves a movement away from immediate experience by the intervention of reflection (MS 290 P113 5r).

But Johnson seldom pauses to reflect. He lives in an intense romantic moment disconnected from past and future, alternately ecstatic and plunged in deepest dejection. He

is Wordsworth's ideal poet, the adolescent who remains a child to whom, "The earth, and every common sight, / . . . did seem / Apparelled in celestial light, / The glory and the freshness of a dream" ("Intimations" Ode 2-5). To Johnson, each experience comes as it does to the child:

He has seen pot-making all his life, but he is always interested to hear the life history of each pot, to criticize its form, to argue with the potter about its quality, or to discuss the general state of the pot trade at that moment. To him Africa is simply perpetual experience, exciting, amusing, alarming, or delightful, which he soaks into himself through all his five sense at once, and produces again in the form of reflections, comments, songs, jokes, all in the pure Johnsonian form.

(MJ 92)

Johnson's art flows from his immediate experience: his sensual delight in Bamu, his feeling of power and mastery in building the road, his grief at leaving a world he loves.

Johnson fashions his poetry out of concrete images drawn from familiar objects. His desire for Bamu is expressed as a series of similes. Like Africa, Bamu excites all of Johnson's senses:

"I got a lil girl, she roun' like de worl'.
 She smoot like de water, she shine like de sky.
 She fat like de corn, she smell like de new grass.

She dance like de tree, she shake like de leaves.
 She warm like de groun', she deep like de bush."

(MJ 19)

Johnson not only compares Bamu to nature, he also personifies the natural world. As he waits to be executed, Johnson sings his farewell to the world which he represents as a father lovingly responsive to his needs and desires:

"Good-bye, my worl', good-bye, my father worl'.
 Carry me on you head, give me chop.
 When this fool chile hear you breathe in the dark he no more 'fraid.
 I smell you like de honey beer in de dark night.
 I see you bress shine in de moon,
 I feel you big muscle hold me up so I no fit to fall.
 Good-by, my father, you do all ting for me, never ask for nutting for
 youself."

(MJ 221)

Johnson's personifications and similes are all drawn from simple sensory or emotional experience. He rejects with scorn, as empty abstractions, words signifying sensations and emotions of which he claims to have no experience:

"What, who dare say Mister Johnson 'fraid?
 Johnson say, what dat mean dat word 'fraid?

What dat mean, 'fraid? Is it good to eat?
 Is it like a man's leg when I bite it off?
 Is it good to drink? Is it like a man's blood
 When I drink it up?
 What you mean, 'fraid? Show me some 'fraid.
 I don't know nutting about 'fraid . . ."

(MI 135)

Johnson asks for a simile that will render the abstraction "fear" in terms of his own sensory and emotional experience, for it is only through sensation and feeling that he knows the world.

Johnson is Cary's portrait of the artist who is romantically in tune with the natural world, who is as responsive to his own immediate experience as a harp in the wind, who lives intensely in the moment and renders each moment's experience in concrete natural images. Gulley Jimson is also emotionally volatile and his delight in the London landscape is as intense as Johnson's enjoyment of Africa. But Gulley has an adult's ability to distance himself from his own experience, to remember, and to learn from the past. This makes Gulley's relationship with the world around him, and consequently his art, correspondingly richer and more complex. While Johnson's poetry involves rather simple tropes of simile and personification, Gulley's paintings are richly symbolic.¹

Cary's notion of the symbol depends upon the artist's separation from, and complex relationship with, his or her own intuitive experience. It is important to remember that Cary's notion of intuition involves a separation from the world which is then overcome by transcending the self to grasp the real via an unconscious "feeling." This feeling is a relationship of subject and object, which then rises into consciousness as a feeling-as-

apprehension. To Gulley his own intuition seems to come from outside himself. In Art and Reality Cary asserts that "[i]t is the very mark and sign of intuition that it . . . appear[s] from outside. It stands over against [the artist] . . . a piece of the real whose whole force is in its objectivity and universal truth" (29-30). That is, the artist first grasps the real by an intuition, a feeling-as-apprehension which involves both separation and relationship of subject and object. The intimation itself becomes an object of contemplation for the artist by virtue of another separation. Because his own intuition is an object for him, the artist "as subject has to use his brains to translate the effect [on him] of this real into a symbolic form" and to realise this form in a work of art (A&R 30).

In The Horse's Mouth, Gulley offers two interpretations of Blake's "The Mental Traveller" to illustrate his own problems in translating intuition into symbol and in realising this symbolic form in a work of art. One reading of the poem interprets it as a paradigm of the artist's search for an appropriate symbolic form. Gulley depicts this search as the struggle to break free of "classic" forms and to create new ones suited to a "new world with a new formal character" (HM 61-65). The choice of this poem emphasises the connection Cary draws between imaginative creation and historical development, for its central image is an infant Prometheus, who breaks his bonds to pursue his "maiden," a new form in which to capture his vision. Orc/Prometheus captures and enjoys the maiden, but only temporarily. As he regresses to infancy, the maiden ages into a crone who binds Prometheus to his rock again. Gulley interprets this as the new form of one age becoming the "classic" of the next generation, as stifling to innovation as the old "classic" it replaced. In the history of art, as in every other area of development, Cary depicts the creation and the creative at war.

In his pursuit of the maiden, Gulley turns to the world around him for new forms that can be given symbolic significance. The London sky and the River Thames are

constant sources of inspiration, suggesting those solid forms he loves so well. The evening sky is

that dome, the heavenly height, the eternal roof, the everlasting muffin-dish, heavy as the hand of fate, solid as the Bank of England, and glorious as the first of things. The Primary. Rap your knuckles on it and it makes a noise like a turnip.

(HM 68)

But even a drop on the end of Ollier's nose can furnish raw material for Gulley's creative imagination (HM 27). A huge tree, an overturned boat, a gasometer, Lolie's sturdily-built nude body, Coker feeding her baby, Churchill's hat, and Hitler's eyes contribute to the creation of Gulley's whale. This symbol rises from a sub-conscious integration of selected features (Lolie's, the boat's and the gasometer's solidity, the tree's and the gasometer's size, the boat's outline, the hat's, the gasometer's, and Coker's "cylindrical" shape, Lolie's and Coker's sex, Coker's maternal status, the blue colour of Hitler's eyes) of these very disparate objects (HM 240, 243).

Once Gulley has found a symbolic form, he must engage in intimate battle with the material world to impress this form upon it. As he says: " 'It's one thing to see or think you see a set of forms, and another to put it down' " (HM 243). In order to depict this struggle, Gulley again quotes Blake:

And he rends up his manacles
 And binds her down for his delight
 He plants himself in all her nerves
 Just like a husbandman his mould
 And she becomes his dwelling-place
 And garden fruitful seventy fold.

(HM 52)

In this instance, the conflict of male and female is interpreted not as a pursuit of new symbolic form by the artist, but as the struggle of the artist with material reality in order to realise his new-found form. Gulley casts himself as the Promethean creative artist, or "prophetic spirit," and Sara as "[m]ateriality . . . the old female nature" whom he eventually subdues and embraces (HM 52). By depicting the interaction between the artist and the material world as a conflict, Cary emphasises that there must be a separation of self and world, if there is to be any possibility of creation: "You need to take necessity and make her do what you want; get your feet on her old bones and build your mansions out of her rock" (HM 58). That is, the artist must stand over against both his or her own intuition and the external world, in order to see how the former may be realised in the latter.

Hard as the struggle of self with the material world is, Gulley sees it as the corollary of creative freedom:

"It's all work, work. The curse of Adam. But if he doesn't work, he doesn't get anything, even love. He just tumbles about in hell and bashes himself and burns himself and stabs himself. The fallen man — nobody's going to look after him. The poor bastard is free — a free and responsible citizen. The Fall into freedom."

(HM 174)

Gulley interprets the fall into creative freedom as a fall into the material world from which he is separated and yet of which he is a part: " 'the Fall into freedom, into the real world among the everlasting forms, the solid' " (HM 174). However, it is also a fall into relationship, reflected in Blake's depiction of the struggle of artist and material world in sexual terms. Moreover, the choice of sexual imagery underlines both the transcendence of self involved in entering into such an intimate relationship with the not-self, and the intense, ephemeral self-fulfilment involved in the artist's work.

Therefore, there are four steps, each of which involves interaction with something external to the self, in the creation of a work of art: first the relationship with the not-self in an act of intuition, second the examination of the objectivised intuition itself, third the search among " 'the everlasting forms, the solid' " for an appropriate symbol, and fourth the struggle with material reality in order to realise this form. However, as The Horse's Mouth makes abundantly clear, Cary, himself a painter as well as a writer, evidently felt that these movements interact in complex ways.

For example, after seeing a street-market stall "covered with blue-silver shining pots, ice-white jugs, heaps of fish, white-silver, white-green," Gulley returns to his painting and realises that he needs a certain kind of pattern at the bottom of his picture (HM

42). He makes the necessary shape before he recognises that it could be a fish: "Fish. Fish. Silver-white, green-white." At the moment of recognition Gulley says, "I felt a kick inside as if I was having a foal" (HM 43). That is, he recognises that the fish are what he needs in order to realise in his painting his intuition of the nature of the fall into freedom. His picture is of the Biblical Fall, and his notion of the fall into consciousness, freedom, and responsibility is that it is a fortunate one. The fish-symbol of Christ the Redeemer in a picture of the Fall is therefore an appropriate reminder of the potential blessings of the fall into freedom. Did the technical problem of the relations of colour and mass (the struggle with materiality) stimulate Gulley to recognise an appropriate symbol in which to express his intuition of the nature of the Fall? Or did his as-yet-unconscious recognition of the appropriateness of the fish seen in the market suggest a certain shape and colour as the solution to his technical problem? Whatever is happening, artistic creation is clearly a complex process involving Gulley's interaction with material reality on two levels, both as a medium (paint and canvas) and as a source of forms which can be used symbolically (fish).²

Cary's notion of the symbol involves yet another kind of self-transcendence, in that he sees it as an attempt at communication. He depicts symbolic artists as struggling to communicate their intuitions of reality in such a way that others learn something about their own relationship to the "real." The evidence of Cary's fictional and theoretical writings strongly suggests that he adapted many notions set forth in Sartor Resartus, particularly with respect to the role symbols play in keeping people in touch with the "real." For although they differ as to the nature of the "real," and therefore as to the nature of the insight yielded by intuition, both Carlyle and Cary describe symbols as the embodiment of an intuitive revelation. Cary's adaptation of Carlyle's notion of history, as both renewal and innovation, suggests that some symbols embody intuitions and experiences common to

every age and culture, while others represent new insights and relationships. But even those which body forth the permanent and universal aspects of human experience must be "renewed to the imagination," for the symbol "is always sinking back into a mere sign," losing its revelatory power (FI 8; A&R 173).

Cary derives the fragility of the symbol from his notion of how an intuition is communicated. According to Cary, this is by means of a concept which not only transmits the idea of the intuition but also, through the power of association, evokes an appropriate emotional state in the observer, thus conveying both "the fact and the feeling about the fact" of the original intuitive experience (A&R 10). A symbol is this highly allusive concept given form in words or paint or stone.³ Thus a Gothic cathedral both reflects the notion of God's kingship, his right to a magnificent earthly habitation, and evokes powerful emotions of awe and reverence. In Gulley's "Creation" a mother whale with Hitler's eyes suckles her calf, suggesting the concept that people mistakenly tend to read human values, such as love and hate, good and evil, into amoral natural processes. Despite its inhuman otherness, there is something warmly appealing about this image. The emotions associated with it are those of both alienation and sympathy, reflecting Gulley's insight that, although the universe is indifferent to human values, its beauty invites people to enjoy being part of it. Gulley's emotional response to the cosmos varies from fits of outrage at its injustice to moments of overwhelming joy at the beauty and variety of creation. The whale, whose eyes hold "all the grief and glory in the world" (HM 288), successfully conveys both the "fact" of his intuition (the natural world is both "unjust" and beautiful) and his ambivalent "feeling about the fact" (alienation and joy).

What is the basis of Gulley's confidence that his whale will evoke the same associations in the observer as it does in himself? His "Creation" relies on the tension of distance and sympathy evoked by a large, potentially dangerous animal depicted in one of

the most deeply felt and widely experienced human relationships, to convey his own ambivalent emotions of alienation from and joyful participation in the natural world. In the whale, Gulley appeals to the ubiquity of common life experiences (the suspicion of large animals, the love of mother and child) to evoke specific "universal" emotional responses. The consistency of Cary's thought becomes apparent when one considers that, in rejecting Platonic Ideas, Cary transferred the notion of universal "form" from idea to emotion, internalising and naturalising it. The creative artist, therefore, does not communicate his or her intuition by appeal to another realm of Ideal Forms universally accessible to reason, but by evoking emotional "forms" that are an integral part of every person's nature.

But the artist can also create symbols by grafting new emotional connotations onto existing concrete objects with which they are not "naturally" associated. The Swiss Alps' formidable terrain caused them to be regarded as "dangerous nuisances to travellers," until the romantic poets remade them into "symbols of beauty and majesty" ("Switzerland" 37). This change of perception has come about because "we exist almost entirely by and in the imagination." Art and literature so condition our lives that, for example, the castle of Chillon as a concrete object can no longer be separated from Byron's poem: "They enter into feeling together" ("Switzerland" 37). That is, the association of the "universal" emotional "form" of "beauty" with the Alps was itself the product of the romantics' intuition of a new way of experiencing mountains.

Not only can new associations be created, old ones may also decay. Because of its conceptual nature, any symbol tends "to lock up feeling in given constructions" (MS 238 83), from which the associated emotions may leach away. If, for any reason, a construction ceases to be associated with the feeling-as-emotion of a certain experience, it can no longer serve to communicate this intuition: "all concepts, all symbols . . . are mere

things . . . they live only by the associations we give them, and die by the same fate" (A&R 57). For a symbol is

a mere thing dependent for its effectiveness on our response to its associations The symbol as thing, word, gesture, ballet-step, building, is a compound of concept and associations. A cathedral, a flag, like any other work of art is the product of conceptual thought designed to convey emotion by the associations attached to its form. But as a mere thing, it requires to have its associations renewed. It always tends to lose them and to sink into the empty object, the bare concept-label, the mechanical sign or gesture.

(A&R 71)

For the eventual exhaustion of a symbol's ability to evoke appropriate emotion is inevitable. Cary gives the example of the Gothic architects who endowed their symbol with extremes of height and massiveness, qualities that "normally" excite awe. As time passed, the young architect who wished to "renew the joy, the intuition of the majesty of God" had "to build still taller, and balance still greater weights on more slender pillars," because the feeling evoked by any symbol "is always liable to fall away by familiarity" (A&R 54). The urge to new experience that drives historical development, that sends the child into the world alive with curiosity, leads to an erosion of emotional response to even the most potent symbols and compels the artist to seek new forms in which to communicate his or her intuitions: "The symbol, the symbolic system . . . is highly fragile. It is always dying" (A&R 71).

In Sartor Resartus, Carlyle deals extensively with the notion of the decay of symbols, particularly with their loss of emotional associations, and with the aridity and alienation resultant upon clinging to a spent symbol system. For Carlyle matches Cary's assertion that "we live in a symbolic world," by declaring that, " 'It is in and through Symbols that man . . . lives, works, and has his being' " (A&R 60; Sartor Resartus 153). Unlike Cary, Carlyle does not attempt to account for the decay of symbols, for he is more concerned with the urgency of his historical situation than with ultimate causes, but he is most insistent that they do decay into empty forms and that renewal is imperative if English civilisation is to survive (Sartor Resartus 155-56, 160, 171). He sees his own age as one of paralysis, despair, and unbelief, because his contemporaries either cling to the outworn forms of the exhausted Christian symbol system or embrace bare mechanistic concepts and empty social formulas, "Idols . . . empty for the worshipper's heart" (Sartor Resartus 111, 114-15; Heroes 208, 236). For this reason Carlyle suggests that the Man of Letters may be the hero of his age, a " 'Hierarch . . . and Pontiff of the World . . . the Poet and inspired Maker; who, Prometheus-like, can shape new symbols, and bring new fire from heaven' " (Sartor Resartus 155). The poet's revelation of "The unspeakable Divine Significance" informing a universe which appears mechanical and dead will redeem the times by renewing the capacity of symbols to evoke feeling (Heroes 180).⁴

Carlyle would doubtless consider the anarchic Gulley to be an unlikely hero. Yet Gulley's paintings can be seen as part of an attempt to revitalise those elements of a once powerful Christian mythology that are still relevant to the twentieth-century human condition. To Gulley, a religion is a particularly vulnerable symbol system, because its peak of significance coincides with its moment of dissolution. Just when a religion " 'grows into a real old faith, a masterpiece which people can really get something out of, each for himself . . . everybody keeps on saying that it ought to be pulled down at once,

because it's an insanitary nuisance' " (HM 171). Although Gulley uses elements of traditional Christian mythology (Adam, Eve, the serpent), the clergymen whom Plantie brings to view his painting of the Fall detect its subversion of orthodoxy. The Biblical narratives of the Creation and the Fall contain, for Gulley, enduring truths about the universal human condition in a world of freedom and responsibility, but the very fact that his final painting is on the wall of a ruined and abandoned chapel indicates the inadequacy of orthodox Christianity as a contemporary embodiment of these insights.

In an attempt to re-embody these truths in forms which hold emotional associations for the twentieth-century psyche, Gulley's paintings, which he somewhat hesitantly describes as " '[r]eligious art' " (HM 280), display a typically "Carian" tension of renewal and innovation. When Gulley decides that the affirmative aspect of "life itself, living" can be fittingly represented by painting his whale blue and depicting her suckling her calf (HM 240), he renews and exploits the potent emotional associations of the image of the Madonna. Clearly, while the whale represents Gulley's unique intuition, this symbol owes as much to cultural tradition as it does to his own creative imagination. Once again Cary eschews the simplicity of "either/or" for a polarity of innovation and continuity, as vital to art as it is to human history or to the growth of the psyche.

To appreciate fully Cary's notion of the symbol, one must examine carefully his depiction of the artist's intuition which the symbol strives to communicate to the observer. It is here that his habit of selecting and rejecting elements of other writers' notions becomes very evident with respect to Sartor Resartus. Cary represents intuition not as the ability of the self to transcend one world in order to touch another, but as a moment of heightened awareness stemming from transcending the self in order to enter into an intimate relationship with a unified reality. This is an important point of difference between Cary and Carlyle, to whom the world as we experience it is itself only a symbol: " 'All visible

things are emblems,' " space and time are merely the "clothing" of the Divine, and "all Forms whereby Spirit manifests itself to sense, whether outwardly or in the imagination, are Clothes" (Sartor Resartus 49, 50, 141, 180, 187). A hero is one who is in touch with "the Inner Fact of things," a person who "looks through the shows of things into things," and the symbol created by a hero-artist makes available " 'more or less distinctly and directly, some embodiment and revelation of the Infinite' " (Heroes 52, 63; Sartor Resartus 152). Symbolic works of art are "clothes" by which the invisible Divine is made visible in the world of Appearance. In contrast, Cary heaps scorn on the notion that Platonic Ideas have any real existence apart from the particulars which embody them (see Chapter I).

Consequently, Gulley's intuition of the natural world does not arise from an apprehension of Ideal Nature but from his own experience of life in a world in which people are free, yet subject to natural law. Out of this experience rises a moment of insight. Cary depicts this intuitive insight rising spontaneously into consciousness because, as one pole in a relationship of self and world, Gulley cannot summon inspiration at will, although he makes it possible by remaining open to the not-self. His moment of insight comes as he muses on the injustice of unmerited pain and suffering, an injustice which (according to Cary's "idea of life") is at least partly attributable to the fact that human freedom operates in a natural world whose laws neither God nor man is able to set aside at will (HM 103). Suddenly, Gulley recognises "the kick in the old horse" of a genuine intuition as he realises that the natural world is "SOMETHING THAT GOES ON GOING ON" independently of human notions of justice, although human beings are inextricably involved in these natural processes (HM 104). This moment of intuition is the genesis of Gulley's painting of the "Creation," in which a sleeping God creates a beautiful natural world that does not reflect human values.

However, there is reason to think that Cary may also have thought of the world of experience as itself a symbol, although in a sense very different from Carlyle's. In his notes, Cary says that the notion of a creation as a beginning to the universe is "absurd" and that reality has existed for all eternity (MS 267 N59 "Religion" 6; MS 267 N65 untitled ms 4). Gulley's painting does not depict the "Creation" as occurring at a specific moment in time, but portrays God as continually creative, the "old 'un who dreams it all," sleeping in "the cave of the eternal rock," the universe with which he is co-existent for all eternity (HM 241). As God "dreams it all for the first time," this dreaming brings new forms into an already existing reality in the same way in which the artist creates, through the imagination: "curly kale, as a work of the imagination, beats Shakespeare. The green, the tender, the humorous imagination. When the old 'un dreamt curly kale, he smiled in his beard" (HM 294). God fits the cave of eternity "like a nut in the shell" (HM 241) because he is immanent in the universe, as the artist is part of the natural world. But as he dreams new forms, God transcends the existent, just as the artist transcends what-is in order to envisage new possibilities. Elsewhere, Cary even suggests that God, like the artist, struggles with the limits of material reality in order to realise his dreams (MS 267 N65 "Politics and Freedom"; MS 238 2).

Thus God is the supreme symbolic artist and the world of the solid is a great work of art. Gulley's exclamation, "I am God" (HM 170), arises from his perception that the artist creates, not by passive mimesis of another reality, but by transcending the given to imagine new forms into existence in true, God-like creativity.⁵ Therefore, the artist not only transcends the self to obtain an insight into the nature of a single unified reality, but also transcends the given to realise new possibilities. In the first instance the artist is merely "receptive," a seer, but Cary cites Kierkegaard and Berdyaev to support his contention that in making new forms the artist is genuinely creative, bringing something new into existence

out of the realm of possibility, limited only by the "character" of the real (MS 272 P52 24v-25r; MS 280 N108 "Creation").

Clearly, Cary's notion of the artist who creates symbols conveying insight into the "character" of reality differs radically from Carlyle's depiction of the artist as one who reveals an aspect of ideal reality to the fallen world of appearance. Cary does not reject the existence of the ideal, but for him it is the product of the creative imagination, a possibility brought into existence in the work of art. In his notes, he cites the example of a building as the impression of an architect's vision (ideal) upon stone (real). The work of art, therefore, is the point of intersection of ideal and real (MS 267 N68 19r). Gulley thinks his "Bath" is a successful picture because in it Sara's legs are both " 'divine legs . . . ideal legs' " and recognisably her own (HM 100). Cary also depicts the work of art as the meeting place of particular and universal. An Egyptian cat sculpture, he says, was created to "communicate catness," and it is an example of "the universal in the particular" (MS 271 N82 27r). In his painting, Gulley strives to capture " 'the jug, the window[,] the fields and the woman as themselves. But not as any old jug and woman. But the jug of jugs and the woman of women' " (HM 100). Through the particular woman captured by Gulley in his painting

"you feel with all the women that ever lived and all the women that are ever going to live, and you feel their feeling while they are alone with themselves — in some chosen private place, bathing, drying, dressing, criticizing, touching, admiring themselves safe behind locked doors. Nothing there but women's feelings and women's beauty and critical eye."

(HM 100).

Gulley's intimate observation of Sara's delight in her own flesh has led him to an intuition of how women in general may experience the beauty of their bodies. The enjoyment of her own ideal beauty by universal woman has a genuine existence — in Gulley's painting of the real beauty of a particular woman.

Cary's adaptation of Carlyle's ideas results in a notion of the symbol as a polarity of concept and emotion, new creation and cultural tradition, particular and universal, ideal and real. In the closing pages of The Horse's Mouth, Cary demonstrates his notion of the symbol in the person of a white cat. Snow's name suggests the evanescence of the intuition of which she is the representative: "Wordsworth's intuitions die not only for the man, they fade very quickly for the child" (A&R 30-31). Like the symbol for which Gulley searches in order to embody his intuition, the cat is elusive and unbiddable, wilfully ignoring those who try to entice her, but approaching Gulley when he ignores her. Wandering through the "forests" of drinkers at the pub bar, the cat reminds Gulley of Blake's tiger, and of the white serpent, "symbol of nature and love" (HM 279-80, 285, 11). That is, Snow is evocative of other symbolic animals with traditional associations, much as Gulley's whale invites allusion to the Madonna. A miracle of classical form and graceful motion, the cat is also deaf and castrated, a reminder that even the most effective symbol is still only the imperfect embodiment of an original intuition (HM 281, 283, 285). At once the "only individual cat in the world" and "[u]niversal cat," Snow embodies the tension of particular and universal that exists at the heart of all art (HM 286). Finally, "with one spring, in every joyful lovely muscle," Snow ascends "into Heaven; or the garden wall" (HM 288), for symbols are the locus of the intersection of the ideal and the real.

Although the principal difference between Cary's and Carlyle's notions is the ontological status which each assigns to the "ideal," they are alike in that neither of them

suggests that a symbolic work of art is a mimesis of reality. Carlyle's symbol is "clothing," something artfully constructed and external to the divine reality it reveals, not a particular mimesis of a universal ideal form. This is the rationale behind the claim that a symbol may conceal as well as reveal or may change, decay, become empty of divine content (Dale, in Bloomfield 298-99). Cary's symbol represents a "translation" rather than an imitation: "there is no such thing as imitation in art. All art involves translation" (A&R 39). Furthermore, Cary depicts the symbol not as representing reality but as translating the intuition, the whole complex experience by which the self enters into relationship with the real, into a communicable form. The whale represents not nature, but Gulley's intimation of the organic world. Similarly, the Gothic cathedral is symbolic of the artist's intuition of the grandeur of God; it does not presume to imitate God himself.

Hazard Adams has written perceptively about Cary's aesthetic theory, but his elucidation of Cary's notion of what the symbol represents overlooks the central importance of "universal" emotional "form" to his description of intuition. This leads Adams to assert that Cary is inconsistent when he claims that the original intuition is communicated in symbolic art: "To call [the quality inherent in the symbol] 'intuition' is to imply that there has been conveyed to the observer the artist's *original* 'intuition.' But Cary has already argued in Art and Reality that this is virtually impossible and has rendered it possibly irrelevant in The Horse's Mouth" (Particular Real 47, italics mine). Adams contends that Cary depicts the pristine insight into reality as superseded by the artist's subsequent intuitions into the objectified art object. It can be shown that this is a misconception on Adams' part, that Cary depicts the communication of the original intuition as difficult but not as impossible, and that he implies that such communication is the *raison d'être* of all symbolic art.

Adams' difficulties stem from his failure to perceive the relationship of the "form" of the original intuition to the form of the symbol. The first is inherent, the second is constructed by a great deal of hard work that involves a certain amount of trial and error. In discussing Cary's objections to Croce's aesthetic theory, Adams notes that "the disagreement between Cary and Croce is finally over what status in existence each is willing to give to whatever it is that comes first in the artistic process," and that the "question had become one of whether intuitions had to be formalized linguistically or in some other symbolic form in order to be afforded the status of intuitions" (Particular Real 18, 16). Adams then, on the grounds of "the inevitable formal vagueness of preverbal intuitions, if they exist," states that this first step is, for Cary, a " 'general idea,' " a vague formless notion (Particular Real 18). However, the passage in Art and Reality from which this phrase is taken refers to the experimental nature of the process by which the artist realises in concrete form an intuition which is not itself formless. This becomes clear if one examines more of the passage in question:

. . . the work of art as completely realised is the result of a long and complex process of exploration. . . . The notion that a painter suddenly imagines a composition expressive of his feelings and straightway puts it down is untrue. He begins with a *general idea*, no doubt — if he has a landscape before his eyes, *he wants to express his feelings* about landscape in colour and form. But he has not yet got colour and form on canvas, he has not translated the actual fields and trees into symbols, and however experienced he is, he does not know how to get the exact effect he wants. . . . he [is] not merely

expressing an intuition, he [is] continually discovering new possibilities in his own work, now become objective to him, and realising them.

(A&R 86, italics mine)

It is clear that the phrase "general idea" does not refer to the "feelings" which are to be expressed but to the desire to express them and to vagueness about the form in which to do so.

As we have seen. Adams resolves several apparent inconsistencies in Cary's aesthetic theory by pointing out that the work of art becomes a piece of objective reality into which the artist may have intuitive insights (see note 2, above). In Art and Reality Cary portrays the artist treating the art object as a piece of objective reality and exploring his or her own work, both conceptually and intuitively, in order "to know its possibilities of development" (A&R 89). But Adams is mistaken in supposing that in succeeding intuitions into the objectified art object "the intuition that originally set Jimson going is lost and . . . it does not really matter" (Particular Real 47). The original intuition into the "character" of the real which inspires the painting remains as the reference point for Gulley's insights into the emerging work of art, into the manner in which this primary intuition may be realised in a concrete symbol. The kick of the foal by which Gulley recognises the appropriateness of the fish symbol to his notion of "The Fall" is not, as Adams claims, the sign of the sudden appearance of a new intuition that obliterates the original one (Particular Real 28). For one thing, this interpretation does not fit Cary's imagery. The foal's kick is not a symptom of a new conception, but a sign of the continuing presence of the original intuition, and of the beginning of a new stage in the process of bringing it to birth. What Gulley is experiencing is a subsequent intuition into the work itself, while his original "feeling — the intuition —

remain[s] to be examined, to be compared with the various expressions" with which he is experimenting (A&R 26).

For this reason Echeruo's suggestion that Cary's principal objection to Croce's aesthetic is to the notion that the intuition achieves form only when it is "expressed" as language or as visual image within the artist's mind (Order 21-22) is an important point to consider. Cary's notion is that the intuition is a "formal experience" even at the preconscious and preverbal stages because of the role of emotion in intuition. Ironically, this is stated clearly in two passages quoted at length by Adams, in which Cary asserts that the artist knows his or her own intuition, when it rises to consciousness, by the "form" of its emotion:

. . . if [Croce] means that immediate intuition of beauty is not known unless it has the form of its appropriate emotion, he is obviously right, but it seems to me that in that case he is stating a tautology. An intuition that does not have a distinctive form is not an intuition. What we mean by intuition is a formal experience

It would still be possible to say that the intuition as formal experience is only known to the artist by some verbal symbol. For instance, that he does not recognize and classify even to himself the experience of beauty . . . without the word, without some formal expression But all the evidence is the other way, all the evidence points . . . to the significance of intuition without verbal analysis

(MS 238, quoted in Hazard Adams, Particular Real 17, 18).

This means that, for example, the artist recognises an intuition of beauty by the emotional "form" of an experience of the beautiful. Therefore, Cary differs from Croce in seeing an intuition arriving in the consciousness as already possessing a definite and recognisable form. He contends that "experience can exist independently of expression . . . life has at least some definite forms of mental action without the verbal symbol" ("Tolstoy's Theory of Art," SE 132). That is, there is a certain form to experience that permits people consistently to recognise their own emotions of love, hate, anger, and joy.

There is yet another important distinction to be made, on the basis of "universal" emotional "forms," between Croce's and Cary's notions. Croce, Adams says, "is driven to see externalization as a mimesis in a foreign medium of an already established internal expression" (Particular Real 19). Cary depicts the relationship of the emotional "form" of an intuition to the form of the symbol as one of "translation," not of mimesis. The symbolic form is mimetic only in the sense that, by association, it creates in the observer a state that "mimics" the rising to consciousness and recognition of the emotional "form" that is appropriate to the intuition experienced by the artist. This occurs because a "universal" emotional "form" has come to be associated with a certain symbolic form either through custom (as in the example of Chillon) or through common fundamental life experiences (as in the image of a mother and child).

In experimenting with his or her materials, the artist constantly compares the form of the art object to that of the emotional "form" of his or her own objectivised intuition, not to imitate it, but to see if the form of the work will cause the appropriate emotional "form" to be evoked in the observer, "to know if it has had the effect he intended" (A&R 89; MS 239 203). Gulley's intuition appears to have arrived from outside, straight from the horse's mouth, even before he makes it into an object of reflection, because "universal" emotional

"forms" are to a certain extent "objective" to the isolated mind: "[f]or the artist his intuition always come to him as from a world of permanent and objective forms" (A&R 29). In a letter to Arthur Melville Clark, written in 1942, Cary reiterates his belief that " 'meaning [exists] before the symbol . . . there [can] be therefore a direct reference from the mind to a reality objective to that mind . . . the reality [consists], in its most obvious form, of primitive characters of feeling.' " The objective existence of emotional "forms" enables the artist " 'to compare his symbol or expression with what it [is] meant to contain and convey' " (quoted in Fisher, Joyce Cary Remembered 143-44). This comparison facilitates the process that Cary refers to as the "translation" of intuition into symbol.

Cary suggests that a successful "translation" of intuition into symbol can then be "read" by the observer in such a manner that it recreates in him or her an approximation of the entire intuitive experience. Accordingly, he defines a symbol as a "form which gives the same effect to another person" that the original intimation had for the artist (A&R 30). Cary depicts the observer as feeling a "shock of revelation, which is also recognition," yielding him "a knowledge of truth, of the real world, with exactly the same sense of illumination as if he had discovered it by force of intuition" (A&R 132, 133). That is, the observer experiences a truth about reality as directly as if he or she had personally intuited it. This claim is related to Cary's notion that the intuition itself is not a purely subjective experience, but a polarised relationship of the artist, as subject, with some object that exists in a reality in which the observer also shares. He argues that the symbol communicates by recreating this subject-object polarity for the observer. Since both subjects are responding in a similar manner (at the level of "universal" emotional "form") to an independently existing objective world, he suggests that one can be reasonably confident that the experiences are comparable. Therefore, Cary's whole notion of the symbol's ability to communicate intuitive experience depends upon three key ideas: the symbol recreates the artist's intuition

in the observer, the basis of intuition is a polarised relationship between subject and object, and the subjective pole of intuition is itself polarised into an isolated individual mind and "universal" emotions.

Obviously, Cary places on the emotional associations of the symbol most of the burden of ensuring that the shock of revelation in the observer will be a close approximation to the artist's intuition. It is this that betrays a debt to Wordsworth as well as to Carlyle. Cary's notion that "universal" emotional "form" is the primary vehicle of symbolic communication resembles Wordsworth's contention that the carefully formalised "overflow" of his own feelings will communicate the poet's experience to the reader who recognises similar emotions as part of his or her own experience (Preface to Lyrical Ballads, in Poetical Works 735, 738). Furthermore, Cary's notion of the symbol as the meeting place of "the individual idea and the universal real of emotion" (A&R 174) recalls Wordsworth's interest in the manner in which emotions are linked to ideas, and both ideas and emotions become associated with neutral objects. The whole psychology of the "spots of time" is bound up with the association of emotion with concept and of both with natural objects which then become "symbolic" of a certain psychological state. In addition, Cary's "shock" of recognition, produced by the symbol, is similar to the effect that Wordsworth claims for "the turnings intricate of verse": both reflect the power of a work of art to convey experiences through "forms and substances" that "Present themselves as objects recognised" by the observer (The Prelude V 601, 603-604).

Cary's artist uses the emotional component of the symbol to minimise the difficulty that, isolated in mind, people can never be sure that verbalised or visualised concepts mean the same thing to any two individuals, but the problem cannot be eliminated.⁶ As a corollary of these notions, the symbol's emotional associations set limits to its multivalency: a symbol can mean many things but not just anything.⁷ The limited

multivalency of a symbol stems from the association of "universal" emotional "form" with a concept which can be differently interpreted by different consciousnesses, or even by the same consciousness at different times. This becomes clear in the case of Gulley, whom Cary uses to explore the roles of reader as well as painter, of the interpreter as well as the creator of symbol. Gulley's varying interpretations of Blake's "Mental Traveller" have in common the anxiety experienced by the artist engaged in the process of creation and the ephemeral joy stemming from successful realisation of creative vision. Similarly, Gulley offers two interpretations of the Biblical Fall, as the fall into freedom and as the fall into sexual experience (HM 118-19, 174). Differing in concept, these interpretations have in common the emotional confusion and anxiety that stem from a "fall" into responsibility and relationship.

Clearly, Cary does not depict "universal" emotional "forms" as completely compensating for conceptual differences, and therefore he does not claim that intuition can be communicated without a certain amount of distortion. But he does claim that symbols are the only reasonably effective means of communicating intuition and that this is important, because in doing so they teach the observer a "truth" about the nature of reality. Gulley is convinced that the preliminary sketches in which he strives to capture his intuitions of the "Creation" represent " 'a fact, a poke in the belly . . . it's got a feeling . . . it's something, almost itself by itself ' " (HM 229). Cary suggests that Gulley's faith is justified because the intuition which occurred in the artist and which is recreated in the observer is a reliable source of knowledge of the nature of the real. It will be remembered that Cary asserts that the validity of intuitive insight is vouchsafed by the very intimacy of the relationship of subject and object in the act of intuition. It is the transcendence of self to enter into relationship with the natural creation that justifies Gulley's contention that his intuition comes straight from the horse's mouth.

Why, then, do not all great works of art, the products of intuitive insight into a single shared reality, tell the same version of the truth? Because in the intuitions of all but the youngest infant concepts become inextricably intertwined with emotion. The artist's feeling-as-apprehension arises in the midst of a "view of life" which gives every poet or painter "a theme, an idea of life profoundly felt and founded in some personal and compelling experience" that is subsequently reflected upon and shaped by conceptual education (A&R 104, 105). This "theme" interacts with the "feeling," the artist's pristine intuition into the nature of reality. For example, Gulley's notion of injustice is rooted in his childhood experiences with a brutal uncle, reinforced by his sister's sufferings at the hands of a selfish husband, and developed by his readings in philosophy. Thus, every artist offers a reliable intuition of reality filtered through the medium of his or her own unique "idea of life." What any work of art offers is not the truth, but a truth. Gulley's "Creation" is a representation of his intuition into the "character" of the natural creation, translated into symbols by a man whose "idea of life" is predicated upon both the injustice and the beauty of the world.

Just as, in creating the work of art, the artist's "feelings" interact with his or her individual "theme," so the interpreter experiences the revelation a symbol evokes against a background of education and personal experience by which his or her own intuitions are "conditioned": "Life offers different revelations to a French catholic and an English protestant, even to a European catholic and an American one" (A&R 153). The revelation is influenced by personal as well as by cultural differences, by the "idea of life" which "gives life and meaning" to the world for the reader (A&R 153). For example, Gulley borrows Blake's mythology to construct his narrative because, in seeking to understand his own situation, he finds Blake's poems express an insight into the artist's relationship with a

world of freedom. But he interprets Blake's poems in a manner consistent with his own "idea of life."

Cary describes reading as a creative act, and Gulley as reader has passed through a process of maturation analogous to that of the artist (A&R 119-20). The child reader, like the child artist, recognises the "universal" emotional "forms" but has not developed mentally to the point at which concept and emotion become associated in complex ways. Just as the intuitions of the adult artist are enriched by reflection and memory, so the adult reader responds to the work of art in a manner that appears to by-pass conscious thought, but that involves memory and concepts and is much more complex than the unreflecting intuitive response of the child (A&R 133-34). Because unique ideas interact in complex ways with "universal" emotion in both the creator and the interpreter of the symbol, the exact intuition of the artist cannot be recreated in the observer.⁸

Cary uses Gulley to explore the problems of the creator of symbol in terms of visual images and of the interpreter in terms of words, to emphasise that ensuring that the observer will accurately "re-translate" symbol back into intuition is particularly precarious for the artist whose medium is language. He shares Wordsworth's appreciation of the difficulty inherent in the attempt to convey visionary experience "by form / Or image unprofaned," of the inevitable inadequacy of language to communicate an intuition in all its pristine fullness: "All feel the limitations of language" in the struggle "to express an intuition of life which transcends any possible symbolic form" (The Prelude II 305-306; A&R 152; see also A&R Chapter XXI "Experience and Word"). Gulley's intense discomfort whenever someone tries to put the "meaning" of his pictures into words stems in part from his recognition that words are dangerous, that they can be used to nail "your work of imagination to the rock of law . . . and [submit] him to a logical analysis" (HM 48). As a painter, Gulley is highly suspicious of words as a medium for conveying truth

about anything: "When you're talking a lot you haven't time to get the words right. Talk is lies. The only satisfactory form of communication is a good picture." He further contends that " 'when you tell a truth you kill it. And it changes into something else' " (HM 88, 99).

In his notes, Cary emphasises the inadequacy of language to communicate the true "form" of a feeling. However, he asserts that poetic language comes closest to conveying the truth of an experience, by "translating" this "form" into a symbol (MS 280 N108 "Feeling"). Gulley, too, privileges poetic language. Although he distrusts analytical language, and even ordinary talk, Gulley celebrates Blake's poems as symbolic communications of the poet's intimation of reality. Poetic language is privileged because it elevates "signs" into "symbols," by exploiting the ability of words to acquire heightened emotional connotations (A&R 58). Wordsworth, too, is acutely aware that "every man must know that an attempt is rarely made to communicate impassioned feelings without something of an accompanying consciousness of the . . . deficiencies of language." Yet Wordsworth also asserts that this deficiency can be meliorated by "the interest which the mind attaches to words, not only as symbols of the passion, but as *things*, active and efficient, which are themselves part of the passion" (Note to "The Thorn," Poetical Works 701).

That is, for Wordsworth as for young Antony and Evelyn, words acquire a heightened significance by association with powerful emotion, so that he evolves "from intense and personal experiences . . . an intensely personal use of language" (Sykes Davies 76-79, 88). Wordsworth is aware of the danger that the associations of verbal sign with emotion as the result of personal experience may result in a private symbolic language which will not serve as a mode of communication. Although, like Cary, he is convinced that his own "passions and thoughts and feelings" are "the general passions and thoughts and feelings of men," he worries lest "my language may frequently have suffered from

those arbitrary connections of feelings and ideas with particular words and phrases" (Preface to Lyrical Ballads, in Poetical Works 738, 740). Nonetheless, Sykes Davies argues that Wordsworth's poetry surmounts this difficulty by transmuting a language that is "sometimes 'private' in its origins" into "words of wide general power by the process of apparent tautology and repetition" (88). David Simpson suggests that, according to Wordsworth's aesthetic, "endowing passive objects with feelings and associations . . . [gives] people a direct emotional connection to objects, and to each other by means of these objects" (46) because these "figured forms" may become part of a public language through repeated use. These suggestions are at bottom the same that Cary makes with respect to Byron's poetry and Chillon — that the formalisation in words of personal intuitive experience can alter the emotional associations of some neutral object for an entire culture.

Cary's polarisation of the subject into isolated self-consciousness and "universal" emotions which remain "objective" to it is an attempt to bridge the gap between a private language of personal associations and a public language of symbols with agreed upon associations. In the same letter to Clark in which Cary insists that the symbol refers to an objective reality of "universal" emotions, he suggests that objective reality, for human beings, consists " 'largely of . . . a universe of discourse' " (quoted in Fisher, Joyce Cary Remembered 144). Cary does not express himself very clearly and appears to contradict himself. But the contradictions can be resolved if by " 'universe of discourse' " he means to refer to what he elsewhere describes as "a symbolic world," created to satisfy the "feelings," in which people live the most important part of their lives (A&R 60). This interpretation seems reasonable because, in the letter to Clark, Cary goes on to describe the "universe of discourse" as a " 'created idea' " which is meaningless unless it is rooted in " 'primitive feelings' " (quoted in Fisher, Joyce Cary Remembered 144). That this created universe is in part a public world of commonly held symbolic associations is made clear by

Cary's discussion of the significance of uniforms and of fashions in architecture (A&R 60-61). Thus Byron, who intuited a richer and more satisfying way of experiencing mountains, had his symbol adopted by a whole culture's "discourse."

Obviously, Cary's emphasis upon emotional "forms" as the basis of his notion of the symbol is an attempt to minimise the danger of solipsism which Wordsworth sees in figurative language. Cary contends that all symbols, verbal or visual, function in the same way, recreating the artist's intuitive experience in the observer by invoking customary associations of "universal" emotional "forms" with common experiences or with objects that are part of a consistent reality. This works reasonably well for visual images such as the whale, the Swiss Alps, and the Gothic cathedral, all of which have inherent properties that Cary can argue are linked, by nature or by habit, to particular "universal" emotional responses. But it is not clear how one can be sure which emotional "form" is being appealed to by a particular word, which has no inherent quality that will evoke a specific emotional response, but depends upon the reader's ability to refer it to some object or experience that has such inherent properties. This is the process by which the words "whale" and "death" become emotionally charged for young Evelyn Corner, but as Wordsworth points out, it is highly subjective.⁹ Nevertheless, the principal strength of Cary's notion of the verbal symbol is that while the conceptual "meaning" of a poem or novel must be captured and conveyed to the reader "in" words, its emotional significance is communicated by a symbol which evokes the actual experience of an emotion in the reader. For example, the artist is not required to capture in words the majesty of God, but only to join to the idea of divine majesty phrases that will evoke in the reader emotions of reverence and awe.

Given Cary's interest in the problems connected with using verbal symbols, it is not surprising that he read The Symbolist Movement In Literature in 1910.¹⁰ However,

Fisher's notion that Cary as a young man was influenced profoundly by the *symbolistes*, particularly Huysmans, is unsupported by any solid evidence. Fisher contends that although Cary became "a symbolist in conscious revolt against the Symbolist movement" this revolt "stemmed from his previous discipleship" (Theme 39). She attributes the paucity of evidence for a period of *symbolistes* influence to Cary's "secrecy about his sources, symbols, and meanings," and to a desire not to "offend his wife" by dwelling on the "Bohemian period of his life" as an art student in Paris (Theme 39). Her attempt to prove "influence" depends largely upon the construction of dubious chains of coincidences: in 1907 Cary went to Edinburgh, where he "would be almost certain to mention Raffalovich to his Bohemian friends, some of whom would certainly know of his books, and so of his relationship to Huysmans" and therefore "Cary's interest in Huysmans dated back at least to 1907" (Theme 48). Fisher finds it remarkable that Enid Starkie, a close friend of Cary's and "an authority on the Symbolists," failed to detect "his real knowledge of them" and "his reactionary attitude to them," and hints darkly at the possibility that Starkie did see this "and failed to say so" because it did not fit her own notion of Cary (Theme 40). When permitted to speak for herself, Starkie states bluntly that Cary "did not consider symbolism, as the Symbolist poets did, as the intuitive means of coming into contact with ideal reality" (in Richardson 129).

It should be obvious that, while Cary's notions bear a general resemblance to those Symons attributes to the *symbolistes*, they are also fundamentally different in many respects. In contrast to Cary's ontological consistency, Symons slides from one ontological assumption to another, referring to the symbol as rendering both "the perception of a reality which is opposite to the world of appearance," and "the perception of the world of appearance with a visionary intensity" (Ellmann, introduction to Symons xiii). In Symons' book Cary would have encountered Villiers' depiction of experiential reality as "the dream,

and the spiritual world as the reality," Verlaine's "[i]n instinctive, unreasoning" artist "entirely at the mercy of the . . . moment," his "instincts," and his "passions," Mallarmé's deliberate obscurity, Huysmans' "disgust" with the world, and Maeterlinck's mystical faith in the " 'inner light,' " all of which Cary rejects or calls into question (Symons 20, 50, 72-74, 76, 89). On the final page of the 1908 edition Symons speaks of the "infinite insignificance of action . . . the delight of feeling ourselves carried onward by forces which it is our wisdom to obey," a complete antithesis to Cary's notions of responsibility and freedom (Symons 96). Kermode, in Romantic Image, and Hazard Adams, in Philosophy of the Literary Symbolic, both emphasise the *symbolistes'* retreat to the magical, the occult, and the irrational, their characterisation of the symbol as concealment from all but the initiated few, and their tendency to lapse into impenetrable solipsism, notions and positions antithetical to Cary's.

Far more convincing than Fisher's argument is Adams' discussion of Cary as an English symbolist and disciple of Blake. Since Cary repeatedly affirmed his admiration for Blake, made extensive notes on his symbol system, and made Blake's poetry a prominent feature of The Horse's Mouth, this argument is very compelling. Adams characterises Cary's notions as "a somewhat unique twist to a tradition of thought about the literary uses of language that dates back to the sources of the old distinction between symbol and allegory," a tradition that includes Blake and Carlyle, and culminates in the *symbolistes* (Particular Real 15). The many elements that Cary's notion of the symbol holds in common with that of Carlyle provide further support for Adams' contention.

Adams' placement of Cary is especially significant in that he is a contemporary defender of the symbol against charges of "bad faith." These accusations are part of the current critical rehabilitation of allegory at the expense of "the romantic delusions of the symbol" (Krieger 14). Critics such as Paul de Man see allegory as legitimate because the

allegorical signifier honestly proclaims that it is "pointing to an earlier and fuller reality outside itself" that can never actually be reached, that is to an absence (Krieger 4). Romantic notions of the symbol, on the other hand, are execrated as pretending to the status of "miracles of co-presence": "a poetic symbol [is seen] as a signifier that generates and fills itself with its own signified," the distance between signified and signifier is abolished, and a "unity that transcends time and difference" is claimed for the symbol (Krieger 4, 7, 16). Cary detests allegory, on the grounds that it disjoins concept from emotion and falsifies reality by reducing the unique particular to representative membership in a category ("Interview," SE 14; A&R 158-72; Mahood 85). However, it should be clear from the discussion of symbols in this chapter that Cary, like Carlyle, regards them as artfully constructed temporary forms whereby an intuition about a pre-existent reality is communicated. Furthermore, since the symbol's emotional associations are never "in" the symbol at all, but evoked by it, he clearly does not see it as a "miracle of co-presence."

Nonetheless, Cary does have some notion of "meaning" as inherent in the symbol, rather than as pointed to by it. According to Cary, people must create a symbolic world in order to satisfy their "feelings" because "meaning," in the sense of value, does not exist in the cosmos except by virtue of the self-conscious, creative, imaginative subject: "The world of meaning . . . exists only by the continuing effort of the imagination" (MS 210 3; quoted in Christian 10, 184). Gulley is acutely aware that the universe is neither "unjust" nor "beautiful" except to the consciousness of people such as Plantie and himself (HM 208). Therefore, "meaning" is something made when people create symbols depicting "beauty," "truth," and "goodness" and enact these values in their lives.¹¹ The artist is a "creator of meanings" who charges the world with value. This world of meaning and value must respect the limits of possibility placed upon human action by the "material and moral real,"

but it is the only place in which reality is "made actual, complete and purposeful to our experience" (A&R 147, 158, 174-75).

In Philosophy of the Literary Symbolic, Hazard Adams uses a somewhat similar notion to critique de Man's argument (355-65). As part of this discussion, Adams points out that de Man's notions "proceed *from* the attitude that language is ideally a copier or a signifier of a preceding reality" (356). Adams does not argue for Coleridgean "miracles" of presence on the part of the symbol, but for a notion which he depicts as also evolving within the romantic tradition: that symbols are creative of a world of human meaning rather than mimetic of an unattainable "origin" with which they can never coincide (Literary Symbolic 354, 356, 359-60). In view of the relationship which this thesis traces between the notions of Cary and Carlyle, it is particularly interesting that Adams considers Sartor Resartus "a necessary step toward establishing the idea of a cultural reality that symbols generate rather than merely transparently stand for" (Literary Symbolic 47). Many of Cary's notions would place him within this alternative romantic tradition, described by Adams as descending from Carlyle: that it is not reality but the experience of reality which is communicated by symbol; that symbol "mimics" the original intuitive experience by recreating it in the observer; that intuitive experience takes place within a polarity involving a pre-existent objective reality and a subject which is itself polarised into "universal" emotions and a self-consciousness embedded in a world of humanly created value.

It is evident that Cary's notion of the symbol is consistent with his preference for relationship over identity and for polarity over dialectic. The symbolic work of art is the result of a complex chain of interactions of the self with the world, first to intuit some aspect of the real, second to find some form into which to "translate" the intuition, and third to realise this form in a concrete object. This is a fundamentally individual activity, but the purpose of this strenuous effort is to share with other people the fruits of one's lonely

encounters with the world. The power of symbolic art to communicate intuitive experience means that when Cary suggests that "we live in a symbolic world" (A&R 60), he is not referring to the enclosed solipsistic world of a *symboliste*, but to one in which insights into reality can be shared.

For despite all hazards of creation and interpretation, Cary insists that the symbol is the only effective means "by which one individual mind can express itself in material form and so communicate with another" (A&R 57-58). The universality of emotional "form" and the communication of ideas by the conceptual component of the symbol ensure that the interpreter will recognise both a "fundamental presentation" of reality and "its development, its action, in [the artist's] own special world" (A&R 154). Insofar as the artist's intuition is concerned with one of the great common life experiences, it will have a general relevance. It is for this reason that "classic" works of art transcend time and culture (A&R 154, 157). But a symbol stimulates the observer, not merely to a recreation of a "universal" experience of the real, but also to a sympathetic appreciation of its variations in different ages, cultures, and individuals (A&R 153-54). Here we meet again Cary's notion of the fundamental universality and infinite variability of human experience.

Through art, people are able to share the intuitions of others. This is important, because intuition is of value in telling people how to live their lives in day-to-day engagement with the world. Carlyle, who advocates substituting action for inhibiting self-conscious reflection, asserts that the only solution to the pressing social and spiritual problems of his, or any, age is to work in a manner that takes into account "the actual Reality of things" that symbols reveal (Past and Present 35). Cary suggests that since intuition gives one insight into the real, one need not wait until the highly problematic day when the exact nature of the real has been decided upon in order to make creative decisions. That is, one need not hesitate to engage with the world of whose fundamental nature one

cannot be sure. Cary's characters are therefore not inevitably and necessarily paralysed, unable to act, to work, or to create. The work of art, as an embodiment of the encounter of self and world, obviously is of value to those who wish to learn about the real in order to act creatively.

Therefore, a work of art represents not merely the intersection of self and world, but also of self and other selves. Art is in fact the meeting place of world and self and other, with self as the central term. While in intuition one transcends the self in order to enter into a relationship with the world, the symbol is a vehicle of self-transcendence in the other direction, an attempt to communicate with others. The aim of such communication is very seldom mere self-expression on the part of the artist: "He is, in fact, almost invariably a propagandist, he is convinced that his idea of things is true and important and he wants to convert others, he wants to change the world" (A&R 91).

It is the desire and the ability to affect others and to change the world that imposes a moral constraint on the artist. Carlyle and Cary are both deeply concerned with the moral and spiritual implications of a failure of mature self-transcendence on the part of those whose gifts give them the power to influence other people's decisions. Carlyle assesses Voltaire as a poor philosopher, overconcerned with self and therefore blind to " 'The Divine Idea' " ("Voltaire," Essays II 135). As a result, Voltaire was only capable of destroying the old Christian symbol system, not of constructing new "clothing" for " 'the divine Spirit of that Religion' " (Sartor Resartus 133-34). That is, he did not offer a solution for modern alienation because he was unable to escape from the prison of self and to make contact with the real.

However, as we have seen, Carlyle considers the extent of inspiration to be the measure of a person's virtue, and the great artist-hero to be also a good person: aesthetic and moral excellence are described as two aspects of a single spiritual force. We have also

noted that Cary calls this aspect of Carlyle's thought into question in the characters of Gulley Jimson and Mr. Johnson. But he does not depict creativity and morality as completely disconnected.¹² Following Kierkegaard, Cary depicts moral choice as fundamentally creative (see Chapter I), and he applies the same criterion to artistic and to moral maturity, in that both can be measured by the extent of the individual's capacity for self-transcendence. In his second trilogy, Cary explores the consequences of a failure in self-transcendence on the part of two men, one highly creative and one exceedingly unimaginative. In his final work, The Captive and the Free, he returns to an area of concern that is explored in his earliest novels — the notion of guiding one's conduct by an "inner light," an imaginative construct that is interpreted as a divinely sanctioned moral imperative.

NOTES TO CHAPTER V

¹ Many of Cary's narrators employ vivid similes. Sara and Evelyn are particularly fond of this trope, but Gulley himself frequently uses it. On the very first page of his narrative he compares the sun in a mist to "an orange in a fried fish shop" (HM 11). The incongruity of this simile arises from the fact that Gulley is a painter who sees the London landscape in terms of colour, mass, and outline. When describing in words, he searches his memory for objects with exactly the right colour or shape. Evelyn, as a child, seeks to understand the world by comparing newly encountered objects to those within his short experience. Sara is a woman whose world is rich, but of small compass, and who therefore uses homely similes. Although Cary uses simile as a vivid method of communicating sensory and emotional response to experiential reality, his notion of the symbol is that it involves transcending immediate experience to intuit some aspect of the "character" of the real.

² There are other sources of confusion in Cary's depiction of the process of artistic creation. The original intuition which inspires a painting rises suddenly into consciousness as a feeling-as-apprehension. Similarly, Gulley suddenly recognises the fish as a symbol appropriate to the communication of his intuition. The symbol, therefore, as the product of a largely unconscious synthesis, rises into consciousness in the same manner as a feeling-as-apprehension. Even more confusingly, Cary uses the same terminology to describe how Gulley arrives at the solution to purely technical problems of colour and mass. Gulley describes his recognition of the appropriate shape for Adam's shoulder as coming "straight from the horse," that is, as arising in his consciousness with the force of a genuine intuition (HM 29). This is not, however, as inconsistent as it at first appears. Hazard Adams points out that as Gulley creates, his painting becomes an object with an independent existence of its own (Particular Real 28). It thereby becomes part of the "real" into which the artist can properly have intuitive insights.

³ As Echeruo suggests, the ultimate source of these notions may well be Kant for whom "art is necessarily symbolic because only through the attachment of 'emotional supercharges' to aesthetic 'forms' is communication possible between men" (Order 22).

⁴ Typically, Carlyle, sensing the importance of literature in a secular age, wants all literary men to be organised along the lines of a religious order (Heroes 190ff).

⁵ "Plato calls [art] the imitation of objects because for him objects themselves were merely imitation, and as a moralistic dictator, hating and fearing the power of art, he wished to put art in the humblest possible place" (A&R 17).

⁶ An amusing illustration of this is Gulley's and Sara's differing interpretations of the word "stuck." Both use the word to explain Gulley's periods of irritability and short temper, which sometimes erupt into violence. When Gulley says he is "stuck," he is referring to the frustration of artist's block. Sara uses the word to mean that Gulley is constipated, a physical affliction which she believes has unfortunate effects upon his psychological state (HS 117).

⁷ Of course, context also sets limits to meaning, as in Cary's example of the President's top hat and Churchill's cigar (A&R 62-63, 67).

⁸ Cary's notes emphasise that universals are expressions of the character of being itself, without which no particulars could exist, but that universals have real existence at any moment only by virtue of particulars (MS 268 S10A 3). This is consistent with his contention that emotions exist as "universal forms" but only by virtue of the innumerable shades of difference that make every experience of emotion unique. Therefore, not even "universal" emotional "forms", undistorted by personal or cultural differences, could recreate exactly the same experience in the reader.

⁹ Cary tries to circumvent this problem in Art and Reality by using as examples of literary symbolism whole scenes from the novels he admires. In these discussions, his notion of the use of words is quite "painterly," in that he treats them not as symbols in themselves but as a medium out of which the artist constructs a symbolic scene. In this manner, he attempts to explain literary symbols in terms of the notions he derives from a study of symbolic painting. This places Cary within the romantic tradition which Hazard Adams depicts as moving in the direction of treating symbol at the level of "the poem as a whole" rather than as "a device or element in the poem" (Literary Symbolic 358). Adams' notion that "that the whole poem is a symbolic form" recalls Cary's depiction of the novel as a "total symbol" that cannot "have a complete significance until the whole work is known" (A&R 103).

¹⁰ Cary purchased Sartor Resartus at about the same time (Fisher, Theme 38). Kermode points out that Carlyle's definition of the symbol, which Symonds chose as epigraph, "had been widely circulated in France" (Romantic Image 109).

¹¹ Since Cary's God is love and beauty and goodness, this would imply that people create God. The nature of deity is one of the least precise and consistent of Cary's notions. However, it is possible that he thought of the relation of the divine to the human as analogous of that of universal to particular. That is, "God" is the universal "goodness" which would not exist without individual acts of human charity, but without which such acts would not be possible.

¹² For one thing, Cary draws a connection between morality and literary works, for literature alone among the arts takes morality as its content (A&R 144, 149). Therefore, he attributes a moral dimension to all literary creation: "In the final resort, all novel-writing is moral." Even "Pater, Huysmans, or Wilde" is obliged to shape his creations according to some "principle of choice" and "his only [available] criterion is moral value" ("Morality and the Novelist," SE 154-55). For this reason, in assessing works of literature although "[w]e certainly distinguish between aesthetic and moral judgment," Cary suspects "that our aesthetic judgment is still charged with a certain sensibility which we must call moral" (A&R 136). This is certainly true of Cary himself as a critic. One of his principal objections to allegory is that it "lays down categorical imperatives for conduct in a world of particular and unique events" and "treats the world as a mechanism whereas it is a world of free souls" (A&R 163).

CHAPTER VI

Carlylean and Kierkegaardian "Heroes": Egotism, Guilt, and the "Inner Light"

(i)

In his final four books, Prisoner of Grace, Except the Lord, Not Honour More, and The Captive and the Free, Cary continues to explore the importance of the capacity for self-transcendence, by examining the consequences for his characters of a failure to escape the confines of the ego. We have seen that Cary's notion of immoral behaviour is that it is fundamentally immature, a sign that the person has not developed enough to transcend the self in order to interact compassionately with others whose selfhood is respected. We have also noted that he considers egotism to be the root of all neuroses (MS 233 "Freedom of Mind" 216). His notion of personal development leads him to depict such self-enclosure as crippling to the self, which can become fully mature and remain healthy only when it is capable of self-transcendence.

The central importance of the notion of self-transcendence to Cary's "idea of life" is revealed by the fact that he depicts virtually all notions which denigrate the importance of individual moral responsibility as the product of entrapment within the ego: he describes the notions of Plato (as a political philosopher), Rousseau, Spencer, Marx, Hegel, and Hitler as rooted in "egotism" (PM 61-62). The egotism of Plato's and Hitler's notion that most people are incapable of governing themselves is clear. But how can claiming that people are at the mercy of divine, natural, or historical processes which are beyond their control be interpreted as egotism? The connection is provided by Cary's suspicion of "inner light

mysticism," in which an individual claims privileged insight into the will of God or into the workings of historical or natural necessity (PM 62). In his notes Cary classes mystics who follow the "inner light" with followers of "Rousseauism" and anarchism (MS 251 P9 inside front cover; MS 267 N60 untitled ms). In Power in Men he argues that Tolstoy's divinely inspired anarchism and Hegel's historical dialectic err in the same respect, in that each man sets up some supreme force ("God" or "the Absolute") and then "reads the will of this power in his own will" (52-53, 57). This raises the possibility that the light that guides may be easily confused with personal desire.

Indeed, Cary claims that all those who believe that they can detect beneath contingency the workings of natural law, the Absolute, "automatic historical process," or a dialectic, base their claims, directly or indirectly, on the "[d]irect access of [the] individual to God's will" and equate this will with their own (PM 61-64).¹ A belief in the absolute authority of one's own will is inherently immoral: "A man who appeals to his own will and mind for guidance acknowledges no other right. There is no hope for mankind as long as it takes egotism, under any name, for a law of conduct" (PM 64). This is a crucial point of difference between Cary's notions and those of Kierkegaard and Carlyle, both of whom posit the existence of "heroes" whose actions express the divine will, and to whom the ethical norms of their societies do not always apply. In the second trilogy, Cary explores the consequences for the self of assuming that one is a Carlylean "hero," while in The Captive and The Free he turns to a consideration of a man who puts himself in the position of Kierkegaard's "hero" of faith, Abraham.

In The Horse's Mouth and Marching Soldier, he had already portrayed Hitler as a self-styled "heroic" prophet whose implicit belief in his own destiny plunged Europe into chaos. But in his final novels Cary depicts such men as dangerous to themselves as well as to others. In Latter and Nimmo he depicts the egotism of assuming "heroic" status for

oneself as either preventing the emergence of a fully developed selfhood or eroding an already existing self.

Jim Latter's selfhood is crippled because he is locked in a solipsistic ego that cannot enter into relationships with other people or engage with the world in meaningful ways. His own narrative, Not Honour More, makes it clear that he is arrogant, opinionated, and intolerant. He sins because of an immature ego that precludes respecting the freedom of others or granting them any self-affirmation that contradicts his own narrow-minded notions. He fails to recognise the selfhood, or even the humanity, of those who disagree with him, frequently characterising people he doesn't like as animals, particularly insects or vermin (NHM 15, 31-32). Latter tries repeatedly to control and to direct events, but his childish self-enclosure prevents his engaging creatively with the world and other people. He fails as a soldier, as a colonial administrator, and as a landed gentleman because his unimaginative, self-centred idea of life leads him to misinterpret people and situations and to perform one disastrous action after another.

Latter attempts to convince the reader of his "heroic" status by depicting himself as an honourable man, a dutiful soldier, and a responsible colonial administrator. He attributes his failure in all these roles not to his own shortcomings, but to the villainy of others. Some critics accept Latter's self-assessment as reasonably accurate (Fisher, Theme 295; Echeruo, Order 128; Robert Bloom 187). Others point out that Cary carefully and consistently depicts Latter's notions of honour, duty, and responsibility as abstractions that fail to materialise in his reactions to concrete situations (Hazard Adams, Particular Real 65; Christian, Creative Imagination 207-10). For example, Latter's supercilious and sentimental attitude toward Varney, a working man who "knows his place," does not motivate any action to help a man who is unemployed, homeless, and forced to put his mother in the workhouse (NHM 183-84). From Nina's narrative the reader knows that

Latter seduced and impregnated his adolescent cousin, abandoning her because marriage might interfere with his military career (PG 20-21).

Latter pays a heavy price for failing to escape from his immature self-enclosure and for refusing to recognise other people's right to differ from himself. Because he is incapable of the mutual recognition Cary depicts as essential to the development of a mature person, Latter's own selfhood is compromised. His "idea of life" is a pastiche of hackneyed and sentimental notions, incorporating few original intuitions. His very language, which at first appears highly idiosyncratic, the outward sign of a fully developed individual personality, is revealed on closer examination to be a string of telegraphic slang, empty abstractions, and clichés. Latter is one of Cary's most self-destructive characters. His narrative reflects a man who is bitter, resentful, and irrationally convinced that he has been cheated of happiness by the man who "stole" the love of his life by marrying the woman he had deserted. Driven by furious jealousy of Nimmo, Latter destroys himself by sacrificing the most meaningful relationship of his life to an empty, abstract "honour." Killing Nina is for Latter fundamentally self-destructive, for she is the true foundation of his life, the person whose recognition and sympathy affords him the limited selfhood of which he is alone capable. Even his narrative (otherwise merely the episodic reportage of his own experience as a series of disconnected incidents) acquires meaning only in relation to his possessive love for Nina and his jealousy of Nimmo.

Nimmo is a much more imaginative person than Latter, but he abuses the power of the imagination to transcend the self. His imagination enables him to identify with other people in their particular situations and thereby to discover the most effective means of playing upon their emotions and desires. Cary is willing to accept the argument that sometimes it becomes necessary for a political leader to manipulate people for their own good ("Political and Personal Morality," SE 231; PG 5). He even argues in defence of

manipulating people by "a selected, an arranged, truth" and he suggests that politicians are artists: "the modern leader of the people needs to be a spell-binder, and poets have never been very scrupulous in getting their effect" ("Political and Personal Morality," SE 231; PG 6). He asserts that it is impossible to govern effectively without using such tactics ("Political and Personal Morality," SE 227, 228). But Cary does not exempt either the politician or the artist from the moral standards that apply to everyone else: "Lies are always lies, evil is always evil; public and private morals are governed by precisely the same law" ("Political and Personal Morality," SE 229)

Moreover, the politician is an artist whose raw material is human lives, and who is frequently tempted to violate the moral "imperative" to respect the freedom and selfhood of others. Thus the politician is placed in a difficult situation which entails an enormous risk. For this reason, Cary's notes suggest that " 'those who do the job' " of governing are sacrificial figures who make " 'the *moral sacrifice*' " of incurring the risk of " 'degradation' " (MS 380 N145; quoted in Rosenthal, "Chester Nimmo" 338). Because of the temptations the job entails, because of the necessity for someone to assume responsibility for government, Cary deals leniently with Nimmo's public behaviour. He is depicted as a successful politician who accomplishes a great many reforms as part of a government that contributes significantly to bettering the lot of the working class.²

However, even in the early days of Nimmo's career, when he is passionately committed to rescuing the working class from poverty and exploitation, he never forgets the possible effects of his actions upon his own future. Cary implies that this is a rather venial sin: "Chester was an adventurer not only for his own career, but for a cause that he thought good" (PG 7). Even Nina, who hates and fears lies (but who finds that the "politics" of marriage "force" her to tell numerous untruths), can see that Nimmo finds it necessary on occasion to tell an "arranged" truth to his constituents, to the newspapers, or

even to the House in order to safeguard his own career. Nina can excuse his sophistical behaviour in the Banks Rams affair, because "it would have been *quite misleading* for Chester to have told the whole story." Telling the unarranged truth would have resulted in "a *great injustice*, that is, the ruin of Chester's career" (PG 214). For she understands that in his public life Nimmo is "on the whole a good man" who is "trying to do right" (PG 6). Nina points out that in the political arena Nimmo's sins are venial compared to his temptations: "he was . . . a 'good man' — I mean (and it is saying more than could be said of most people) as good as he could be in his special circumstances, and better than many were in much easier ones" (PG 216).

More importantly, Nina can accept the half-truth which enables Nimmo to remain in office because it does not involve the sacrifice of anyone else. But his sins are not always merely venial. Nimmo's behaviour is that of a man who subscribes to Carlyle's notion that the "hero" is one who has a greater insight into reality than most people, who is "providentially" sent to guide the masses, and who therefore has the right to command the obedience of those less gifted than himself (Heroes 52, 63). Carlyle insists that people ought to surrender their own wills to that of the "heroic" leader, because such a man rules by "Divine Right" and the highest morality is obedience to his wishes (Heroes 225, 228). Cromwell's duplicity was part of his greatness, for "a superior man" is entitled to his "reticences" about his own "deeper insight" which, if disclosed, would disturb the equanimity of smaller men and make them useless for the "hero's" purpose (Heroes 253-54). True "liberty" for the masses, therefore, is "being forced to find out the right path, and to walk thereon," to be induced to perform the work for which they are best suited "by permission, persuasion, and even compulsion" (Past and Present 290). As we have seen, this attitude is antithetical to Cary's notions of the freedom and responsibility of all individuals.

Nimmo is "heroic" in the sense that he is one of Cary's Promethean artists, iconoclasts, and visionaries who inspire human development. His political creed is one of constant renewal, of responding creatively to contingency, and for this reason he is one of those who promote the development of history. He is so successful at changing with the times to accommodate antithetical points of view that he becomes the one man who can unite all factions and save the nation from civil war during the General Strike. But Nimmo is a fallen Prometheus who errs in embracing his own myth of "the great man." Cary uses Nimmo's fall to point out a standing temptation to which such a "hero" is subject, for he sacrifices others to a "cause" which becomes increasingly equated with his own political success. His personal degradation becomes evident as the motivation behind his lies becomes more and more suspect. Nimmo degenerates as he confuses his own success with his social goals, equates his personal political survival with his responsibilities to his constituents, and sacrifices other people to the "cause" which he conflates with his own "heroic" destiny.

It is in Nimmo's family life, and particularly in his marriage, that the cost of his sins is manifested, for in pursuing his "heroic" destiny he sacrifices those who are closest to him to the "cause" which has become synonymous with his personal ambition.³ Although she excuses much of his public behaviour as necessary, Nina's narrative reflects her rage and frustration at Nimmo's treatment of herself and her son Tom. She is alienated by Nimmo's attempts to justify lies which have harmful effects on others and by his sacrifice of other individuals, even his own children, to the "cause" or to his personal ambitions (PG 352-53, 355, 399). Her narrative is a reliable guide to the process of Nimmo's degeneration because she distinguishes between his venial "necessary" half-truths and his more serious sins. The so-called "ambiguity" of attitude Nina's narrative displays toward Nimmo (Mitchell, "Joyce Cary's Prisoner of Grace," 275) is in this respect not ambiguous

at all, but an indication that the necessity for a certain amount of expediency in political life does not justify the sacrifice of real people to self-interest, or even to a "principle" or a "cause."

The quarrel between Nimmo and Nina over whether or not to send Tom to public school is exemplary of the conflict between them. He sees the issue as one of whether or not he will endanger his career by reversing his position regarding educational privilege " 'in the most public manner,' " while she sees it as the " 'sacrifice' " of her son to a principle which is impractical in application but which Nimmo finds it politically expedient to retain (PG 177). Since Nimmo's principles allow Tom to compete for a scholarship to public school, thereby possibly depriving a boy from a much poorer family of a great opportunity, Nina's assessment seems valid.

Nimmo overwhelms Tom by force of personality (PG 356). Many of Tom's problems can be linked to confusion over his own identity, in that he wants to emulate the father he admires and yet is repelled by Nimmo's duplicity. The situation is complicated by the fact that although they are not biological father and son, they have similar abilities and therefore Tom competes with Nimmo for attention. Tom's whole life is lived in the shadow of his father. For example, although Nimmo seems to love his son as much as he is capable of loving anyone, his desire to be the centre of attention tempts him to "up-stage" Tom at a theatrical performance. Tom's ambivalence toward his father and his confusion over his own identity as his son are clearly seen when he becomes a night club comic whose star turn is a (perhaps unconscious) imitation of Nimmo as a corrupt and hypocritical politician (PG 340). Tom can be thought of as "possessed" by his father, for he finds fame and success only as a grotesque parody of Nimmo, and he begins "to act a part," off-stage as well as on (PG 348). He is therefore lost when his father abandons him. Nimmo's refusal

to help Tom after his arrest, to the extent of repudiating his paternity, contributes to the young man's suicide.⁴

Nimmo's sacrifice of his son to his egotism is clearly reprehensible, but even Nina realises that many of Tom's problems, the consequence of his situation as the child of a famous parent, are beyond Nimmo's control (PG 356). It is Nina's account of Nimmo's sexual behaviour toward herself that gives the reader the clearest index of her husband's moral degeneration. As he becomes more obsessed with success and power, he begins to treat Nina less as a person and more as an object to be controlled for his own gratification (PG 157, 180, 251). Over the years Nina and Nimmo become sexually sophisticated and, as his sexual habits become "always more complicated and demanding," her husband comes to treat Nina as a slave ministering to an "heroic" monarch weighed down with the burden of responsibility (PG 287-88). For example, because Nimmo is incapable of complete sexual satisfaction unless he feels that he has satisfied Nina, he demands that she pretend that she experiences pleasure whether she does so or not (PG 114, 289-90). Nina, who for years has regarded loveless sex as "a duty which was short and trifling" now feels "outraged" at this expression of Nimmo's egotism, his disregard for her feelings, his demand that she play the role he assigns to her, no matter how incompatible with her true self (PG 290). In the course of thirty years of marriage, Nimmo reduces Nina from a passionately loved woman to a sexual "convenience" and an "accustomed habit" (PG 275, 299). When, after Nina's divorce and her marriage to Latter, Nimmo pesters her with his sexual attentions, he attacks her in a manner devoid of anything but the barest sexual demand, totally oblivious to her as a person (PG 385).

At first this portrait of Nimmo in Prisoner of Grace is difficult to reconcile with the narrator of Except the Lord, for a literal reading of Nimmo's narrative suggests that he remains capable of seeing Nina as an independent self, a unique person with a very special

quality. When he first encounters Nina as a beautiful child of five or six, Nimmo is braced for the disdainful arrogance which, he claims, the children of the rich have not yet learned to dissimulate as their parents do. He is completely disarmed when she simply responds to him as a child to an adult, asking him to read her a story (EL 138-39). Recalling this first meeting, Nimmo eulogises Nina (who at the time of writing is no longer his wife) as the possessor of:

qualities unique in that child — an inborn truth — an essential generosity of affection which no cruelty of fate, no bitter experience of human perfidy, could ever tarnish. Faith, hope — the profound charity which in the truest sense of the word rests in the love of God, and is indeed the very door of His grace — were innate in that spirit.

(EL 140)

Anyone who has read Nina's narrative will see in this portrait a germ of truth and a great deal of wishful thinking. Nina is a generous person in that she always attempts to discover the least discreditable motive behind another's actions. But the "bitter experience" of her marriage to Nimmo has effectively tarnished her "generosity" toward him. Her religious faith is conventional and compartmentalised, playing little part in the conduct of her daily life. Nina's "charity" toward Nimmo, as we shall see, is limited. This description is Nina as Nimmo would like her to be, sharing his Evangelical faith and his belief in his own "heroic" destiny, understanding and forgiving all his "perfidy" for the sake of his dedication to a "cause."

For Nimmo wants Nina to set aside all the religious, social, and political prejudices of her class, as well as her personal horror of duplicity, and to give him her unqualified approval and unstinting support. Although he claims that "during more than thirty years of happy marriage" he and Nina have managed to "transcend all divisions of class" (EL 140), class is from the beginning an important element in their relationship. When Nimmo declares that he always wanted to marry a "lady" he has in mind not only his sexual conquest of a member of the privileged class (PG 34, 35), but also the acquisition of an energetic organiser and hostess who will be a partner in his political career. Nina, who is lazy and retiring and uninterested in politics, does not fit this role. Horrified by Nimmo's abuse of her own freedom, Nina cannot give him her unqualified approval, and although she conscientiously supports her husband in public, to his working class constituency she appears to be more of a political liability than an asset. In both private and public life, Nina cannot be the person Nimmo demands that she be.

In fact, Nimmo seems to want someone like his sister Georgina. In Except the Lord, Nimmo asserts that Georgina is as proud, as strong willed, and as passionately resentful of the injustice of poverty as he is himself. In the light of his relationship with Nina, it is significant that despite the family poverty, Nimmo insists that Georgina becomes "a real lady" after a brief visit to Oxford where her brother, Richard, is studying on a scholarship (EL 169). Most importantly, Georgina is upheld by Nimmo as the personification of womanliness, because she sacrifices the chance for married happiness, and even her life, to her father's sense of his duty to his congregation. Although she disagrees with her father's refusal to move some distance from his disciples in order to live in a better house, she remains with him and dies of disease contracted by living in an unhealthy cottage (EL 207, 280-81).

This is the model of feminine virtue to which Nimmo tries to fit Nina — absolute loyalty and uncomplaining sacrifice in another's "heroic" cause, whatever her private reservations. But Nimmo fails to realise in his married life with Nina an important aspect of Georgina's relationship with her father. Georgina's sacrifice to her father's sense of mission is her own choice, arising partly from her sense of duty to her father and siblings and partly from a notion that it is a fitting retribution for rejecting an old lover who later died of alcoholism (EL 281-82). In contrast, Nimmo responds to every fresh piece of evidence that Nina cannot be the person he wants her to be by attempting to control her behaviour.

Nina is aware of Nimmo's ability to manipulate her by a combination of flattery, threat, and blackmail. Early in her marriage, her greatest fear is that Nimmo will try to "change me into a different person" (PG 29). When, despite herself, she is embroiled in Nimmo's political machinations, she has the "horrible feeling" that "I was being turned into somebody else," a person not of her own choosing (PG 54). This violation of her personal autonomy is at the root of Nina's and Nimmo's marital failure, for only when husband and wife have control over their own lives can each of them be "a real person who can enjoy the other" (PG 32).

Nimmo's attempt to deny Nina's selfhood and to make her over into someone who will be of service to him in achieving his "heroic" destiny is an extreme violation of Cary's moral "imperative" and the consequences to himself of Nimmo's offence are very heavy. It is in this respect that the tensions between and seeming contradictions of Prisoner of Grace and Except the Lord are extremely revealing. In his own narrative, Nimmo reflects on his early life from the vantage point of the nadir of his career: his marriage to Nina is over, he is out of office, and books attacking his political and private morality are being published. We have an "outside" view of him at this moment at the end of Prisoner of Grace, where he

is represented as sexually assaulting Nina (who although married to Latter is acting as Nimmo's secretary) even as he dictates sentiments of the highest morality (PG 386-88). We learn near the end of Except the Lord that this very memoir forms part of that dictation (214). Old age, political rejection by the voters, and a "sudden reminder of mortality" have driven Nimmo to a retrospective self-examination (EL 155). Ironically, although Nimmo himself does not appreciate all that his past reveals about his own behaviour, Except the Lord gives the reader an essential clue to the nature of the sin which leads him to self-destruction in Prisoner of Grace.

In Except the Lord Nimmo describes his youthful sin as that of justifying any means to serve a noble end.⁵ He states that he is writing his book to illustrate how people "come to do evil in the name of good, a long and growing evil for a temporary and doubtful advantage" (EL 252). In Prisoner of Grace, Nina describes the mature Nimmo making the same error, compounded by the fact that his ends become progressively less noble as his actions come to be aimed as much at securing his own political survival as they are at promoting the welfare of the lower classes. But in both the young and the old Nimmo, the notion which underlies this justification of means by ends is that he sees himself as a "hero" to whom conventional morality does not apply. Given Cary's explicit insistence that no one is exempted from the "moral imperative," this is a grave mistake.

From childhood, Nimmo tries on occasion to convince himself that he is not guilty of some transgression because he has not "really" sinned. When the children go to see the melodrama their father considers sinful because it deals in "falsehood," Nimmo tries to deny that they have committed any sin because the play is based on a true story: " 'There is no sin in a true story truly represented' " (EL 87). In contrast, his sister Georgina rejects this sophistry and shoulders her own guilt (EL 96). But Nimmo's degeneration comes about because his evasion of guilt assumes a more sinister form: he chooses to see

all his own actions, however perfidious, as justified by his privileged "heroic" status. For example, after campaigning on a pacifist platform, Nimmo agrees to form part of the war cabinet. He believes that his duplicity is justified because (like Carlyle's Cromwell) he is a providentially appointed "hero" with a " 'moral duty' " to lead those who are his inferiors in ability and insight (PG 267). Although she excuses much of his political duplicity, Nina is deeply disturbed by this episode, because for the first time Nimmo displays a certain amount of cynicism — in that he calculates correctly that in the excitement of war, very few people will remember his reversal of position for more than a few weeks (PG 268). This is a dangerous step beyond the comforting delusion that he has not "really" sinned, and it is his conviction that he can sin with impunity that ultimately damns Nimmo. He becomes less and less concerned with disguising from Nina the cruelty, selfishness, and dishonesty of his actions in his increasing conviction that he is privileged to neglect the " 'letter of the law' " in favour of a " 'nobler dispensation' " (PG 276, 305; NHM 176).

Nina, who in order to manage him has become adroit at flattering Nimmo, discovers that "Chester much preferred to be admired for his flair or intuition than his cleverness. I used words like 'inspiration'. . . . This suggested that his success was due to some mysterious power" (PG 315). Nimmo's belief in himself as "the chosen leader" leads him to characterise those who oppose him as " 'fools' " or " 'cranks' " (PG 386, 278), to equate the public good with the consolidation of his own political position, and to see some deep, godless conspiracy behind all opposition.⁶ As always, the injurious aspect of this belief is most clearly seen in Nimmo's relationship with his wife. Because she objects to some of his actions, Nina becomes in Nimmo's eyes a willing participant in a class conspiracy aimed at preventing reform (PG 130-32). Eventually Nimmo comes to consider Nina a dangerous fool who must be managed in such a way that she does not ruin her husband's career (PG 180). All his attempts to control Nina are "justified" by Nimmo's

faith in his own destiny. He comes to believe that he can sacrifice Nina and curtail her freedom without incurring guilt for doing so, because what he desires *is* the right, to the extent that Nina observes: "I knew that he was quite pitiless and completely satisfied with himself. 'He has become a god,' I said to myself" (PG 177, 307-308).

As a result of such arrogant egotism, as Prisoner of Grace reveals, over a period of thirty years Nimmo's "heroic" self-image consumes his selfhood. His attempts to reduce those around him to objects which can be manipulated in the interest of fulfilling his god-given "destiny" destroy his marriage, contribute to his son's suicide, and end his friendship with Goold, his earliest supporter. As a result of his obsession with conspiracy and his inability to brook any opposition, Nimmo cuts himself off from one person after another until he is completely isolated: "from this time, nothing at all from the outer world reached Chester across the no-man's-land of his isolation" (PG 386). Finally, he is "alone. It [is] impossible any longer to reach him. He [has] . . . made such devastation round himself that to talk to him at all [is] like calling across a waste of broken walls and rusty wire and swamps of poisoned water; full of dead bodies, too" (PG 334).

Given Cary's notion that selfhood depends upon sympathetic interaction with other people, such isolation is intensely self-destructive. Nimmo's own words in Except the Lord take on a poignant irony: "the heart that takes to itself a shell can die within its shell, for the heart must breathe, and its breath, its very life, is the give and take of human sympathy" (268-69). Both Tom and Nina notice that as he ages Nimmo becomes "more dramatic," more like an actor playing a role than a real person, until "even in private life he seem[s] sometimes to be 'acting himself' " (PG 237). In old age he seems to Nina a doll "made of wood and sawdust. . . . He [is] like a marionette imitating himself" (PG 370). At the end of Prisoner of Grace, Nimmo is a hollow and isolated being.

This is Nimmo's state at the opening of his own narrative, in which he returns in memory and in body to the scene of an earlier "fall" from which he was redeemed. Except the Lord reveals the roots of Nimmo's "heroic" self-image, for it makes clear that the twin motives of his life are a desire to redress social injustice and a passionate resentment of his personal humiliation and deprivation as a son of agricultural labourers, the poorest members of the nineteenth-century working class. It is not enough for Nimmo to labour humbly for social reform as his father does. His need for self-assertion requires that he assume a leading position, that he be a "hero." Nimmo's moment of epiphany, as part of the audience of a crude melodrama, reveals that his primary motivation is the need for self-assertion. Even though the villain, Corder, is represented as a member of the upper classes cruelly exploiting the poor and helpless, it is he who fascinates Nimmo. To him, the murdered woman's ghost represents "the inescapable vengeance of the Most High." But, he asks, "did not terror itself bring with it a sense of fearful glory in the man who had defied that vengeance?" (EL 95) Nimmo responds to the power and the glory of the "villain, the devil — and the hero," of defiance for its own sake. In imagination he becomes "a king, a hero of the revolution. But without wrath — without even revolutionary principles" (EL 95, 100). It is only later that this lust to be a "hero" makes common cause with Nimmo's sincere desire to be a social reformer.

Significantly, it is just after an incident in which he has been publicly humiliated that Nimmo undergoes his "conversion" to political activism. As a "defiant and humiliated boy," suffering from "the shames of poverty and ignorance, the consciousness of a public failure," he happens upon a lecture on the brotherhood of man given by Lanza the nihilist (EL 133-35). He undergoes a "conversion" and, under the spell of Dr. Dolling, a disciple of Proudhon and a "hero and martyr of freedom," Nimmo experiences the pangs of rebirth into "a cause for which I might live and die" (EL 141, 145). This cause channels into

service to others his need to see himself as a "hero", but Cary leaves the reader in no doubt that the need for self-assertion is prior to the notion of service: "to defy the established authority of the land was itself a distinction, it gave me the self-respect achieved by an heroic gesture. But to make such an affirmation for liberty and brotherhood — that was glory of the noblest kind" (EL 149).

From the first, Nimmo sees his role in the reformation of society as that of a member of the small inner circle of organisers. He has a vision of the world "as a mass of ignorance and folly" save for a "small sect of believers," who are "heroic pioneers of the millennium" (EL 148). It is therefore easy to understand why a slightly older Nimmo is convinced quite easily by Pring, the Marxist, that "union policy . . . was a matter for experts, and the ordinary rank and file were far from experts" (EL 241). He acquiesces in Pring's policy of lying to the union membership, and he even arranges the beating of men whom Pring suspects of advocating compromise with the employers (EL 260-61). He denies to Georgina his involvement in the beatings, because he feels "called upon" to do so for the good of "the cause." Mingled with his regret at violating his sister's trust is "a sense of glory and triumph," making him feel "like a Napoleon" (EL 254-55). The lies are examples of using dubious means to a "worthy" end, but the beatings exemplify the more serious sin of seeing people *as* means to an end, of sacrificing the freedom of other individuals to a "cause" and to one's own ego. This is the same distinction made by Nina in assessing the older Nimmo's behaviour, between political expediency and the unforgiveable sacrifice of other people.⁷

Unfortunately, Nimmo fails to understand the full significance of his own narrative. While he can see that as a young man he used unacceptable means to a good end, he remains unaware of the insidious danger of the "heroic" posture, the equation of his private gratification with the good of the "cause" to which he believes he may sacrifice individuals

with impunity. Cary makes this lesson very obvious in Nimmo's own narrative, in that young Nimmo's "heroic" self-image leads him to define himself in terms of his role in the union cause to the extent that he has difficulty separating them. Consequently, when Nimmo himself is treated by Pring as a "nuisance" to be eliminated (EL 271), he finds this a crushing blow, for he loses the "heroic" identity which has become synonymous with his selfhood. As a result he feels as if he is no more than "a bug, a nothing, a creature rejected" and he undergoes a long convalescence during which he functions as an "automaton," an "emptiness that yet agonized in its vacancy" (EL 273, 278). Embedded in Nimmo's narrative, therefore, is a moral fable in which sin (violating the selfhood of others) brings a retribution (loss of one's own selfhood) precisely fitted to the nature of the transgression. The young Nimmo is blind to this moral, for he attributes his loss of selfhood to fate, "a conspiracy of circumstances," rather than to his own guilty involvement with Pring's policies (EL 273). He sees in his own fall "nothing . . . of good or evil, only of sordid failure" (EL 279).

Although Nimmo's insight into this crucial experience is greater than it was in his youth, it remains only partial. He is now sufficiently enlightened that he can see his earlier failure not as a matter of fate but as one of sin and consequent self-destruction. Nimmo's narrative articulates the moral which he extracts from his own memories, that the wages of sin is diminution of the self: "One does not fear God because he is terrible, but because he is literally the soul of goodness and truth, because to do him wrong is to do wrong to some mysterious part of oneself, and one does not know exactly what the consequences may be" (EL 49). The parallels between the "falls" and rebirths of old and young Nimmo are striking. Young Nimmo suffers from the emptying of his personality until he is "reborn" when he hears one of his father's homilies and undergoes a "strange convulsion" of soul (EL 284-85). When this experience eventually leads him to re-enter public life as a

preacher, Nimmo finds a new identity and a new arena in which to function as a "hero." Similarly, the older Nimmo makes Georgina's grave at Shagbrook the site of his political rebirth, delivering public addresses in which he preaches the moral he has extracted from his own memoir, that the life of the soul must inform all a man's activity, including politics, or "all his achievement will be a gaol or a mad-house, self-hatred, corruption and despair" (EL 284).

Although Nimmo comes by recollection and retrospective self-examination to the "truth" that immorality is damaging to the self, he still fails to understand the *nature* of his own sin.⁸ The older Nimmo who dictates his memoir to Nina accepts that he was guilty of the sin of subordinating means to ends. This is an advance upon his behaviour throughout Prisoner of Grace, in which he frequently refuses to acknowledge his responsibility for his political lies and expedencies, even when his supporters and Nina are prepared to accept them as regrettable necessities. But Nimmo fails to perceive the greater lesson of his own narrative, for he ignores the sins of his maturity that were foreshadowed in his youthful sacrifice of the reluctant strikers, and of his sister's trust, to the good of the union "cause" on which his own ambitions and "heroic" self-image depended.

Yet again, it is Nimmo's relationship with Nina which Cary employs to make this situation clear to the reader. The reader of Except the Lord is given no hint that the Nimmo marriage was anything other than idyllic, nor that Nina is now married to Latter. Nina goes to Latter when she is "driven out" as a scapegoat, from the marriage she has endured for thirty years. After he loses an election, Nimmo finds it expedient to exploit his evangelical supporters' view of Nina as an upper-class woman who has "corrupted" and misled her husband, and he divorces her as a preliminary to his attempt to return to political power on a wave of religious revival (PG 350, 357). Despite the humility with which he confesses

the sins of his youth, Nimmo's references to Nina in Except the Lord display not the slightest acknowledgement of guilt with respect to her (104, 139-40, 214-15).

Nimmo comes closest to acknowledging his guilt when he relates an episode involving his sister Georgina. He confesses that he selfishly did not dissuade his sister from a loveless marriage because of the financial advantages it would bring to the whole family, thus freeing him to pursue his own career. He admits that he was wrong not to dissuade Georgina and that he was aware of the advantages to himself of her marriage (EL 160-61). Although this appears to indicate that Nimmo has a notion of his guilt in sacrificing others to his personal ambitions, his description of the incident does not justify this conclusion. He claims that he did not consciously decide out of selfish motives not to dissuade Georgina and suggests that perhaps his silence was a result of inattentiveness and misunderstanding. Although he is nagged by the suspicion that "some deep and unregarded" part of his own psyche perceived "the enormous advantage to himself, to his own secret ambition," of such a match, Nimmo claims that to this day he does not know the explanation of his own conduct (EL 161). He still refuses to understand consciously his own motives or to accept the full weight of his guilt for this ancient sin.

It is this lack of insight into the nature of his sins that explains why, even as he dictates Except the Lord, Nimmo continues to assault Nina, for these assaults are the ultimate expression of his belief that he can ignore the rights of others. The continuing sexual assaults do not mean that Nimmo's public rebirth as an evangelical politician is necessarily "insincere" (for one thing, his faith in his own "heroic" destiny means that Nimmo is always "sincere" in his belief that his behaviour is justified). Or rather, what matters in assessing Nimmo's behaviour is not notions of "sincerity" or "insincerity," but the realisation that while the public "hero" remains intact, his genuine selfhood has eroded.⁹ The narrator of Except the Lord is reminiscent of Conrad's Kurtz, another

"heroic" individual who believes himself to be superior to ethical norms, in that the eloquent speaker masks an almost hollow space where a true self once existed.

For the delusion of his own "heroic" immunity from guilt, as exemplified by his belief that Nina's complaints of sexual assault are "truly contemptible beside [his own] tremendous ideas and anxieties," eventually isolates and erodes Nimmo's selfhood to the point that it collapses back into a solipsistic childish ego that "has forgotten ordinary restraints" (PG 371, 387-88). The assaults, the ultimate denial of Nina's selfhood, appear to her to be motivated as much by the excitement generated by the enormous risk of discovery as by sexual need, for Nimmo knows "quite well that he [is] doing something wrong and dangerous" (PG 388). Like a child who has not yet learned responsibility and compassion, he commits a deliberate wrong simply out of a desire for adventure, without feelings of guilt or sympathy for the violation of another such excitement involves. It is one thing for Nimmo to fall victim to the risk of "degradation" inherent in governing others. It is another for him to be seduced by the risk itself, to thrill to the experience of sinning as he once thrilled to Corder's crime, to dare public exposure as Satan, the embodiment of "cruel and lustful egotism," dared God's anger (EL 94).

Nimmo's behaviour is the culmination of the change Nina first noticed when he accepted a seat in the war cabinet. He is fully conscious of his crime in attacking Nina, but exhibits no guilt whatsoever. He therefore commits the sin of the "lie in the soul," the sin described by his father as a denial that " 'we are guilty before God and not fit to stand in His presence' " (PG 45; EL 51). Ironically, his own narrative describes the consequence of the refusal to acknowledge one's complicity in sin as hollowness, the loss of one's very selfhood: " 'If we do not own to ourselves that we are guilty before God. . . . [t]he lie . . . feeds on the spirit as maggots feed on a dor beetle till all is hollow, black and empty within

a painted shell' " (EL 51). As Prisoner of Grace makes clear, at his death Nimmo is a marionette, a grotesque caricature of a human being, rather than a proper self.

In Nimmo's hollowness, Cary represents the self-destructiveness of transgressing against the selfhood of others. Nina's "grace," which keeps her tied to Nimmo, is her intuitive recognition of the "truth" that selfishness, like egotism, is also fundamentally self-destructive. For Nina knows that to try to be happy at Nimmo's expense would be to risk " 'damnation,' " the diminishing of her selfhood by the self-contempt that performing a mean or selfish action would evoke in her (PG 402). But Nina's grace and the "charity" which flows from it represent a somewhat diminished version of the moral "imperative." For Cary real *caritas* is self-transcendence, an outward turning to others in sympathy, in understanding, in love, and in affirmation of their unique selfhood. Nina's charity toward Nimmo is limited, and for this reason she must bear some responsibility for the failure of their marriage.

It is significant that Nina solicits sex from Nimmo at those very times when she most loathes and despises him (PG 62-63). Although her narrative records two occasions, one with Latter and one with Nimmo, on which Nina experiences the "spiritual" possibilities of sex (PG 85-86, 395-96), she effectively prevents any spiritual communion by creating sexual situations in which she herself is disengaged, alienated from Nimmo, looking on and despising him. The motivation of this behaviour is that Nina feels that to give up her detachment would be to expose herself to Nimmo, that to surrender any part of her self to him would be to come completely under his control. She feels that she must manage sex with Nimmo in such a way that she can "hold him off from digging into my soul," so that she can "be 'with myself' even if he stayed in my bed" (PG 114, 115).

Nina also uses the sexual act to defend herself against Nimmo by disarming his anger or diverting his attention (PG 237, 309). When Nimmo implies that Nina

" 'corrupted' " him by making him dependent upon sophisticated sexual habits, she defends herself on the grounds that "even if I gave him certain habits, it was only to make our marriage 'work', to make the man happy and to stop him from killing me with his fearful domination" (PG 373-74). Her use of sex as a weapon to control Nimmo is related to her lack of sympathy for his attitude to the sexual act. Nina's embarrassment and irritation at Nimmo's juxtaposition of prayer and sex stem from her incomprehension of his religious feelings, especially his notion of the sacramental nature of the sexual act (PG 26-27). By rejecting such notions as ridiculous she refuses to recognise and to affirm a fundamental part of Nimmo's selfhood.

In contrast to her lack of empathy for Nimmo, Nina's narrative expresses sympathy for Latter's loneliness as a child, his inability to form friendships as a man, his bafflement at the English society men like Nimmo are creating, his rage at his own ineffectiveness. Although Nina recognises Latter's jealousy and violence, she believes that they are motivated by his love for and need of her. Because she is capable of understanding and sympathising with him, because she thinks that she can fill the needs of his limited personality, as his wife Nina feels happy and fulfilled: "I belonged to myself more intensely than ever in my life before. . . . I was enjoying an extraordinary peace. . . . deep security and independence" (PG 364-65).

Nina's happiness and self-affirmation in her second marriage, therefore, are rooted in her ability to transcend herself in her relationship with Latter. In contrast, the integrity of her selfhood is at risk in her failed relationship with Nimmo. This failure is largely the result of Nimmo's rejection of the person Nina really is and his attempts to make her over into someone she is not. But it is also partly the result of an incomplete self-transcendence on Nina's part. Although she strives to be fair and always to see the other person's point of view, she finds that Nimmo is a complicated man for whom she has limited sympathy and

understanding. There are times when she is happy to provide him with sexual solace, for she can sometimes understand and respond to him as a "worried haggard fierce old man" who needs "to be 'handled' with sympathy and patience" (PG 310-11). But by remaining with him, yet withholding an essential part of herself from him, Nina fails to commit herself fully to the married relationship. Her deliberate use of sex to create situations in which she can secretly despise Nimmo is also culpable. So although she is undoubtedly Nimmo's victim, she is not entirely lacking in responsibility for her fate. Accordingly, Nina suffers both as Nimmo's victim and as one who commits a sin of omission with respect to him. Even in the early days of her marriage, her psyche is fragmented by her opposing impulses to hate Nimmo and to sympathise with him, to the extent that "[i]t seemed that I was being torn apart" (PG 44). She suffers from bouts of despair at her failure to resolve her internal conflicts, to live happily with Nimmo or to leave him, during which, on three occasions, she attempts suicide.

Nina's, Latter's, and Nimmo's fates are designed by Cary to illustrate his notion that the cost of egotism and selfishness is a diminution of selfhood, that insensitivity or indifference to the rights of others eventually recoils upon the sinner. In the "real" world, people may never be faced with a situation in which their immorality has unpleasant or even fatal consequences for themselves. However, Cary suggests that the world presented by a novel ought to persuade the reader that it "could be actual," while displaying "a moral order that does not present itself in life" (A&R 164).¹⁰ This "moral order" exists because the writer is free to choose which of the possible consequences of a character's actions is to be realised in the novel. By selecting possibilities of psychological or spiritual self-destruction for characters who hold inadequate moral positions, Cary strives to communicate the "truth" of his intuition that people who behave immorally are a potential danger not only to

others but also to themselves, that immorality is inherently damaging to the integrity of the self.

Because of the self-destructiveness of the three protagonists, their isolation, the extent of their mutual misunderstanding, and their failure to respond appropriately to one another's needs or to afford each other the recognition that Cary suggests is essential to self-realisation, the world of the second trilogy seems closer to that of the conventional "existentialist" novel than that of his other works. Sometime after 1943, Cary made a series of notes on several works by Kierkegaard. It is tempting to speculate that having been identified as an "existentialist" by readers of The Horse's Mouth, he was stimulated to explore existentialist philosophy. His final novel, incomplete at his death, continues his examination of the delusion of "heroic" destiny and connects it to the notion of the "inner light." Furthermore, for the first time, Cary deliberately invites the reader to set his novel against the works of a recognised existential philosopher, Kierkegaard.

(ii)

Cary posits a continuum of immoral behaviour representing different degrees of violation of his "imperative," ranging from the venial and necessary infringement of people's freedom that is involved in assuming responsibility to the unforgiveable sacrifice of another person to personal ambition. His often reiterated notion that one person's freedom to realise his or her self in creativity inevitably interferes to a certain extent with that of others suggests that there is a sense in which guilt flows from all interaction with other selves. This places his characters in a difficult situation, because they depend for self-realisation upon sympathetic interaction with other people and yet any intervention in the lives of others exposes them to the risk of self-destruction.

In such a situation, ideal behaviour would be to interact cautiously yet compassionately with others, accepting responsibility while remaining conscious of the guilt involved in exercising it. In the far from ideal world of Cary's novels, characters who at least acknowledge the guilt that stems from their intersections with other people's lives are shown as saved from the worst self-destruction. Despite Sara's attempts to blame providence and nature for her sins, she retains a saving, though somewhat confused, sense of guilt. Gulley reports his own crimes without apology but he accepts that he will be held responsible for his actions as the price of his freedom. In contrast, Latter strives to justify everything he does and to place the guilt for the consequences on everyone else. This is another reason that he, like Nimmo, is one of the most culpable and self-destructive of Cary's characters.

Cary's position is a secularised version of Kierkegaard's notion of the inevitability of guilt as a corollary of freedom. According to Kierkegaard, to choose oneself as free is to choose to be guilty before God (Either/Or II 221-22). Furthermore, he depicts guilt as at

times an unavoidable corollary of interacting with other people (Repetition 117). Conversely, guilt and repentance are evidence of people's "accountability" and therefore of their freedom (Either/Or II 242). Kierkegaard's assertion that "the difference between good and evil always remains" is matched by Cary's contention that "[l]ies are always lies, evil is always evil" (Either/Or II 268; "Political and Personal Morality," SE 229). Cary joins Kierkegaard in regarding every situation of moral choice as unique and therefore impossible to prescribe for in terms of a categorical imperative ("Political and Personal Morality," SE 230; Either/Or II 268). Furthermore, Cary refers in his notes to Kierkegaard's depiction of the conflict arising from the individual's need to make free and creative decisions that sometimes violate societal norms, a notion that underlies virtually all of his own novels (MS 271 N82 11).

There are indications that Cary subjected Kierkegaard's concept of morality to his usual sifting process, for his notions depart from those of Kierkegaard in ways which are both typical and revealing. In his final novel Cary calls into question Kierkegaard's suggestion that sometimes a person who violates the ethical norms of his or her society is a "justified exception" who explains and manifests the "universal" against which he or she struggles (Repetition 151-53). Kierkegaard's fullest treatment of this notion occurs in Fear and Trembling, a meditation upon Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac at the command of God. Although Abraham's behaviour is unethical when considered in the light of the "universal" prohibition against killing a child, Kierkegaard defends Abraham as acting on the strength of the absurd, based on his irrational faith that God will restore Isaac to him. Abraham is a "hero" of the greatest kind because he "expected the impossible" and "believed the ridiculous," for faith is believing in the face of impossibility (Fear and Trembling 50, 54, 76). According to Kierkegaard, in obeying God's command Abraham "suspended" the

ethical norms of his society in favour of a higher *telos*, behaving as "the single individual in an absolute relation to the absolute" (Fear and Trembling 88, 90).

Cary's examination of the "suspension" of ethical norms in The Captive and the Free is foreshadowed in the second trilogy by Latter's murder of Nina. Kierkegaard's Abraham manifests the universal which he appears to violate by re-defining the killing of Isaac as a "sacrifice" commanded by God rather than as "murder." He thus both "suspends" the ethical norms of his society and manifests the universal prohibition against "murder." In Not Honour More Latter does the same thing: he sets his own judgment above that of the group, claiming that it is "necessary" to "execute" Nina for her "crimes" in order to shock English society into returning to values it has largely abandoned (NHM 220-22). Although he cites no authority for this action higher than his own judgment, he insists that the responsibility lies not with him, who is only doing his "duty," but with the "cruel fate" that made him the chosen agent of redemption (NHM 220). Latter exemplifies the danger inherent in positing the existence of exceptions to "universal" moral standards, that a man of limited insight and compassion may imagine himself to be such a "justified" exception. As Kierkegaard himself notes: "How does the single individual assure himself that he is justified?" (Fear and Trembling 90) For Kierkegaard is aware that the "demonic" also enables the individual "to be the single individual who as particular is higher than the universal" (Fear and Trembling 122-23).

Latter sets himself above the law that he claims to uphold when he takes it upon himself to judge Nina: "what I'm out for is truth and justice. I've been a magistrate and I've studied law and I know how important it is to make the law respected, but if the law goes against truth, then it is worse than useless" (NHM 34). The existence of an "absolute" truth which justifies the suspension of ethical norms is one of Latter's favourite notions. On the many occasions when his own idea of reality conflicts with those of other people, Latter is

convinced that his own notion is the "truth" and that all others are the product of either blindness or deliberate falsehood and hypocrisy. His chief charge against Nimmo is that he is a liar, one of those who is leading England to destruction by forsaking "the truth, the absolute truth" (NHM 27, 49). He explains to Nina that she must die because she has, or so he thinks, perjured herself at Maufe's trial (NHM 221). He justifies his own violence as necessary because most people only recognise "a bit of truth when it [has] a gun in its hand" (NHM 68).

Latter's situation exemplifies Cary's notion that a man who adheres to an incorrect "idea of life" may mistake his own desires for the demand of the absolute. As we have seen, Cary depicts peoples' "ideas of life," according to which they make moral choices, as shaped largely by intuitive processes, and he considers intuition to be a genuine insight into the nature of "reality." However, he does not suggest that intuition cannot be distorted, nor that a personally intuited "truth" can always be trusted when it appears to dictate behaviour that violates ethical norms. In contrast, Kierkegaard depicts Abraham acting on the basis that God has commanded him to kill Isaac, that is, out of his faith in what Cary would term his "inner light," and he claims that Abraham's faith is justified because of the primacy of subjective truth.

As one might expect, Cary's notion with regard to the validity of subjectively intuited "truth" adapts some aspects of Kierkegaard's ideas and rejects others. Robert C. Solomon describes Kierkegaard's philosophy as "an attack on [Hegel's] notion of [the primacy of] 'objective truth' — truth that is common, true for anyone and everyone" (72). Consequently, Kierkegaard does not claim universal validity for his own notions: "[i]t was enough that his truths were true *for him*" (Solomon 72). Similarly, Cary warns his reader that "this picture of things, as I give it, is not intended for an absolute truth; no one can know what that is. It is simply my own picture, as I see things" (A&R 13). Nonetheless,

just as Cary values art because it enables people to share one another's intuitively apprehended "truths," Kierkegaard wishes to communicate his "truths" to other people. He is convinced that even if his beliefs are not "universally" true, they might yet apply to "an undetermined legion of individual readers" because they are "true from a perspective that he share[s] with many others" (Solomon 72, 73).

Kierkegaard does not deny the existence of "objective truth" any more than Cary quarrels with the "facts" of science, but he finds it an inadequate guide to action on the same basis as that on which Cary rejects Kant's categorical imperative: it is too "abstract" and therefore it "does not tell us how to live" (Solomon 73, 76). He regards the "subjective truths" of "morality, religion, art" as qualitatively different from the "objective truths" of science, but as possessing their own validity (Solomon 76, 77), notions with which Cary is in agreement. However, Cary's distinction between abstract conceptual "facts" induced from measurements and intuitive "truths" arising from "feeling" is not precisely the same as Kierkegaard's discrimination between objective propositions about the world which can be checked against "the facts, the evidence, or the proof" and subjective "emotional truths" that represent "a certain kind of judgment, a personal way of constituting the world" (Solomon 83-84). Clearly, Cary agrees with Kierkegaard to the extent that he contends that intuitive, subjective "truths" are of vital importance in constituting one's individual world and in guiding actions. And he, like Kierkegaard, follows in "the Kantian tradition according to which moral principles (and values in general) are determined by choice . . . and not by appeal to 'the facts' " (Solomon 78). But according to Cary, the "ideas of life" into which intuitions and values are incorporated *are*, in a very real sense, propositions about the world, and he posits the possibility of testing them by examining the consequences of a person's actions.

The test of consequences is a central issue in The Captive and the Free, in which Cary focuses on the extreme situation of moral choice presented in Kierkegaard's Fear and Trembling, the sacrifice of an innocent child at the prompting of the "inner light." In doing so, Cary continues to develop notions raised in the second trilogy by creating two characters, Preedy and Hooper, whose principal qualities are drawn from aspects of Chester Nimmo's complex personality. Preedy is an Evangelical faith healer with a sense of divine mission who follows the dictates of an "inner light." Like Nimmo, he believes himself to be specially chosen. He, too, is attracted by the danger of public exposure of a sexual transgression, because he feels himself to be "set apart from the ordinary common judgments of the world" (C&F 124). While Nimmo claims that he often ignores public opinion because of his impatience with " 'the time-serving rabble,' " Preedy harbours a "deep sense of contempt for the standards of the mob" (NHM 176; C&F 124).

Preedy also resembles Nimmo in seeing himself as someone who is privileged to intervene in the lives of others, and he presumes to tamper with other people's selfhood at the most intimate level. He believes that most people "from earliest childhood set to work to build themselves a fortress, a shell, against the alarms and disappointments of the dangerous world." In order to "save" such people Preedy finds it necessary to break "this hard armour and [get] at the terrified, quivering creature within" (C&F 56). By his own account, before his conversion Preedy suffered from the condition of modern *angst* which he sees as most people's normal state:

" . . . much of man's activity is directed by subconscious forces completely beyond his control; by fear of what he can't even imagine, a lunatic terror; by hatred of what he does not know; by longing for that which he can't conceive

and from which he is cut off, not only by ignorance, but by that pride which is really despair; the despair of a soldier under the last bombardment who does not move from his place because he is afraid that if he moves, he will run away and suffer a greater misery than death, the complete disintegration of his self."

(C&F 56)

Preedy's diagnosis of the modern condition would seem to have some grounds. Joanna first becomes interested in his ideas because she exists in "that empty darkness in which she [feels] like a creature imprisoned in nothingness." She has little sense of her own identity and feels that she lives in a world without meaning or purpose. She therefore lacks the ability to make decisions (C&F 180-81). Preedy's faith attracts people like himself and Joanna because it offers to the bewildered and the despairing "a guiding string in the black fog of their lives" (C&F 275).

Preedy himself finds a refuge from this condition of despair, and a new sense of his own identity, in his faith that he has privileged access to a God of miracles. After a stormy adolescence of drunkenness, violence, and sexual promiscuity, during which he is expelled from school, reduces his adoring mother to terror and despair, and wastes his patrimony, Preedy becomes an alcoholic supporting himself by periodic casual labour (C&F 59). His conversion occurs in a moment of complete loss of selfhood in which he is blinded by an immense light, as the voice of God fills his internal void (C&F 57-58). From this moment Preedy is able to see all his past sins, including seducing and impregnating fourteen year old Alice Rodker, as part of a providential plot shaping him to be the instrument of God's

will. So although, unlike Nimmo, Preedy has confessed and repented his sins, they both attempt to see some higher necessity at work in their own transgressions.

In obedience to this higher necessity, as revealed by his "inner light," Preedy "suspends" the ethical norms of his society, just as Kierkegaard's Abraham obeys the dictates of the divine *telos*. He is placed in the situation of Abraham when Alice's baby, Preedy's own child, falls ill. Like Sara, Alice believes that God is punishing her sexual immorality by sending illness to her baby and consequently she follows Preedy's advice not to " 'insult' " God by calling in a doctor (C&F 147). To Preedy, miracles of faith-healing are demonstrations of God's power by which he will convert the unbelieving. He interprets his own exceptional gifts as a faith-healer as a sign of his special destiny. For like Nimmo, Preedy sees himself as part of a small group of the enlightened, the saved, in the midst of the stupid and irresponsible masses, who are selfish, lustful, sinful and in love with their sin. These people need a leader, who will be shown to them by "revelation" (C&F 261). Preedy is so intent upon seeing himself as a "hero" of faith that he views other people as instruments used by God to no other end than chastising, instructing, and testing himself. He therefore interprets Ada Rollwright's tuberculosis as a "test" of his own faith, of his credentials as the chosen leader, and persuades the child and her mother to refuse medical treatment (C&F 261).

Preedy feels that he is being tested, because Mrs. Rollwright appeals to him at the very moment at which he is tormented with uncertainty and the sense that he has lost touch with the divine power that enables him to accomplish "miracles" of healing (C&F 2 ' -52). He deeply desires a Kierkegaardian "repetition," a return to psychic wholeness, a restoration of the unquestioning faith that he experienced at his conversion when, as he believes, "the child Alice had been sent to save his soul by the revelation of her unselfish love" (Repetition 144; C&F 126). He is convinced that he is right to urge Mrs. Rollwright

to refuse medical treatment for Ada's disease, because the child's initials are the same as Alice Rodker's: "Here was a sign of the plainest kind given to him personally. Saved by one childish messenger, he was to be retrieved by another. A sign made threefold sure by an actual signature — by a repetition of letters which was by itself beyond expectation or plan." (C&F 261). One could argue that Preedy errs because he does not appreciate the difference between "signs" and "symbols." For although Preedy wishes to believe that God speaks to him personally and directly by means of unambiguous "signs," Cary's God speaks indirectly in "symbols."

Preedy's conversion occurs when God's love is revealed to him by Alice's love, the concrete embodiment, or "symbol," of the "divine" possibility of love which becomes actual only in individual human acts. Ada and her mother vouchsafe Preedy another such revelation, which bears all the ear-marks of a genuine Carian intuition:

From the love on one side completely selfless, from the trust of the child, something flashed into him; something like those discoveries made by the pure contact of sense — a glimpse of the sea, of a ripe field, a scent from the ground, the noise of rain — known a thousand times before, which yet bring a shock of recognition; and in a moment he had again an absolute conviction, the absolute certainty of God's presence in the world.

(C&F 253)

But Preedy's desire to believe that he is privileged, a "hero" to whom God speaks directly, distorts his intuition of the need to actualise "divine" love in human affection or, as Cary

expresses it, "the *absolute need* of love to make life possible and the continuous everlasting presence of love in the world" (quoted by Starkie, in Richardson 144). Preedy misinterprets the "symbol" of Ada's and her mother's mutual love and chooses to be guided by the "providential sign" which is the product of pure chance.

The consequences of this decision are consistent with Cary's depiction of the folly of relying upon providence. It should come as no surprise to the reader that, despite the strength of Preedy's faith, both the baby and Ada die. Like Mr. Carr before him, he has sought an illusory refuge from a world he finds difficult and meaningless. But Preedy's religious beliefs resemble those of Selah Coker more than they do the faith in a loving providence held by the Carrs. Preedy's faith is based on a melange of

. . . old stories, terrifying, mysterious, of murderous kings, savage prophets, a turmoil of cruelty and war. And over all the presence of Jehovah, like the whole night itself, a tension of primordial being, the very force of things, the divine will, the living person, the furious judge, the king of kings — and what kings, soaked in treachery and blood — who gave the sign to and tested Abraham with the demand that he should cut the throat of his only son as an offering. And Abraham was loyal; he proved himself. And Isaac lived.

(C&F 260-61)

This capricious and omnipotent God, who is able to remove the suffering he himself created but will only do so if appeased by abject submission, who uses the suffering of an

innocent baby to punish its mother's sexual misdemeanours, who sets arbitrary tests of faith and saves souls by reducing one person to the instrument of another's salvation, is very far from Cary's conception of divinity. He is the God of *juju* and the crocodile. And it is to this deity that Preedy sacrifices Alice Rodker's baby and Ada Rollwright.

Clearly Cary does not find acceptable the notion that one must be willing to sacrifice another person in order to come face to face with the absolute. Therefore, in his consideration of Kierkegaard's sophisticated argument in Fear and Trembling, Cary returns to the rather simpler notions of providence and sacrifice depicted in his own earliest books. His earlier novels make it clear that his notion of morality resembles Kierkegaard's in that both see it not as mere obedience to standards of behaviour sanctioned by the group, but as accepting responsibility for individual moral and creative freedom. But Cary differs from Kierkegaard in upholding his moral "imperative" as an absolute against which the ethics of whole societies can be measured, by examining the consequences of abiding by particular ethical systems. This is the basis for his depiction of historical change, from the tribe to the democracy of groups, as a growth or development, in that the freedom of the individual is increased.

Kierkegaard, too, argues the need for an absolute moral authority beyond the confines of the normal ethical system of a particular society (Fear and Trembling 16). But he insists that one cannot determine if one is behaving correctly in setting aside ethical norms by calculating the probable consequences, because consequences are unpredictable (Fear and Trembling 91, 135). He therefore turns to a personal relationship with the absolute as the ultimate source of moral authority (Fear and Trembling 98). In contrast, Cary argues that although people cannot always predict the outcome of their actions or the vagaries of contingency, they can consider the probable consequences and act accordingly. He asserts that people cannot throw upon providence the responsibility for the effects of

their actions on others, because "miracles" that suspend the physical laws of matter and energy are impossible.

Since Cary regards physical intervention by God as impossible, he rejects Kierkegaard's faith in the absurd. To Kierkegaard's argument that Abraham acted on the strength of the absurd, on the conviction that an impossible "repetition" would occur and that he could sacrifice Isaac and yet receive him back unharmed and unchanged by the experience, Cary opposes his own conviction that God cannot perform miracles that involve suspending natural law. In his notes Cary suggests that the suffering of an innocent child is at least "partially remediable," and he sees the desire to relieve a child's suffering as a manifestation of God's goodness and justice in a universe that does not otherwise exhibit these values (MS 257 N41 12-14). He paraphrases Emmet's remark that one of the most interesting points raised in Fear and Trembling is Kierkegaard's suggestion that "the real triumph of Abraham's faith lay in his courage in accepting the inspiration at the crucial moment that he ought *not* to sacrifice Isaac" when the angel spoke to him (Emmet 268; Cary's paraphrase [MS 271 N97] quoted in Fisher, Theme 213).¹¹ The children who are entrusted to Preedy's prayers die because, when an angel in the shape of a doctor appears, Preedy fails to understand that people's compassionate desire to relieve the children's suffering is the real miracle.

Despite the harm he does, Preedy is more sympathetic than Nimmo by virtue of both his mental instability, which makes him more vulnerable, more the victim of his self-delusion, and the sincerity of his belief that he wants only to "save" others. For Cary never casts doubt on Preedy's willingness to sacrifice himself as well as others.¹² Furthermore, Syson's encounters with Preedy's ardent convictions expose the shallowness of the Anglican curate's conventional faith. This self-knowledge prepares Syson to receive an intimation of God's "grace," the recognition that miracles happen every day, in acts of

goodness, love, and self-sacrifice, as exemplified by Mrs. Rollwright's relationship with Ada (C&F 284). But whereas Syson, whose religious doubts made him " 'the devil's prisoner,' " is " 'made free' " by his intuition of God's presence in the world (C&F 282, 284), Preedy remains the captive of his terrible Jehovah, for he is one of Cary's believers in providence who purchase a refuge from despair and doubt at the price of freedom.

There is external evidence that when he wrote The Captive and the Free, Cary was thinking of the difference between captivity and freedom in terms of Preedy's surrender to Jehovah in return for the power to perform "miracles," as opposed to Syson's genuine intuition that the responsibility for the "miraculous" realisation of God's goodness and love rests with human beings who enact these values in their relationship with others. In an entry in a notebook dating from 1954-57, Cary speaks of captivity and freedom as applying "only to the mind," and refers to "superstition," "egotism," and mistaken ideas as the sources of "real" captivity (MS 294 N162; quoted in Fisher, Theme 304). In another notebook he used at about the same time, he refers to the notion of the truth which makes free as the centre of The Captive and the Free (MS 294 N163 8r). The equation of captivity with ignorance of truth is a notion that Kierkegaard and Cary share. In his Philosophical Fragments, on which Cary made notes in the early forties, Kierkegaard defines sin as the "state, the being in Error by reason of one's own guilt," as being "exiled from the Truth," and consequently as being "unfree" or "bound" (19).

Cary objects to the "inner light" on the basis that one may become the "captive" of one's own distorted intuitively apprehended "truth." This calls into question David Cecil's interpretation of Preedy as one of those "free spirits boldly following the call of their hearts and souls without reference to other people's opinions" as opposed to the captives who "feel themselves compelled to accept standards and religious views inherited or imposed on them by society" (introduction to C&F 6). It should be clear that Cecil's valorisation of

personal moral freedom over societal restrictions is an oversimplification of a complex situation in which Cary is acutely aware of the dangers inherent in his own notions. Reading Preedy as one of the free because "his whole life is dominated by a pure intuitional faith in God" (Cecil, introduction to C&F 6) does violence to the text in order to remedy a non-existent "inconsistency" in Cary's thought.¹³ Although Cary argues for the truth of pristine intuition, he does not depict it as immune from distortion. Preedy intuits the "truth" of God's presence in the world by virtue of "miracles," but because of his desire to be a "hero" and an "idea of life" which incorporates some rather primitive religious notions, he misunderstands the nature of the miraculous and of people's responsibility in bringing it to realisation.

The genuinely free among Cary's characters are those who apply to moral choices an objective criterion which nonetheless places responsibility firmly in the hands of the individual — Cary's moral "imperative." For example, Alice, who is described as a "free soul" who "defies the world" by returning to Preedy, emphatically repudiates her lover's belief in his own providential destiny. Her behaviour is motivated by compassion for his tormented instability, not by faith in his ability to perform miracles (C&F 301, 314). Unlike Alice, Preedy is not free, not only because he remains captive to his superstitious faith in a jealous and punitive deity and to an ethical ideal which eschews responsibility for ameliorative action by throwing it upon providence, but also because he is in thrall to the entirely subjective promptings of his own "inner light," his own desire to see himself as a providentially chosen "hero" of faith.

In the character of Preedy Cary develops and explores the sense of providential destiny that forms such an important part of Chester Nimmo's personality. Hooper the newspaper reporter, on the other hand, becomes the repository of all Nimmo's worldly ambition and of his desire to manipulate and to control people. Hooper also shares

Nimmo's and Preedy's "heroic" contempt for the bulk of humanity even as they seek to save it, in Nimmo's case from economic exploitation, in Preedy's from hell, in Hooper's from "communist materialism." Hooper is the "son of a lorry driver, who worked his way through the grammar school to a varsity" and who displays "a great contempt for the class from which he had sprung," the typical member of which, he avers, is "a born slave and parasite, a creature who did not even wish to improve his lot, to learn, to advance in life, to take responsibility" and whose politics are "a mixture of fear, greed and envy" (C&F 84). His contempt is related to his obsession with

the terrific challenge [posed] by the communists — the appeal of class envy, of racial hatred feeding on national inferiority complexes, of personal greed, personal spite, personal vanity, the whole gamut of human meanness and cruelty now being mobilized to smash civilization in the interests of the communist power gang.

(C&F 23).

Hooper sees himself as an "heroic" figure manipulating the British public for its own good, saving it from the consequences of its own apathy and stupidity by playing upon its emotions and by reducing complex social situations to choices simple enough to be presented in a headline: " 'what we wanted was a simple message — something absolutely clear. That's what gets 'em' " (C&F 270-71). He shares Nimmo's intense personal ambition, but does not bother to conceal such motivation from himself, as Nimmo does. However, Hooper is self-deluded in another sense, for although he considers himself to be

superior to the masses from which he has arisen, like the newspaper-reading public he serves and manipulates he has a fondness for unambiguous choices and simple answers.¹⁴

Hooper supports Preedy because he sees in nonconformism and evangelical religion a force capable of combating the communist "scientific fifth column entrenched in every Western university" (C&F 23). But his backing of Preedy is not motivated solely by personal ambition and a desire to use Preedy as a weapon against the red menace. He also sees the issue of faith-healing in Preedy's simplistic terms: " ' "Either God has power to abolish evil or he hasn't, and if he hasn't then he isn't God, in fact there isn't any God" ' " (C&F 54). So although he knows that in simplifying he distorts, Hooper still believes that the issues as he describes them represent morally valid, even necessary, choices. To Syson's remonstrance that " 'the matter [of faith in miracles] can't be treated by slogans,' " he replies, " 'That was what they said about Wesley and lost the whole of the Methodist movement Wesley put it simply and Preedy puts it simply' " (C&F 53). Hooper believes such distortion is necessary because he sees God as the last line of defence of western civilisation and the British public as too stupid to understand complex theological debate.

As in the case of Nimmo, Hooper's contemptuous desire to control others is manifested most clearly in his relationship with his wife, an upper-class woman whom he dominates and manipulates. Unlike Nina, Joanna is in love with her husband and this is the source of his power over her, although many of his ideas disturb her as Nimmo's do Nina. When he seduces Joanna, Hooper feels that she becomes his "captive" and he despises her as a "plain, gawky and ineffective creature, a failed woman . . . and no credit to her owner" (C&F 119). Afraid that she is losing Hooper, Joanna assures him that she has accepted the validity of faith-healing. She is rewarded by a euphoria, "the bliss of total acceptance," that experienced readers of Cary will find immediately suspect. Joanna is happy when Hooper

treats her as a child, jeers at her ignorance, and treats her contemptuously, because she is relieved "at last [of] all responsibility" (C&F 183-84). Hooper acquires for Joanna "the fascination of the leader, the one who unties knots, who breaks bonds, who sets free" (C&F 188). This is the delusive "freedom" of the convert, for although Joanna scrubs the floor of Preedy's mission, Hooper is her real master.¹⁵

Although he suggests that Joanna scrub Preedy's floors, Hooper himself eventually decides to abandon the preacher because he believes Preedy's scandalous behaviour is endangering not only Hooper's own personal power and prestige as an officer of the newspaper which has hitherto backed his ministry, but also the credibility of the whole faith-healing movement (C&F 230-31, 270). After the exhausted, tormented, half-mad Preedy strikes Alice, Hooper decides to publish a photograph of the girl's black eye. In doing so, he reduces the complex relationship of Preedy and Alice Rodker to a tawdry tabloid sex scandal: "the poor little girl seduced and ruined by a parson who then proceeds to murder her baby, who has such power over her still that he recalls her to his side and beats her up as a reward" (C&F 317). He momentarily considers telling the "truth" behind the "facts" of this assault:

. . . he could describe the girl Rodker as really the stronger party; as a person of remarkable character who had come back to Preedy simply because it seemed to be the right thing to do and to whom that black eye was of no importance whatever. Who had perhaps even originally been more seducer than seduced. Though, of course, he could not exonerate Preedy. He could emphasize Preedy's cruel, or at least thoughtless and irresponsible action in

allowing a girl of that age and that reckless character to sacrifice herself. It could be interesting.

But no

. . . . What did the Dispatch readers want, a piece of psychological analysis?

A complicated story of mixed motives leaving them to make their own judgments? It was crazy even to imagine it.

(C&F 316-17)

So Hooper decides to write "the story of the year" in which the "facts" are clearly spelled out for the ignorant mob. Ironically, he demands an interview with Alice in the name of the freedom of the press, as a blow against censorship (C&F 310). He fails to note that his own management of the news to further the "cause" of saving western civilisation constitutes censorship of another sort, that he in fact commits a crime typical of the totalitarianism he wishes to oppose. In this respect Hooper is yet another "hero" who falls into error because he sees himself as justified in using questionable means to a good end.

Originally intended as a trilogy and incomplete at Cary's death, The Captive and the Free embodies many familiar "Carian" notions: the evil of sacrificing an individual for any "higher" purpose; the complexity of the "truth" of human situations and its distortion by a simple recital of "fact"; the *hubris* of assuming that one can manipulate others without moral risk; the dubiousness of justifying means by ends; the danger of surrendering responsibility to a leader, to providence, or to one's own unconscious. From the diversity of ideas that the novel addresses, it appears that Cary planned to return to many notions which had engaged his imagination for years and to re-examine them in relation to one

another. It is tempting to speculate that, had he been able to complete his original project, many of his so-called "inconsistencies" would have been resolved.

For Cary's notions do exhibit a remarkable consistency both within and between novels, and his "idea of life," while neither original nor profound, is a genuinely personal creation. By the evidence of his notes, his non-fiction, and his novels, Cary borrowed notions from many sources but espoused no one else's philosophy completely. By examining, selecting from, and adapting a number of romantic notions, he arrived at a position that has been identified as representative of an important branch of twentieth-century thought — the existentialist movement. Toward the end of his life, he himself began to examine his own position with respect to this movement, publically placing himself in Kierkegaard's school, while subjecting the philosopher's ideas to a searching examination in his fiction. By tracing Cary's explorations of romantic thought in his novels, we have arrived at a point from which we may proceed to placing his highly personal "idea of life" within the spectrum of modern existentialist philosophy.

NOTES TO CHAPTER VI

¹ The connection of the "inner light" with deterministic notions is one of the most consistent aspects of Cary's thought. In two of his earliest books, An American Visitor and The African Witch, he links Marie's and Coker's "inner light" mysticism to the worship of crocodilean nature gods, a belief in the Rousseauistic golden age, a chosen surrender of the conscious will to the subconscious, and the mentality of the "herd" (AV 151, 153; AW 50, 258). Marie and Coker are both depicted as deluded beings who mistake their own desires for the will of providence, nature, or a crocodilean pseudo-Christian God. Significantly, Cary accuses Kierkegaard of subscribing to the delusion of a "golden age" as the goal of human history (MS 280 N111 87).

² See Christian's Joyce Cary's Creative Imagination (211) for a list of legislation passed by the government of which Nimmo is supposedly part.

³ Aunt Latter also violates Nina's freedom, in subordinating her niece's rights to Latter's selfishness and Nimmo's career, and these abuses have consequences for Miss Latter. Although she acts as Nimmo's accomplice in controlling Nina's fits of rebellion, he soon begins to see her as one of his "political problems," as a situation to be managed, rather than as a person who "was herself a politician" (PG 148). From a proudly independent woman she declines into a hanger-on in Nimmo's household, summoned when she is of use, sent packing when she gets in the way (PG 150, 154-55). Nina assesses her Aunt's life as fundamentally unhappy. Aunt Latter is one of those who "take upon themselves the responsibility (and the guilt) of managing the world" but in spite of "her courage in taking decisions for other people" she suffers because she does not appreciate the complexity of such actions (PG 389-90). This juxtaposition of responsibility and guilt is crucial for an understanding of Cary's notion of morality, and Aunt Latter's sins and the price she pays for them must be considered when one attempts to assess Nimmo.

⁴ Nimmo claims that to help Tom would be to violate his "principles" (PG 351). Nimmo's own father resembles Kierkegaard's "knight of faith," Abraham, in that he sacrifices the physical welfare of his children to a set of inflexible principles that he believes are divinely ordained. It is difficult to condemn father Nimmo's actions because of his saintly personality and purity of motivation, but the consequences of his actions serve to emphasise Cary's notion that sometimes people are called upon to sacrifice their principles in the interests of others for whose well-being they are responsible (PM 69). In avoiding the sin of disobeying the "divine will," father Nimmo becomes indirectly responsible for the deaths of two of his daughters. A remark reported by Cary's friend, Enid Starkie, may have relevance here: "He told me once that he considered anxiety on the score of personal spiritual salvation as selfish, and a foolish waste of time" (in Richardson 130).

⁵ Latter's champions among the critics attempt to exculpate him on the grounds that the "nobility" of his intentions excuses his behaviour (Echeruo, Order 133; Robert Bloom 187). Cary's depiction of Latter's self-destructiveness suggests that good intentions do not relieve him of responsibility for the consequences of his actions any more than they do Nimmo.

⁶ In this respect Nimmo is very like Latter. Both are so convinced that they have privileged insight into the truth of the situation that they see all who oppose them as

conscious hypocrites and villains, and both are convinced of the existence of evil conspiracies (NHM 21). Latter also tries to pose as a public "hero" and feels very superior to most people, whom he treats with the greatest contempt (NHM 15, 72-73, 112-13). And like Nimmo, he sacrifices Nina to a "cause" with which he identifies. The chief difference between them is that Nimmo succeeds where Latter fails, in posing as a "hero" to the public.

⁷ Of course, the politician who manipulates people by lies is also "using" them in a sense. This is the reason that politics is such a dangerous profession in which guilt is almost unavoidable. But an attempt to persuade, even by lies, of necessity recognises the autonomous selfhood of the person to be persuaded.

⁸ The parallels between Nimmo's experience as a youth and as an old man are therefore exact. In both cases he sins in two ways, by subordinating means to ends and by violating the freedom of others. In both cases he suffers a diminution of selfhood as a consequence of these sins. In both cases he finds a new public arena and a new "heroic" identity which replaces a lost old one. And in both cases Nimmo's understanding of the nature of his own experience is only partial. This last point is crucial, for if he were able to see the full implications of his own narrative his behaviour would indeed be inconsistent, and the narrator of Except the Lord would appear to be a personality totally different from Nimmo in Prisoner of Grace and Not Honour More.

⁹ For this reason, Kanu is seriously mistaken in treating Except the Lord as a prelude to Prisoner of Grace. The novels must be read in the order in which Cary wrote them. The irony of Nimmo's failure to understand the implications of his own narrative only emerges in contrast to Nina's account of his behaviour.

¹⁰ The "moral order" of Cary's novels must not be construed as demonstrating some sort of cosmic "justice" at work. As Cary's preface to the Carfax edition of Aissa Saved makes clear, the notion of the injustice of the world is fundamental to his "idea of life" (9). He consistently depicts innocent suffering as the product of bad luck, accident, ignorance, and stupidity as well as of "evil will." Even more appalling, unmerited suffering may result from good intentions (AS 9). Cary conveys his intuition of the injustice of the universe by showing innocent people such as Osi and Plantie suffering undeservedly. Nor is goodness actively "rewarded": characters who respect the moral "imperative" are more likely to be fulfilled simply because they have thereby avoided one form of self-destruction. But Cary consistently depicts negative qualities such as jealousy, hatred, and selfishness as damaging those who entertain them. In Mr. Johnson, for example, the spiteful Ajali is depicted as one of those who "hate everyone else who seems happy or confident" and who are truly wretched as a consequence: "Even if they do not seem wretched, like Ajali, it is only because they do not know how much they have been wasted by boredom and loneliness and selfishness until they have become a new kind of creature, a sort of subhumanity which can . . . live at a level of corruption and misery which would kill a real human being in a day or two" (126). Therefore, although Cary suggests that unmerited suffering is all too common, he depicts immorality as inherently self-destructive. His "idea of life" is a "tragic" one in the purest sense of the word, in that it depicts a tension between fundamental injustice on the one hand and the terrible price of sin on the other, often found in the works of Attic dramatists.

¹¹ Cary evidently read Emmet's article with close attention. In her discussion, Emmet says that she considers Kierkegaard's limitation of ethics to "universal laws and codes" a mistake. She prefers to define ethical choice as "the individual confronted with an absolute obligation to do right" and ethics as "a matter of one's absolute obligation as an individual to seek the best possible solution in that individual situation in the light of conscience" (267), notions compatible with Cary's. The article is principally concerned with depicting the Nazis' "suspension" of civilised ethical norms as a perversion of Kierkegaard's notions. This is interesting in relation to the fact that Cary on several occasions depicts Jim Latter leaning toward fascism (NHM 35, 142, 150; Christian, Creative Imagination 207, 219).

¹² Because The Captive and the Free was unfinished at Cary's death, it retains passages of authorial commentary of the sort that he removed from the final typescripts of his other novels. In particular, it contains a long passage of analysis of Preedy as a "typical schizoid" of a type that may develop into either a Hitler or a St. Francis. Cary points out that this is not a complete explanation, because St. Francis "was a saint, he sacrificed his comforts, his peace to do good as he conceived it. . . . if he sought power, then it was power for good" (57).

¹³ Hoffman, too, in an attempt to render this novel consistent with Cary's argument for the reliability of subjective, intuitive "truth," tries to argue that he vindicates Preedy's faith and that "Preedy's freedom . . . [is] real" (Comedy 167).

¹⁴ Hooper is convinced of the power of religion to evoke and to manipulate people's emotions by his own susceptibility to church music and to Preedy's faith-healing (C&F 44).

¹⁵ At least until she becomes pregnant. Then, like Amanda before her, Joanna finds relief in a surrender of responsibility to natural processes: "she had the sense of being acted upon, of being absorbed into a course of events over which she had no control. She was being carried along in a stream of physical existence which she could not change if she chose, and a great part of her happiness was just in the sense of belonging, of being managed" (C&F 190). And like Amanda, Joanna is jolted out of her apathy by her sense of responsibility to her child, for when she refuses to have an abortion, Hooper leaves her. Cary's consistency is demonstrated by a telling detail: the thought of refusing her responsibility to her child and having an abortion arises in Joanna's mind "like a crocodile in a swamp" (C&F 193). Thrown upon her own resources, she plans to live abroad with her child in order to spare it the "stigma" of illegitimacy. Piqued at this display of independence, Hooper proposes (C&F 231-34).

CHAPTER VII

Cary's Existentialist "Pathology"

(i)

The "idea of life" manifested in Cary's novels can be shown to display clear affinities with particular notions of recognised existentialist philosophers. Furthermore, he arrives at this position as the result of a critique of specific romantic notions embodied in a small number of texts. Therefore, although "romanticism" and "existentialism" are terms which cover a diversity of positions, Cary can be placed within this bewildering heterogeneity with a reassuring degree of precision. It is significant that the consistent attitude displayed in his novels corresponds at many points with the notions of one of the most self-confessedly "romantic" of twentieth-century existentialists, Nikolai Berdyaev.

The precise nature of Cary's "existentialism" is most clearly demonstrated in his notion of the importance of transcending the self in relationships with other selves and with objects. Indeed, many of his characters vividly illustrate failures in self-transcendence that are described by existentialist philosophers. Since Cary regards such failures as crippling to the psyche, his novels afford the reader an existentialist "pathology."

For example, Martin Buber describes several diseases of the modern psyche resulting from loss of relationship. These conditions arise because people live in a world of relation, with nature, with other people, and with "spiritual beings" (6). Buber depicts the baby as existing in an intimate connection with "the undivided primal world" (28). This primal state of "natural connexion" is exchanged for a "spiritual connexion" or "*relation*" to the world, from which the child becomes separated (Buber 25-26). That is, the child emerges from a primal world of "*a priori*" I-Thou relationship, into a separation of I and

Thou. Buber, like Cary, suggests that in its primal, unseparated state, the infant has an "instinct" to relate to the world, but "only gradually, by entering into relations," does the "personal, actualised being" emerge from the "primal world" (Buber 27-28). Clearly, Buber and Cary have in common a somewhat "Wordsworthian" notion of psychic development.¹

According to Buber, the separation of I and Thou brings with it a longing to reconstitute I-Thou relationships, for it is only in this kind of relationship, by which one affirms another's selfhood, that one's own selfhood can be achieved (28). The separation of the I from the primal state is necessary if the self is to confront an "*It* existing 'in and for itself,' and [to form] in conjunction with it the other primary word" constitutive of I-It relationships (Buber 29). However, those who engage only in I-It interactions "cannot meet others," and, as a result, never develop true selves (Buber 32, 67, 70). Buber and Cary both emphasise the importance to the healthy psyche of the ability to transcend the self by entering into relationships with others, and both make the point that true selfhood depends upon recognition of and by the other as a free and independent being.² Jim Litter's limited selfhood and childish inability to relate to others in any meaningful way make him a good example of Buber's thesis that a true self cannot develop in the absence of genuine I-Thou relationships.

Buber also suggests that the erosion of the ability to relate to others in a manner in which the I does not take Thou for an object, but in which the relationship exists "*between I and Thou*," separates human experience into a "province of *It*," of "institutions" outside the self, and a "province of *I*," of "feelings" within the self (Buber 14-15, 43). Institutions ignore the individual save as an example of a species, and feelings grasp the other only as an object, since feelings are only one part of the "living mutual relation" among people. Institutions are locked in the past, while feelings are confined to the present moment. The

result is a public life devoid of genuine community and a private life without authenticity (Buber 44-46). Cary's Wilcher is an example of the man who has largely abandoned genuine relationship in the interest of preserving "institutions" and is therefore trapped in his own past. And although Cary would object to Buber's characterisation of "feelings," Mr. Johnson's fate indicates that Cary is keenly aware of the dangers of solipsistic immersion in immediate experience to the extent that one fails to connect one's own past and present, or to understand what others are trying to communicate.

Buber describes another "pathological" condition which Cary's Chester Nimmo vividly exemplifies. Buber notes that the successful politician "looks on the men with whom he has to deal not as bearers of the *Thou* . . . but as centres of work and effort" (47). Such a man excuses himself on the grounds that he cannot confront people as *Thou*, or he will be unable to control the world of *It* which economics and the state have become. As a result the politician runs a great risk, the danger of crossing "the boundary set for him by the spirit" (Buber 49). For Buber makes the same point that Nimmo does in Except the Lord, that the life of the spirit cannot be compartmentalised, but must inform all a person's actions (Buber 50-51). A person who spends too much time in the world of *It* becomes an alienated *I* who "lives in arbitrary self-will," trying to control the world, until he or she becomes "wholly and inextricably entangled in the unreal" (Buber 58-61). A man who believes himself to be fated, yet "intervenes continually" in destiny, employs all "attainable means required by such a purpose" (Buber 59-60). He becomes aware of his own condition "whenever he turns his thoughts to himself; that is why he directs the best part of his spirituality to averting or at least to veiling his thoughts" (Buber 61). Furthermore, a man who allows "everything about him [to] become an *It*, serving his particular Cause," is not a person because he has "no one whom he recognise[s] as a being" (Buber 67). Feeling himself to be "fraught with destiny," unable to relate to others, he turns inward, becoming

the object of his own I, and tries to see in this empty relationship with his own ego a "religious relation" (Buber 67-68, 69-70). Nimmo's manipulateness, self-deception, and abuse of the selfhood of others, and his consequent regression to a naked ego, devoid of proper selfhood, are here anatomised by Buber, along with his sense of a divinely sanctioned "heroic" destiny.

Cary's other providential "hero," Preedy, exemplifies yet another spiritual disease described by Buber, whose notion of mysticism is that it involves a relationship of self and God rather than a unity in which the I is swallowed up in the divine Thou. The "absolute otherness" of Buber's transcendent God is fundamental to his beliefs, but he insists that "if you hallow this life you meet the living God" and that God is not found in turning from the world "for there is nothing in which He could not be found" (Buber x, 79-80). Although Buber posits moments of "actual being" at which the human confronts the divine, such experiences are impossible to maintain and invariably decay into "potential being" (113). The only way in which continuous relationship with the divine can be maintained is by permeating and illuminating the world of It with relationship: "He who truly goes out to meet the world goes out also to God" (Buber 114-15, 95). Therefore, Buber emphasises that his essential concern is "the close connexion of the relation to God with the relation to one's fellow-man" and depicts the mystical loss of I swallowed up in the Thou as a delusion which precludes genuine relationship with the divine (123-24, 77-78, 86-87). Preedy, who believes that from time to time he can achieve momentary loss of selfhood in union with the "absolute," is depicted as prevented by this delusion from relating to the divine in a meaningful way, in that he overlooks a genuine intimation of God's presence in the world.

Marie Hasluck, whose mysticism takes the form of a nostalgia for a return to primal unity with the natural world, becomes another example of existential "pathology." Cary's

notion of wonder invites people to revel in the interaction of consciousness and world, which can only come about through their separation. He depicts relationship as infinitely more interesting than unity, because it affords richer experience. However, Cary understands that for people like Marie, such estrangement from the not-self is frightening. Buber suggests that one method of escape for the individual who becomes aware of and frightened by her own alienation lies in the mystical belief that "the *I* is embedded in the world and that there is really no *I* at all" (71). This illusion again precludes relationship, which cannot exist without separation (Buber 93). The costs of such illusions are high in Cary's world. Marie's desire to escape the responsibility authentic selfhood entails, by being absorbed into natural processes, prevents her from relating appropriately to reality. When she can no longer sustain this illusion, she is reduced to despair.

Yet Buber does suggest one way in which the ephemerality of direct contact with the divine and one's sense of estrangement from the world can both be overcome. Every "response to the *Thou* which appears and addresses [people] out of the mystery" manifests the spirit and "binds up *Thou* in the world of *It*," and this is how "symbol [is] made" (Buber 39-40). The artist is stimulated to create symbol when "form is disclosed to the artist as he looks at what is over against him" and this form demands to be embodied in a work (Buber 41, 9). In "bodying forth" the form the artist "disclose[s] . . . lead[s] the form across — into the world of *It*." Although the artist "banishes" form "to be a 'structure' " and the "work produced is a thing among things . . . from time to time it can face the receptive beholder in its whole embodied form" (Buber 10, 41). Each culture grows from a response to the divine *Thou* which "creates in the spirit a special conception of the cosmos . . . an apprehended world, a world that is homely and houselike" (Buber 54). A culture which ceases to be "centered" on the relational event "hardens into the world of *It*" and must be renewed by a new relational response "of a man to his *Thou*" (Buber 54-55).

This accords with Cary's depiction, in The Horse's Mouth and Art and Reality, of a world of symbols that both body forth the true form of reality and render it humanly meaningful, and with his notion that the beholder of symbol actively engages in the process of eliciting meaning from the art object, that symbols decay into empty structures with time, and that it is the ability of the artist to confront reality in a reciprocal relationship transcending the subject / object dichotomy that leads to a renewal of cultural (symbolic) tradition.

Cary's novels also dramatise some of the notions of Gabriel Marcel, another existentialist who, like Buber, emphasises the importance of meeting another person as "Thou," to "apprehend him *qua* freedom" and to "collaborate with his freedom" (Marcel, Being and Having 106-107). According to Cain, Marcel argues that it is only in relationships of mutual recognition that the self can be realised, for the self "requires the witness and response of the other." Therefore, "the *thou* discovers me to myself. I am truly *I* only over against a thou for whom I am also a *thou*" (Cain 36). The ability to relate to others is so important to Marcel that "love as the breaking of the tension between the self and the other, appears to [him] to be . . . the essential ontological datum" (Marcel, Being and Having 167). A dialogue of "call-and-response," of one self to another, is "an ontological relation of being with being" rather than a "dialectical relationship of subject to object" (Cain 38, 91).

Marcel refers to charity as "disposability," a measure of the degree to which a self has not invested all its emotional and spiritual capital in itself and is therefore available to afford others such recognition (Being and Having 69, 73). This is close to Cary's depiction of charity as a species of self-transcendence which makes possible the affirmation of another's unique selfhood. Marcel also depicts patience and charity as fostering the maturation of the self, much as Cary depicts compassion and sympathy for others as the mark of moral maturity (Cain 83). Both Jim Latter's moral "infantilism" and the price he

pays for his possessive jealousy of Nina illustrate Marcel's notions. Marcel depicts "having," in which the other is treated as an "it" to be possessed, as fundamentally self-destructive (Cain 63-64). Latter asserts that Nina belongs to him because of their sexual relationship, and he murders her in part because of his sexual jealousy and suspicion that she has tolerated Nimmo's attacks (PG 86).³ And this murder puts at risk what little selfhood Latter possesses because it destroys the only being who recognises and accepts him as he really "is."

Wilcher's difficulty in relating to the world of objects is also pathological in terms of Marcel's philosophy. A large part of Wilcher's ambivalence toward Tolbrook stems from his sense that he has been consumed by the objects he owns. It might therefore appear paradoxical that Robert's investment in recreating Tolbrook as a modern working farm helps to make him a self-fulfilled man. Marcel's suggestion that people are less likely to be consumed by their own possessions when they are "more vitally and actively bound up with something serving as the immediate subject-matter of a personal creative act, a subject matter perpetually renewed" is relevant here (Being and Having 165). This sort of commitment can convert "having" to "being," and therefore alter a person's whole relationship with objects: "Wherever there is pure creation, having as such is transcended . . . the duality of possessor and possessed is lost in a living reality" (Being and Having 166). Wilcher's brother, Bill, manages such a conversion when he makes a garden that he knows he will not live to see.

Gulley Jimson, who is in many ways Wilcher's antithesis, owns nothing save the rags he stands up in. He is interested in possessions, from tubes of paint to the Beeder's silver teapot, only insofar as they can serve as, or be transmuted into, raw material for his paintings. And Gulley is a fulfilled and fully realised self. Marcel suggests that transcending present existence in commitment "to something beyond oneself" is the source

of such self-realisation (Cain 81). Cary depicts Wilcher's failure to commit himself wholeheartedly either to Tolbrook or to the "pilgrim" life as contributing to his fragmentation. In contrast, Gulley's commitment to art, Bewsher's dedication to his job, Sara's devotion to nest-building, and Harry's involvement in creating his farm help them to achieve self-realisation. Cary's self-fulfilled characters dramatise Marcel's notion that self-transcendence is the foundation of a person's humanity, that the essence of human beings is their ability to transcend what they are through commitment to something larger than the self (Cain 55, 81). Furthermore, as Cary does, Marcel likens such "personal self-creation" to artistic creation (Cain 81).

Paul Tillich also draws a connection between self-realisation and creative engagement with the not-self: a person "affirms himself as receiving and transforming reality creatively" (Tillich, Courage 54). Like Marcel and Buber, Tillich asserts that a "person becomes aware of his own character as a person only when he is confronted by another person," that only "in the community of the I and the thou can personality arise," and that solely "in the continuous encounter with other persons does the person become and remain a person" (The Protestant Era 125; Courage 93). Furthermore, self-transcendence is the basis of freedom, "the power of transcending one's own given nature" (Tillich, The Protestant Era 116).⁴

Tillich devotes considerable attention to the "pathology" of whole societies whose members fail to understand that the meaning of their lives transcends their immediate situation and that with such freedom comes responsibility. He claims that cultures move through cycles in which a "theonomy" decays into an "autonomy." A theonomy is a society based on the intuition that "the innermost law of man himself, rooted in the divine ground which is man's own ground" transcends humanity and therefore gives "a transcending meaning" to human existence. An autonomy posits that "man as the bearer of universal

reason . . . is his own law." But autonomous cultures are spiritually empty and people frequently seek refuge in a "heteronomy," a system of law that is external and superior to humanity, and substitutes a "higher" authority for personal moral responsibility (The Protestant Era 45-47, 56-57). Spiritual renewal occurs at a *kairos*, a turning point in history when the temporal and the eternal intersect and a new theonomy is created (The Protestant Era 45).⁵

Tillich's heteronomy is reminiscent of the situation of those of Cary's characters who seek to throw responsibility upon some form of "providence," or upon "heroes."⁶ In Cary's adaptation of Carlyle's notions, an "autonomous" society is one in which institutions mistake their "clothing" for their meaning, and decay because they are empty, so that the values they once represented must be clothed anew. Tillich's "theonomous" age corresponds to Cary's vision of a society in which self-transcending intuition revitalises traditions that give meaning to existence by their expression of enduring truth. However, Cary describes all advanced cultures as being in a state of constant change along many fronts simultaneously. Thus a given culture may be undergoing a religious or artistic revival at the very moment that its political institutions are decaying. Furthermore, the divine does not intervene miraculously in history and the responsibility for renewal lies with humanity's ability to find "clothing" that is suitable to its immediate historical situation.

Although he sees a pattern in history, Tillich, like Cary, denies the existence of a "law of universal progress." There is no inherent necessity to history, no preordained *telos* to the "dialectic" and Hegel was wrong "to interpret the arbitrary acts of human self-determination as the bearers of an all-embracing meaningful necessity" (The Protestant Era 48, 173). He characterises Hegel's dialectic as "a philosophical rationalization of the idea of providence" and rejects it because he can see no grounds for the arbitrary choice of a point

at which the dialectical process is said to be complete. Furthermore, he points out that such notions are dangerous because they often lead to repression and totalitarianism: to see a particular moment as the *telos* of history implies that any change would be devolution and that the *status quo* must be maintained at all costs (The Protestant Era 41-42, 173, 23-24). Hegel's notions are particularly dangerous because many people find the Hegelian dialectic an attractive idea. For, like Cary, Tillich suggests that "providential" notions pervade modern attitudes to historical change: "During the whole course of modern culture . . . philosophy maintained the belief in providence" as a " 'pre-established harmony' " or as " 'the law of progress and perfectibility' " (The Protestant Era 10). Cary's African novels (especially Castle Corner) are centrally concerned with the high cost paid by individuals who surrender their freedom to an historical providence or dialectic.

These same novels embody a notion of history as development from the homogeneity of tribal life to the richness and complexity of the "democracy of groups," a notion fundamental to Tillich's philosophy. He, like Cary, characterises the tribe as an archaic stage of human development, and he depicts as pathological any attempt to regress to the forms of primitive societies which suppress the emergence of independent selfhood. Uli exemplifies Tillich's contention that in tribal societies, the community gives the individual "its life . . . its meaning," so that the individual "affirms himself through the group in which he participates," rather than as an independent self, for "[t]ruth and meaning are embodied in the traditions and symbols of the group, and there is no autonomous asking or doubting" (The Protestant Era 125; Courage 95-96). Cary's African novels dramatise Tillich's depiction of tribal society as crippling to the self who desires to evolve beyond this self-definition in terms of the group. According to Tillich, in primitive societies the individual's "development into a personality is restricted and often destroyed by the community," a notion dramatically illustrated by Akande Tom's humiliation (The

Protestant Era 125). Tillich sees in democracy the emergence of an institution which encourages people to affirm themselves as individual selves, so that "personality becomes the bearer and goal of social life" (The Protestant Era 126). The contrasts Cary draws between tribal and democratic societies, as illustrated by the situations of Judy and Elisabeth, Dryas and Osi, exemplify Tillich's notion that individualism evolved as the primitive collectivism of the tribe developed into modern democracy (Courage 114).

Tillich also describes nationalism and myths of racial superiority as symptoms of a pathological "relapse into tribal collectivism," and he sees in romantic myths of the Golden Age and the organic society a misguided longing to return to the security of the group (Courage 99-100, 118). That is, as Cary does in his novels, Tillich draws a connection between the temptation to rejoin the herd and a tendency to see "providential" forces at work in human history. He attributes the attraction of "a new tribal existence" to fascism's myth of racial destiny and he asserts that communism, like the tribe, sees the "meaning of life [in] the meaning of the collective" (The Protestant Era 131; Courage 103). Cary's novels depict the fascist's racial intolerance and the communist's worship of the collective as fundamentally related: "herd communism, herd fear and herd love, blood ties, and race hatreds" are all part of Selah Coker's "primitive religion" (AW 209).

Many more of Tillich's notions are played out in Cary's novels. For example, Tillich suggests that although the idea of personal responsibility is essential to the emergence of the self from "primitive conformism," totalitarian states of both the right and the left encourage the abandonment of this responsibility for individual judgment and demand the sacrifice of selfhood (The Protestant Era 137, 225). This is very reminiscent of Cary's notion that the development of a concept of personal responsibility is essential to the maturation of the self, and that primitive tribes and totalitarian states are alike in demanding the sacrifice of mature, responsible selfhood. Both Cary and Tillich depict some people as

eager to surrender personal autonomy in exchange for security. Cary's depiction of Marie and Amanda vividly illustrates Tillich's assertion that security is impossible, and cannot be purchased by "submerging [one]self in the vital life-process" (The Protestant Era 198). Sara's, Tibby's, and Gulley's careers exemplify Tillich's contention that "life demands again and again the courage to surrender some or even all security for the sake of full self-affirmation" (Courage 78). And Wilcher's ambivalent view of Tolbrook, as both a refuge from a changed world he cannot understand and a prison that has prevented him from achieving his ambitions, displays the "[p]athological anxiety" that, Tillich declares, "impels [him] toward . . . the security of a prison" (Courage 78-79).

Tillich fears the "romantic" tendency to take "refuge" from such insecurity in "any strong authoritarian system" (The Protestant Era 116). He was deeply concerned that his contemporaries were abandoning responsibility and rushing to embrace "enthusiasm, sacrifice, and self-subjection" to "authoritarian, totalitarian" governments (The Protestant Era 225). This is the situation which Cary depicts in Marching Soldier and The Drunken Sailor. In turn, Tillich's depiction of the "prophetic spirit" existing in eternal opposition to such irresponsibility and self-enslavement recalls Gulley Jimson. Tillich could be describing Gulley when he declares that the "prophetic spirit must always criticize, attack, and condemn sacred authorities, doctrines, and morals," must affirm the responsibility of the individual to judge for him or herself, and must "protest against every power which claims divine character for itself" (The Protestant Era 226, 230).

However, Cary's "prophetic spirits" are suspect when they claim privileged access to the divine will. Preedy and Selah Coker, who claim this privilege, are two of Cary's most psychologically unbalanced characters. Tillich defines mystical "courage to be" as the result of the individual's longing "for a participation in the ground of being which approaches identification" and asserts that "the element of identity on which mysticism is

based cannot be absent from any religious experience," even from "the person-to-person encounter with God" (Courage 166, 153, 156). Significantly, at Preedy's mystical moment of conversion he feels emptied of selfhood and filled with the voice of God. But Tillich also points out the problem that Preedy personifies, first, that "not everything that calls itself ecstasy is an experience of being grasped by the really real," and second, the difficulty of knowing, when the "divine voice within us" speaks, if the *content* of an ecstatic experience comes from God, whether the truth revealed by the "inner light" is in fact divinely or humanly inspired (The Protestant Era 80, 142).

On the other hand Tillich, like Cary, finds Kant's categorical imperative unsatisfactory (Tillich, The Protestant Era 143). He seeks an answer to this problem in the Christian notion of the individual conscience, declaring that the idea of personal responsibility and guilt is essential to the emergence of a true self (The Protestant Era 137, 139). The "sensitive" conscience is aware of its own inevitable guilt and looks "beyond the sphere in which it is valid to the sphere from which it must receive its conditional validity" (The Protestant Era 149). The Christian *Agape* "offers a principle of ethics which maintains an eternal, unchangeable element but makes its realization dependent on continuous acts of a creative intuition." Christian love, therefore, responds to the "*concrete demands of every individual and social situation without losing its . . . unconditional validity*" (The Protestant Era 154-55). This resembles the manner in which Cary's novels respond to a similar challenge: his reluctance on the one hand to embrace the categorical imperative and on the other to adopt Kierkegaard's notion that purely subjective experience can justify violating ethical norms. And Cary's solution is similar to Tillich's, an "imperative" that demands that one respect the freedom of others, that one examine each moral choice independently and respond to it creatively, and that one's choices be guided by self-transcending compassion.

Cary's novels depict the consequences of the difficulty of living up to such standards as the ever-present possibility of guilt, and the second trilogy vividly illustrates the cost of a "pathological" denial of one's guilt. Tillich regards the whole notion of guilt as fundamental to the Christian experience and as a moral and spiritual advance upon pagan stoicism because "the courage to face one's own guilt leads to the question of salvation instead of renunciation" (Courage 28). The anxiety of guilt is "present in every moment of moral self-awareness" and is a "normal, existential" condition because of the "unconditional demand to realize the true and to actualize the good" which can never be completely fulfilled (Courage 59, 79; The Protestant Era 198). One response to the "anxiety of becoming guilty, the horror of feeling condemned" is a neurotic reduction of choices and actions "to a minimum which . . . is considered absolutely perfect," the "creation of certitude in systems of meaning, which are supported by tradition and authority" (Courage 79, 80). The "narrow castle of certitude" in which neurotics barricade themselves, leads them to doubt "what is practically above doubt" and to be "certain where doubt is adequate" (Courage 80). Jim Latter is Cary's portrait of such a neurotic, for Latter refuses to accept responsibility and guilt for his actions, he deliberately constrains himself within a narrow world of simplistic inherited ideas, he consistently fails to doubt people such as Maufe whom he has classified as "good," and he persists in doubting Nina's innocence in the Maufe affair to the extent of misinterpreting the letters which exculpate her (NHM 214-19).

Tillich suggests that to refuse the experience of guilt is pathological because guilt is inescapable. There exists a "demonic" principle in history, arising from the "inseparable mix of good and evil in every human act," and "human freedom inescapably involves [people] in human ambiguity" (The Protestant Era xvi-xvii, 201; Courage 59). This situation is rendered by Cary's depiction of historical development, from the mixed good and evil consequences of Johnson's road, to the destruction of beautiful old farms, houses,

and country inns in the interest of new creation that Cary depicts in To Be a Pilgrim and A Fearful Joy, to Gulley's painting over another artist's canvas, obliterating the fruits of someone else's struggle to realise creative vision in the interest of capturing his own.

From the evidence of Cary's novels it is clear that he displays a strong affinity with Buber, Marcel, and Tillich. What these philosophers have in common is a conviction that the relationship of two selves who respect one another's freedom and selfhood is difficult but not impossible. Furthermore, they suggest that such relationship is fundamental to the integrity of the self. Thus the isolation of the self-consciousness is compensated for, in that relationship is dependent upon the existence of some sort of distance between the related entities. The notion of separation from the not-self as constitutive of selfhood is one of the few notions that these philosophers have in common with Sartre, who posits consciousness itself as coming into being as separation from the *en-soi* (in-itself), and freedom as existing only by virtue of the nothingness which the *pour-soi* (for-itself) "secretes" around itself. However, the *pour-soi* desires a return to the unity from which it arose, a desire which is constantly frustrated: the "synthesis of the for-itself and the in-itself" is impossible because the for-itself "could not attain the in-itself without losing itself as for-itself" (Sartre, Being and Nothingness 24, 28, 90).⁷

Cary celebrates the separation of the self as constitutive of its existence, because a genuine self cannot exist in a state of primal undifferentiation. The desire for a return to unity is depicted as an abrogation of the self's responsibility to enter into meaningful relationships with other people and objects, relationships on which its own realisation depends. Buber speaks for Cary when he says that human experience exists in a tension of "natural separation" and "natural combination" and that "[a]ll real living is meeting" (24, 11). In contrast, although Sartre says that the other "is indispensable to my existence," and "I accept and wish that others should confer upon me a being which I recognize," he means

this in rather a different sense from Cary (Sartre, Existentialism and Humanism 45; Being and Nothingness 262). He depicts the fundamental relationship of selves, not as mutual recognition of one another as experiencing subjects, but as a hopeless struggle in which each tries "to constitute [itself as] a subject by constituting the other [as] an object" (Blackham 118). While recognition by "the Other is the foundation of my being," shame arises from the knowledge that the other is looking at and judging me. Shame is evaded by reducing the other, for whom I am an object, to an object. The ideal relationship, in which the freedom and subjectivity of the other is respected, is therefore "unrealizable" (Being and Nothingness 261, 289-90, 364-66).

For this reason, the behaviour of Nimmo and Latter toward Nina, depicted by Cary as pathological, is compatible with Sartre's depiction of a normal love affair. Latter's possessiveness and jealousy, while reprehensible, are at least understandable, because Nina is the woman upon whose recognition Latter's selfhood depends and therefore he wishes her to focus all her attention upon him. As Sartre points out, the lover wishes to be freely chosen by the beloved and to absorb all her attention (Being and Nothingness 370). But if Latter were truly to "possess" Nina she would no longer be an independent self, and she would therefore be unable to afford him this recognition: the "ideal . . . appropriation of the Other qua Other" is incompatible with treating the beloved as an object " 'to be possessed' " (Being and Nothingness 374).

Nina's relationship with Nimmo also illustrates Sartre's notion of the "normal" course of love. According to Sartre, "to want to be loved is to want to be placed beyond the whole system of values posited by the Other and to be the condition of all valorization and the objective foundation of all values," to "constitute myself as the necessary intermediary between her and the world" (Being and Nothingness 369, 372). This is precisely what Nimmo wants to be to Nina, the source and judge of all her values and the medium through

which she interacts with the world. Simultaneously, because "the Other is not only the one whom I see but the one *who sees me*" he wants Nina to reflect back to him unstinting approval of all he does, for he requires nothing less than "the consent of the Other's freedom" to the proposal of himself as "unsurpassable" (Being and Nothingness 228, 372).

It is very significant that the relationship of Nimmo and Nina, which Cary presents as the extreme of pathology, fits so closely Sartre's depiction of normality. Sartre sees conflict as "the original meaning of being-for-others," because "[f]rom the moment that I exist I establish a factual limit to the Other's freedom" and the other's freedom ineluctably limits mine (Being and Nothingness 364, 409, 525). Since the very existence of the other limits the self's freedom, all relationship involves struggle: "while I attempt to free myself from the hold of the Other, the Other is trying to free [her]self from mine; while I seek to enslave the Other, the Other seeks to enslave me" (Being and Nothingness 364). In Sartre's Roads to Freedom trilogy, Mathieu Delarue's urgent wish to avoid meaningful relationship stems from his belief that any commitment to another is incompatible with freedom. Sartre's notion resembles Cary's contention that the freedom of one person to realise him or herself creatively inevitably infringes on that of others, that, for example, Sara's desire to realise herself by building a "nest" around Gulley conflicts with his ability to fulfil himself as a painter. However, given Cary's depiction of the cost of Nimmo's sacrifice of all his relationships with other people to his relentless striving for self-affirmation, he would probably agree with Tillich's assessment that Sartre's Delarue is an example of an extreme form of courage to be as oneself "which pays the price of complete emptiness" (Tillich, Courage 142).

Nonetheless, Cary, like Sartre, suggests that there is a certain danger to the self in interacting with others. In Cary's world there exists a tension between the need to interact

with others in order to achieve self-realisation and the risk of self-destruction as a result of interfering with another's freedom. This danger is dramatised in the novels as the inescapability of guilt. As Barnes points out, Sartre is centrally concerned with two different notions of guilt. "Existential" guilt stems from "shame," the awareness that we are each an object for others and that we in turn inevitably "do violence to [the other's] subjectivity" (Barnes, Being and Nothingness xxxii). Cary's notion of guilt is limited to the latter concern, the violence one does to another's freedom. Barnes distinguishes Sartre's notion of "existential" guilt from his depiction of "psychological" guilt, defined as a "lack of authenticity" stemming from "bad faith." One is in "bad faith" whenever one refuses to accept responsibility, blames others for what one has done, fails to exercise one's freedom, or subscribes to any "theory of psychological determinism," notions with which Cary is clearly in sympathy (Being and Nothingness xxxii, 44).

Indeed, many of Cary's characters exemplify Sartre's notion of "bad faith." For example, Sartre's man of "bad faith" who lies to himself and deliberately represses knowledge he does not wish to face recalls Cary's Ella and Nimmo. His "man who in the face of reproaches . . . dissociates himself from his past by insisting on . . . his perpetual re-creation" is a more self-conscious Mr. Johnson, and Sartre's "man who deliberately *arrests himself* at one period in his life and refuses to take into consideration later changes" recalls Wilcher (Being and Nothingness 49, 58). Charley is in danger of falling into yet another form of "bad faith" by accepting a limiting definition of himself as a delinquent and allowing this to determine his behaviour (Being and Nothingness 63-65). And Nimmo is certainly guilty of "fundamental bad faith" in defining Nina purely by her function ("my wife") and seeking to make her "useful" to himself by employing "those 'master-words' which can release [her] mechanisms" (Being and Nothingness 381).

In drawing a connection between guilt and the exercise of responsibility in the sphere of political power, Sartre and Cary also have something in common. Sartre accepts that guilt comes with such responsibility, and, like Cary, counts it as a less evil choice than the sacrifice of human relationship to abstract principle. In Dirty Hands he presents a portrait of an effective politician, Hoederer, who firmly believes that the end justifies the means and, unlike the self-deluded Nimmo, acknowledges that it is impossible to "govern innocently" (223-24, 225). He is murdered by an ideologue who, like Jim Latter, is led by jealousy to sacrifice someone he loves to his empty "principles" (Dirty Hands 225).

Sartre's The Devil and the Good Lord explores questions of political leadership and responsibility, and among the characters are figures who resemble some of Cary's people: Heinrich, a priest who escapes responsibility in blind obedience to the authority of the church and the commands of God, Nasti, a revolutionary prophet who manipulates the peasants in order to achieve the millennium, and Goetz, a demonic figure who at first embraces evil as a form of defiant self-assertion and later seeks to manipulate people for their own good. Sartre's play suggests that some people must accept the loneliness and responsibility of leadership as their way of participating in humanity, a notion that is related to Cary's depiction of the risk and the sacrifice of assuming political power. Yet even here, Sartre's notion of "commitment" is, as Philip Mairet notes, "essentially unilateral," for the leader is committed to others and yet isolated from them by responsibility (Existentialism and Humanism 16n). Once again a condition (in this case the isolation of the leader) which Sartre views as inevitable is depicted by Cary as a pathological extreme.

Clearly, although in some respects they are so different, in other areas Cary and Sartre have more in common than Cary was willing to admit. In a small book published in 1947, Existentialism and Humanism, Sartre emphasises the more positive side of his philosophy as he attempts to defend his views against charges that he promotes quietism

and despair, ignores relationship in his emphasis on isolation, and advocates moral relativism (23-24). Sartre's expression of his position in this work (which he later repudiated) affords several parallels with Cary's notions. He, like Cary, describes moral choice as "comparable to the construction of a work of art," and says that it is possible to judge other people on the basis of the truth or error of the grounds on which they base moral choice (Existentialism and Humanism 48, 50-51). Cary's novels invite the reader to make this sort of judgment by exposing the "ideas of life" of various characters to the test of experience, the results consequent upon enacting them. As we have seen, one particular group of notions that Cary goes to great lengths to expose as inadequate are those Sartre describes as "deterministic doctrine[s]" offering refuge from the responsibility of choice (Existentialism and Humanism 51).

Sartre also focuses on the aspect of Kierkegaard's notions that most disturbs Cary, the problem of knowing if inner voices "proceed from heaven and not from . . . my own subconsciousness or some pathological condition." Because of the impossibility of knowing this, one can never be sure that one is "the proper person to impose, by my own choice, my conception of man upon mankind" (Existentialism and Humanism 31). On the other hand, Sartre rejects Kant's categorical imperative on the grounds that "principles that are too abstract break down when we come to defining action." Nonetheless, he contends that "although the content of morality is variable, a certain form of this morality is universal" in that one must not try to evade one's freedom (Existentialism and Humanism 52). This represents Sartre's attempt, like Cary's moral "imperative," to find an absolute criterion for behaviour which is not incompatible with the freedom of the individual.

Given such areas of agreement, it is evident that it is in their depictions of personal relationships that the principal differences between Cary's and Sartre's notions are seen. Sartre's notion of the nature of personal interaction that does not threaten the integrity of the

self is a very arid one. According to Sartre, while it is possible to say "we" when " 'we' includes a plurality of subjectives which recognize one another as subjectivities," the members of the "we" relate to one another only in the manner of an audience viewing the same play (Being and Nothingness 413). Sartre's "we" is thus very different from "I-Thou." This is the crucial distinction which differentiates Sartre from those existentialists who see the realisation of the self as dependent upon respect and compassion for others. This difference does a great deal to mitigate the anguish and despair that is often depicted as "typical" of the "existential" novel. Cary himself considers that this type of novel is written to illustrate a "thesis," a dogma of despair in which (Cary naively insists) the novelist cannot genuinely believe because it is false to experience. The "existential" novelist sacrifices to a thesis the depiction of love and goodness as commonplaces of human existence, the everyday acts of self-transcendence which, Cary says, we take for granted precisely because they are ubiquitous ("Morality and the Novelist," SE 158-60).

Sartre's notion of transcendence as "self-surpassing" differs from Cary's in that Sartre views people as transcending themselves toward their own future, wrapped up in their own projects, and leaving their past selves behind in the interest of greater self-realisation: "Man is all the time outside of himself: it is in projecting and losing himself beyond himself that he makes man to exist; and, on the other hand, it is by pursuing transcendent aims that he himself is able to exist" (Existentialism and Humanism 55). To Cary, one becomes most fully human and most fully one's self when one transcends the given in new creation or adapts creatively what has been inherited from the past, when one transcends immediate experience through intuitive insight, but most importantly, when one transcends the self in acts of love and goodness directed towards others. This last point forms the basis on which Cary himself distinguishes between his own notions and Sartre's: "The French seem to take me for an Existentialist in Sartre's sense of the word. But I'm

not. I am influenced by the solitude of men's minds, but equally by . . . their sympathies which bring them together. I believe that there is such a thing as unselfish love" ("Interview," SE 7).

(ii)

Nikolai Berdyaev is the only contemporary existentialist philosopher other than Sartre to whom Cary refers in his notebooks. Cary's notes on Berdyaev do not antedate 1939, and this suggests that many of the notions they hold in common are the result of convergent evolution rather than of "influence." Significantly, Berdyaev, who like Cary places himself with Kierkegaard as opposed to Sartre, acknowledges that he was profoundly influenced by Thomas Carlyle (Dream and Reality 89, 97). He reports that he was "completely carried away while reading . . . Heroes and Hero Worship" (Dream and Reality 89). But Berdyaev retains two Carlylean notions which Cary rejects — the existence of a group of "aristocrats" who must labour to save humanity from its own stupidity and evil, and the notion of an ideal other reality of which the world of our experience is but a fallen copy.

Berdyaev characterises himself as "a Russian romantic of the early twentieth century" because of "my hostility towards the determinism of the finite, and my disbelief in the possibility of achieving perfection in the finite." He also describes as "romantic" his "opposition of intuition to discursive reasoning," his emphasis on the importance of "the creative element in the life of man," and his "insistence on the supremacy of the personal and the individual over the general and the universal" (Dream and Reality 16, 109), notions that are shared by Cary.

Because he values the individual over the universal, Berdyaev, like Cary, rejects the categorical imperative and grounds freedom in creative acts that are "indeterminate, uncaused, gratuitous" in that they introduce something new, "in this sense, out of nothing" into the world (Berdyaev, Dream and Reality 99, 208). Berdyaev, too, rejects the self-limitation of freedom by choosing to subordinate oneself to any entity "which makes

pretensions to universal significance" (Slavery and Freedom 71) and claims a right to sacrifice the individual to this purpose. He considers nationalism to be particularly pernicious, because it treats the "nation" as an abstract principle, rather than as a group of individuals with concrete needs and hopes, and because it can become an idol demanding human sacrifice (Slavery and Freedom 164, 166, 168). Cary's African novels (and especially his use of crocodiles in The African Witch) suggest that he would support Berdyaev's contention that the subjection of any individual person to an abstract concept is a variety of human sacrifice (Slavery and Freedom 103). Berdyaev posits the existence of a variety of providence, the result of "the antinomous union of God's Will and human freedom" (History 79). However, he joins Cary in opposing notions of divine providence which depict God as an "autocratic monarch," and in resisting the justification of evil to individuals by the harmony of the whole because this "turns personality into a means to an end" (Slavery and Freedom 87; Freedom and the Spirit 360-61).⁸

Furthermore, Berdyaev's views of natural causality show a marked similarity to Cary's. He points out that accident can interfere with even the most deterministic natural processes and he states that the individual "breaks in upon [the] cycle of natural determined life as a force . . . out of the realm of freedom" (Slavery and Freedom 94, 95). This closely resembles Cary's contention that human self-determination introduces a radical unpredictability which greatly interferes with deterministic natural processes (A&R 6, 8). Like Cary, who attributes to the "character" of the universe "an immense amount of luck, of pure chance" (A&R 8), Berdyaev emphasises the importance of chance in natural processes, and rejects the notion that there is any overriding teleology behind them (Slavery and Freedom 99). He suggests that the romantic "return to nature" is an attitude "based upon an illusion" of the natural world as "unity and harmony." This desire to see in nature "a world harmony . . . world unity, world order" Berdyaev calls "the lure of the cosmos"

and he warns that it can take the form of "the lure of blood, race" (Slavery and Freedom 97-98). That is, as Cary does in An American Visitor, The African Witch, and Castle Corner, Berdyaev depicts myths of racial destiny as an outgrowth of notions of a "natural" teleology, of the idea that humanity will achieve the millennium by following the dictates of nature.

Cary's attitude to the tribal societies he describes in his African novels bears a striking resemblance to Berdyaev's notions. Berdyaev states that, in such societies, personality is "engulfed by the community," to the extent of "the ejection of the subject into the object . . . into a horde, into a clan." He is aware of the "anguish and distress" experienced by individuals such as Cary's Uli in "breaking away from the primitive trend to collective existence." However, this is a necessary break, an escape from "the sway of fear," from slavery to "the past, [to] what is customary" (Slavery and Freedom 103, 138, 52, 70).

Although he sees this break with the past as necessary, Berdyaev, like Cary, values tradition, which he sees as the transmission of "the creative spiritual life" to succeeding generations (Berdyaev, Freedom and the Spirit 331). However, like Cary and Carlyle, Berdyaev distinguishes between the content and the temporary form of a tradition, between "eternal principles" and their "social and political forms," and he emphasises the dangers of confusing them (Berdyaev, Slavery and Freedom 110-11). For example, he distinguishes between Christian tradition and the institutionalised church: "When the church, as objectivization and a social institution, is regarded as holy and impeccable, then the creation of an idol and the slavery of man begin" (Slavery and Freedom 249). Furthermore, because of humanity's spiritual development, the old church formulas no longer suffice. When "historic forms" decay, the "world becomes 'disincarnated,' " and new forms are required (Freedom and the Spirit 234-35, 332, 317, 81).

Berdyaev's notion of the importance of symbol in providing new forms for enduring tradition closely resembles Cary's. This is hardly surprising, considering the importance to both of them of the thought of Thomas Carlyle (Berdyaev, Dream and Reality 89; History 13, 208). Both Cary and Berdyaev are indebted to Carlyle for the notion that symbols decay and need to be replaced or revitalised, that symbols can harden into institutions which are then substituted for the reality they represent (Berdyaev, Freedom and the Spirit 43, 45, 46). Berdyaev sounds remarkably like Gulley Jimson when he suggests that the art object itself may enslave when it becomes an object of veneration that discourages artistic innovation. The creative genius of one generation becomes the idol of the next, and an irruption of the "prophetic spirit" is necessary to revitalise the artistic tradition (Slavery and Freedom 129). Gulley refers to himself as the "prophetic spirit" and he is engaged in an arduous search for new forms. Ironically, he must contend with his own earlier artistic self, who has become an "idol" to the public, to the critics, and to patrons such as the Beeders, the Duchess, and the American millionaire.

The area in which Berdyaev may have had a direct influence on Cary's notions is in his discussion of the manner in which new symbols are created, an issue with which Carlyle does not deal.⁹ Like Cary, Berdyaev depicts the creative act as a variety of self-transcendence (Freedom and the Spirit 230). In creativity one achieves a relationship which "does not know any dualistic division into subject and object" because such division is transcended by "creative intuition," a "sympathetic living-into the world," a "loving penetration into the essence of things" (Dream and Reality 206; Creative Act 113, 116, 35, 40). But such sympathy does not mean that artistic creation is devoid of conflict, for Berdyaev depicts creativity as "a fight against matter and necessity" to realise the artist's vision in concrete form (Slavery and Freedom 128). Like Cary, Berdyaev suggests that artistic creation is genuine creation *ex nihilo*, not merely a rearrangement of elements, and

that such creation is an act of freedom that triumphs over necessity (Creative Act 129, 144, 225).

However, in other areas Berdyaev and Cary are not in such complete agreement, for Berdyaev often remains faithful to Carlyle when Cary chooses to differ from him. At the centre of Berdyaev's notions are a Carlylean realisation of "a struggle of opposites at the heart of existence," and a vision of "the life of man and the world torn by contraries, which must be faced and maintained in their tension" (Dream and Reality 92, 97). Whereas Cary depicts these polarities as generating and sustaining continua, Berdyaev attributes such tensions to mutually exclusive opposites: spirit and freedom *versus* nature and necessity. For his philosophy relies upon a dualism which Cary's notion of polarised continua attempts to circumvent and this dualism is involved in those areas in which his thought differs most markedly from Cary's.¹⁰ For example, they both emphasise what Berdyaev describes as "the gap between [the artist's] aim and realization," but Berdyaev attributes this gap to the fact that in art "new being is not created but only signs of new being, its symbols." He laments that art "does not attain ontological results," does not penetrate "into another world" and create "the real," but produces a cultural world of "ideal . . . symbolic values" (Creative Act 238, 226). For his dualism, his longing for transcendence, leads him to see as a spiritual failure the very aspect of art which Cary depicts as its chief purpose — the creation of a humanly meaningful "symbolic" world of values.

Berdyaev asserts that "[s]ymbols presuppose the existence of two worlds and two orders of being A symbol shows us that the meaning of one world is to be found in another" (Freedom and the Spirit 52). All genuine art "teaches us that everything passing and temporal is a symbol of another form of being, permanent and eternal" (Creative Act 238-39). For this reason, Berdyaev differentiates between "canonic" and "romantic" art. "Canonic" art remains tied to the world of sin and necessity, in the interests of adaptation to

which it hinders genuine creative energy. It "seeks only cultural values, does not strive toward new being," and therefore merely shows "symbolic signs" of spiritual reality, whereas "romantic" art displays a "transcendental intention towards another world" (Creative Act 226-28). Therefore, Berdyaev hails the *symbolistes* as "noble, truly aristocratic" spirits, the forerunners of a new era because they "refuse all adaptation to this world" and reach out "not towards cultural values but towards new being" (Creative Act 240-42).

Although "adaptation" to the world of nature is to be resisted, Berdyaev contends that the spiritual and natural realms "are not in a state of irrevocable separation," for symbols partake of both worlds and thus "a symbolic mode of thought . . . brings us face to face with ultimate realities" (Freedom and the Spirit 52, 83). The spiritual world is "symbolically reflected" in the world of nature and history and symbol "renders the finite transparent to the infinite" (Freedom and the Spirit 20, 34-35, 60). Therefore, the reason for a symbol's decay is that it "no longer gives expression to the inner life of the spirit" (Freedom and the Spirit 58). In his notes on Berdyaev's contention that the symbol joins two worlds, Cary comments that the symbol "also divides" because it is a "proxy" (MS 280 N111 33). Cary's notes make clear that he persists in seeing symbol primarily as a way of recreating past experience, a "door" to the past moment of intuition (MS 280 N111 34-35). Although intuition gives one insight into the eternal "truths" of reality, symbols function diachronically by recreating this moment of intuition rather than synchronically by bridging two realities. In this respect, Cary's notions are much closer to Wordsworth's idea of the function of poetic language than they are to Carlyle's symbols. This is not surprising when one considers the similarity of Cary's notion of memory to that of Wordsworth.

Like Carlyle, Berdyaev sees an important role for exceptional individuals who strive for the spiritual development of all people by virtue of their ability to see into the realm of the spirit. And like Cary, he depicts these "prophets" as frequently persecuted for their nonconformity: "The initiators and creators of new thought and a new way of living have always been persecuted" (Berdyaev, Slavery and Freedom 67). He cites Kierkegaard and Carlyle, Socrates and Jesus as prophets, whom he also describes as "aristocrats," "saints," and "geniuses." He also describes Prometheus as a "liberator" and "the father of human culture" (Berdyaev, Freedom and the Spirit 358-59, xii-xiii, 61, 226). However, like Carlyle and unlike Cary, Berdyaev depicts the creative spirit as limited to this "aristocratic" minority who must work for the salvation of all (Berdyaev, Freedom and the Spirit 80, xvi).

Berdyaev differs from Cary in retaining both Carlyle's notion of the "hero" and his distrust of democracy. He candidly admits his "hatred of the democratic herd," and describes democracy as "the impoverishment of . . . the human personality." Most people, he contends, cannot bear freedom; it is "too heavy" for them: "freedom is not democratic but aristocratic: freedom is uninteresting . . . to the masses" (Berdyaev, Dream and Reality 272, 61, 223-24). Although he considers himself a socialist and displays considerable contempt for liberalism, Berdyaev regards the Marxist proletariat as a "myth" and the worship of the collective as "idolatry" (Slavery and Freedom 213; Dream and Reality 235). He rejects anarchy, because some form of state is necessary to protect the rights of the individual, but it is difficult to envisage the form of state that would satisfy him (Slavery and Freedom 150-51, 213; Dream and Reality 235). Unlike Cary, Berdyaev does not posit any "final order" arrived at by human effort in the world of nature and history.

For Berdyaev finds it easier to envisage a spiritual transfiguration of the entire human race than the evolution of a free but stable society. He says that "[t]he lie in the soul

which is common to political and social revolution consists in the desire to eliminate external evils while allowing them to flourish" within the person. That is, to believe that social reform is possible without a radical change in human nature is the worst kind of self-deception (Freedom and the Spirit 186). The real source of Berdyaev's rejection of all models of society is his belief that to posit the perfection of human society is a "perversion and distortion" of the Kingdom of God on earth that "presupposes an ultimate solution of human destiny within the framework of terrestrial relations" (History 191-92). It is precisely this "framework of terrestrial relations" that Cary describes as the proper milieu for all humanity's efforts to realise justice and compassion in the teeth of a chance-ridden, amoral universe. Cary does not suggest that, for example, perfect justice is possible, but he does imply that people can create an order of society which will maximise the possibility of justice for all its citizens.

In contrast, according to Berdyaev, because social and political history belong to the realm of necessity they remain trapped in an endlessly repeating cycle of violent revolution, culminating in anarchy and inevitably leading to fear-inspired repression by society's new masters, who become despots subordinating means to ends in an attempt to realise their impossible Utopias. As a result, in marked contrast to Cary's insistence that democracy foreshadows the "final order" of human society, Berdyaev sees a pattern in history whereby all states tend to totalitarianism (Slavery and Freedom 191-96, 141). Although both men suggest that a culture eventually decays when it exhausts its creativity, Cary believes that a society can renew and transform itself. And whereas Cary suggests a development toward increased richness of experience for everyone, Berdyaev (as part of his rejection of anything which hints at satisfaction or completion in this world) depicts the desire to organise and to enrich life as leading to decadence, especially when it spreads beyond a few "natural" aristocrats to the masses (Berdyaev, History 209-10).

Berdyaev also rejects, as "an entirely illegitimate deification of the future," the notion of "progress" (History 187). Cary concurs, although for very different reasons, with Berdyaev's repudiation of the notion that there is any "progress in the sense of a process which is necessarily good directed towards some absolute and supreme end in the future" (Freedom and the Spirit 309, 314-15). Berdyaev joins Cary in depicting nineteenth-century notions of progress as a secularisation of the Christian "millennarian idea." He asserts that the idea of progress has "profound religious roots" in its "subordination" of history to "a teleological principle" which exists as "a purpose independent of historical process" and outside time (History 186). But the secularised "doctrine of progress" errs in that it posits a future in which perfection will be attained in this world (History 186-88). Although he rejects "progress," Berdyaev agrees with Cary that "it is impossible to deny the fact of development in the world," a "fact" which he attributes to a "spiritual development," in which people co-operate with God "in a creative and dynamic process" (Freedom and the Spirit 303, 307, 314, 306). The driving force behind this "spiritual development" is a "divine thirst and longing for an other self" to love and to be loved by (History 48-49).

Berdyaev distinguishes between "progress" and "development" on the basis of the difference between "teleology," which sees history progressing toward some predetermined end to be achieved within the historical process, and "eschatology," which views history from the perspective of a divine plan that depends upon the creative participation of humanity.¹¹ He predicts that history will come to an end when a radical change in the structure of consciousness has been brought about by the creative co-operation of God and humanity (Slavery and Freedom 265; Freedom and the Spirit 309, 314, 315). This will signal the "irruption" of the divine into the terrestrial, the triumph within time of "eternal principles" over the "temporal," of spirit and freedom over nature

and necessity (History 198, 68). Thus, Berdyaev consistently differentiates between a world of necessity in which historical change leads nowhere, and a realm of freedom outside time, whose penetration into the realm of nature will end history (History 205).

Berdyaev's dualism permits no possibility of escape, by transformation within the world of nature and history itself, from cycles of political anarchy and tyranny, and cultural creativity and decay. He finds the actual world a disappointing place, in which the passage of time fills him with a horror of loss and leads him to strive "relentlessly towards the transcendent" (Dream and Reality 40-41).¹² Berdyaev is fundamentally a Christian philosopher who wishes to redeem a world which he perceives as fallen, by absorbing the world of nature into that of the spirit, because he believes that the world of nature cannot itself be regenerated (Freedom and the Spirit 84, 86-87). Berdyaev's conviction of the irremediable fallenness of the realm of nature differentiates him from both Cary and Carlyle, who are anxious to reform the world as far as possible. And to posit that the divine is capable of intervening to help humanity transform the natural world would be to raise the issue of theodicy which Cary avoids.¹³

Perhaps the most profound difference between the notions of Cary and Berdyaev is this contention that our world cannot be redeemed, that "truth, goodness, beauty, power or divinity of life" cannot be realised by human culture, but only rendered symbolically, that although all culture is "symbolic," it is so in the sense that cultural values are "only signs, symbols of final being" (History 210; Creative Act 239; Freedom and the Spirit 84). Even "romantic" symbolism which strives toward the transcendent is a failed attempt at "Realistic" creativity which would genuinely transform the world (Dream and Reality 209-10). In contrast, Cary insists that symbols do indeed transform the reality in which we live and that values such as beauty and goodness can be realised in the choices of free men and women.

These choices are supremely important to Cary, because his God is apprehended only indirectly, in human acts that create beauty, love, and goodness. Syson's faith is restored when he discovers the "truth" of God's miraculous presence in acts of love and self-sacrifice. Berdyaev's God is also a personality discoverable in "truth, beauty, love, freedom, and creativity," for only "personality is something which is capable of loving, capable of rapture and compassion and sympathy" (Dream and Reality 177; Slavery and Freedom 51, 57). But whereas Berdyaev celebrates the mystical penetration into another reality to confront the divine directly (Creative Act 63), Cary distrusts the validity of such experience. He suggests that intuition can give valuable knowledge about the nature of the real, including God, but he is suspicious of those who claim to have a mystical relationship with deity. Characters such as Selah Coker and Preedy, who claim privileged insight into the will of God, bring disaster upon themselves and others.

Furthermore, Berdyaev's preoccupation with the spiritual realm deflects his attention from human relationship in this world. Like Cary he depicts love as a "going out of the self" to another who is distinct from the self, as "the mystery of the union of two beings who enjoy independent and distinct reality" (Freedom and the Spirit 281). Berdyaev, like Tillich, Marcel, and Buber, describes personality developing from "acts of communion" with others, in relationships of I and Thou, where Thou is not treated as an object but as another personality. Original sin is "the inability to issue forth from the self," egocentricity is slavery, and freedom comes from "going out from the I" in true communion with Thou (Slavery and Freedom 132, 42-43). He differentiates among love in the form of *eros* ("union with another in God"), *caritas* ("union with another in the absence of God, in the darkness of the world"), and *agape* ("Christian love") which partakes of both *eros* and *caritas* (Slavery and Freedom 225-26). But Berdyaev's yearning for a reality that transcends this "fallen" world leads him to remark that "loving kindness and

compassion" may enslave one to this world (Slavery and Freedom 226; Freedom and the Spirit 33). Cary's God *is* love, manifested in the self-transcendence by means of which people relate to one another compassionately, redeeming by their love the darkness, injustice, and cruelty of the world.

In the end, it is this quality, rather than an unquestioning optimism, that makes Cary's existentialism an affirmation. He does not deserve to be dismissed as a "cheerful Protestant," for his characters often find the world to be unjust and recalcitrant to human desires. The world of his novels even has an element of Greek tragedy, in that he shows people paying the price of the unforeseeable contingencies arising from their choices. This world is polarised, not only between freedom and necessity, creation and destruction, change and continuity, separation and relationship, but also between joy and sorrow. "Richness" of experience increases the capacity for both happiness and suffering: "The greater a grown man's power of enjoyment, the stronger his faith, the deeper and more continuous his feeling of the waste of life, of happiness, of youth and love, of himself" (HC 67). Yet, although Cary visits his protagonists with poverty, diseased old age, imprisonment, and violent death, people such as Gulley, Sara, and Tibby emerge triumphant, transcending joy and sorrow alike in "richness" of experience that comes from escaping the narrow confines of the self to meet and interact with the other. To Tibby and Gulley, old, poor, alone, and dying, laughter is prayer, for they know that if life is killing them, it is doing so by surfeit. For what Cary's most self-fulfilled characters seek is a richness that can be achieved only by risk:

The world grows more tense, more dangerous, but also infinitely richer in experience. There is no more happiness, perhaps less, but very much more intensity of living. . . .

. . . it is far more mature. It has suffered more and takes life harder. It begins to look fundamental and everlasting evil in the face and to distrust the sloganeer . . . with his snap formula for the golden age. It knows that there will never be a golden age; that everything has to be paid for. Only the grace of God, in love, in beauty, in truth, is freely given, and that's why we don't say thank-you for it.

("Joyce Cary's Last Look," SE 247).

NOTES TO CHAPTER VII

¹ Like Cary, Buber is more interested in the relationship of the self to other people than to "nature," and also like Cary, he avoids many of Wordsworth's concerns by this shift of focus. For instance, Buber sees language as a means of overcoming isolation, because it involves genuine mutual response between people (102-103).

² However, Cary differs from Buber in depicting such relationships as the responsibility of the unaided individual. To Buber, although "[l]ove is responsibility of an *I* for a *Thou*," human beings are incapable of achieving full mutuality in their relationships without the help of God's grace (15, 131).

³ In several other respects, Cary's depiction of sexual behaviour dramatises Marcel's notions. Herself Surprised and The Moonlight call into question what Marcel describes as the "Cartesian" dualism of mind and matter that equates the self with consciousness and reduces the body to a lump of material controlled by the mind, a notion to which Marcel much prefers the "richly confused idea of the *flesh* which is embedded in all Christian philosophy" (Marcel, Being and Having 185-86, 84, 86). Sara's declaration that " 'I *am* a body,' " recalls Marcel's assertion that " *my* body is something I *am*, not that I *use*" (HS 10, italics mine; Cain 31). But Sara's mistaken notions delude her into believing that she ought to abandon this healthy "confusion" in favour of a "Cartesian" alienation from her own body, so that it becomes an object which must be controlled: "I shall . . . keep a more watchful eye, next time, on my flesh, now I know it better" (HS 220). Amanda is another of Cary's women who suffers from alienation from her body, because she believes in her own subjection to powerful biological drives, which she identifies as the workings of a "life force." Marcel rejects the notion of a life force on the grounds that it "presents as the expression of empirical data what is really only a free choice of the mind," a position with which The Moonlight is clearly in sympathy (Being and Having 197).

⁴ Tillich describes surrealist art as a variety of "self-transcending realism" that "tries to point to the spiritual meaning of the real by using its given forms," a close parallel to Cary's rendering of Gulley's attempts to communicate his intuitions of reality through the given forms of the world, "the solid" (The Protestant Era 67).

⁵ One of the most provocative aspects of Tillich's notions is his idea that whole cultures may pass through "neurotic periods" in which normal "existential" anxiety is pathologically exaggerated. He places such periods at transition points in history when "masses of people were overtaken by a special type of anxiety because many of them experienced the same anxiety-producing situation" (Courage 83, 94). In The Courage to Be, he describes the end of ancient civilisation as characterised by a crisis of the "ontic" variety of "existential" anxiety, the Middle Ages as culminating in exaggerated "moral" anxiety, and the modern period as collapsing in "spiritual" anxiety (63). In The Protestant Era, Tillich cites the early and high Middle Ages as examples of a theonomous culture, the late Middle Ages and "Protestant orthodoxy" as examples of heteronomy, and classical Greece, the Renaissance, and the Enlightenment as examples of autonomous epochs (57). The two systems of cultural classification are therefore not perfectly congruent.

⁶ Tillich's suggestion that a person's fate is an interplay of necessity and freedom and his emphasis on the contingency, unpredictability, and purposelessness of events are strongly reminiscent of Cary's world (Tillich, The Protestant Era 4; Courage 52).

⁷ Lentricchia refers to this aspect of Sartre's thought as a "metaphorics of desire which posits a lost origin and an eternal yearning for its recovery" (48), a desire startlingly similar to Wordsworth's yearning for his lost childhood.

⁸ Berdyaev and Cary both acknowledge that they are profoundly influenced by Dostoyevsky (Berdyaev, Dream and Reality 57, 59; AS 10; Cohen 13). In The Brothers Karamazov Ivan argues that the suffering of even a single child is too great a price to pay for the perfect bliss of all mankind, and that therefore innocent suffering cannot be justified by the "greater good" of providential design (296). Cary considers Ivan's position irrefutable (A&R 41). Berdyaev also mentions this scene, as a preliminary to his attempt to exculpate God from charges of tyranny and injustice (Freedom and the Spirit 159-60; see note 13 below).

⁹ In many respects Berdyaev's discussion of the creation of symbol is strikingly similar to Cary's depiction of creativity in The Horse's Mouth. Cary made extensive notes on Berdyaev's Freedom and the Spirit, particularly on the chapter entitled "Symbol, Myth, and Dogma" (MS 280 N111). According to Fisher, Cary began using this notebook sometime between 1943 and 1946 (The Horse's Mouth was published in 1944).

¹⁰ Berdyaev rejects "the abstractions" of "monism, dualism, or pluralism" in favour of "mystery," which he describes as a "unity and duality of the two natures" — human and divine (Freedom and the Spirit 39-40). He believes that he avoids "dualism" because he sees in spirit a unity of divine and human that involves distinction without division (Freedom and the Spirit 37). However, he regards spirit and freedom as a separate reality from that of nature and necessity, and, although he posits that both realms are contained within a cosmic unity, he maintains them as absolutely distinct (Freedom and the Spirit 10, 41; Slavery and Freedom 12; Dream and Reality 97-98). He is therefore forced to concede that "[d]ualism exists . . . between spirit and nature, between freedom and necessity" (Slavery and Freedom 31).

¹¹ Somewhat confusingly, Berdyaev depicts history seen from this eschatological perspective as the clash of "Providence, divine fatality, and necessity" with "human freedom," and therefore as not to be rebelled against. True freedom resides in seeing history as an internal, spiritually significant process within the human spirit (History 37, 38; see also 76-77, 79, 111-12 for Berdyaev's attempt to reconcile human creative participation in history with divine providence). He describes freedom as accepting one's place in the cosmic hierarchy and suggests that slavery to necessity is the result of revolting against God's will, and that a person's creativity is most evident in "submission and surrender to God of all the forces of his spirit" (Creative Act 147-48, 152-54; Freedom and the Spirit 212). In his notes Cary refers to this aspect of Berdyaev's notion of freedom as involving, at least in part, an escape from confusion, responsibility, and guilt (MS 280 N119 "Nature" 13). That is, Cary classes Berdyaev's notions with all those that he depicts in his novels as involving a surrender of individual responsibility.

¹² For instance, Berdyaev has a very negative opinion of the subconscious and of sex. Because he places the psyche within the realm of nature and necessity, he depicts the subconscious as a powerful determinant of human behaviour, a "demonic principle" polarised in opposition to the "divine principle" within each human being (Freedom and the Spirit 123; Slavery and Freedom 20). He suggests that sexual behaviour is under the

control of an impersonal natural force and that sexual desire is "tragic" because it "gives rise to illusions which make man the tool of an inhuman, biological process" (Dream and Reality 52). In addition, Berdyaev argues that women are more controlled by their sexuality and by their subconscious than men are, and that they are "less human" and have a "feebler" sense of their own unique selfhood, in short that women are largely under the control of deterministic natural forces (Creative Act 183-84, 190, 218-19). He accepts and deplores the existence of a life force as evidence of the "fallenness" of our world (Dream and Reality 109). These are all notions which Cary calls into question in Herself Surprised and The Moonlight.

¹³ Berdyaev's theodicy stems from his dualism: he insists that God is not responsible for evil, because he does not act upon the "world order" that exists by virtue of the fall which ejected humanity "into the sphere of the objectivized external" (Slavery and Freedom 87-88). Moreover, according to Berdyaev, although the realm of freedom where divine and human intersect transcends necessity, God himself is not omnipotent (Slavery and Freedom 70; Dream and Reality 177). Evil is a corollary of the "irrational freedom" which is "in the very origin of the world" and has all possibilities latent in it. This "chaos" is the ground of life and freedom, as well as of all good and evil possibilities. God is exculpated by positing that he is "All-powerful in relation to being, but not in relation to nothingness and to freedom" (Berdyaev, Freedom and the Spirit 160).

AFTERWORD

The element of risk that lies at the heart of the way in which Cary's characters experience the world arises from the polarity of freedom and necessity. His people risk falling victim to chance or to natural law, that is, they may suffer by accident arising from the "activity" of the real or because they come into conflict with some aspect of the permanent "character" of reality. The more positive aspect of this situation is reflected in Cary's argument that although human freedom is a part of the contingent "activity" of the real, the exercise of this freedom depends upon the existence of a natural order which can be manipulated with reasonably predictable results. The paradigmatic example is the artist whose creativity brings new forms into existence, yet whose ability to manipulate the material world is both limited by and dependent upon a stable physical universe. Cary also posits "universal" consistencies of human nature in response to common life experiences, for which it is the artist's task to find new symbolic expression. His notion of the function of artistic creation is intimately related to his depiction of cultural development as both complete innovation to meet contingent situations and renewal of traditional methods of coping with the underlying consistencies of the human condition. This cluster of notions illustrates the principal strength of Cary's "existentialism," for although his individual solutions to problems of freedom and necessity, contingency and order, creative realisation and material limits, change and continuity are not philosophically rigorous, they do form part of a coherent "idea of life."

This coherence stems from the mutual consistency of his various polarities. His rejection of providence in all its forms (historical, natural, psychological or divine) in favour of a polarity of freedom and necessity is exemplary of his eschewal of absolutes.

But so is his notion of the power of "Promethean" individuals such as Johnson to manipulate material reality in order to build roads, farms, and cities, and of artists like Gulley to utilise the world of "the solid" in the creation of a symbolic world of human value and significance. For Cary rejects notions of the world both as completely the product of the human consciousness and as a predetermined reality to be passively accepted. The world is "given" to his characters, but it is given to be creatively transformed. Aladai, Marie, Benskin, Sara, and Preedy are wrong in accepting "what is" as the dictates of the dialectic, natural law, the unconscious, or Jehovah. In contrast, Gulley and Johnson engage with "what is" in order to realise "what might be." Human experience takes place in a symbolic world shaped by the interaction of the boundless creative imagination with the limitations imposed upon actualisation by the "character" of reality.

Cary depicts a person's biology as part of this "character." For example, the experience of women like Amanda is profoundly influenced by their ability to bear children. Nonetheless, biological "givens," like any other aspect of the real, are not to be accepted without creative experimentation, and so women of each society and historical situation find new forms for the consistencies of the feminine condition. Cary even speculates that the urge to explore and to manipulate the material world is itself a biological "given," and one not exclusive to our species. He considers the possibility that the urge to new experience is a fundamental part of the "character" of the organic real, which finds particularly potent expression in the eager curiosity of the human child, in the social innovations of the "Promethean" iconoclast, in the compelling need of the creative artist to bring to actualisation some new insight into reality, and above all, in the desire of each man and woman for a "richer" life. In other words, it is part of the "character" of the organic real for individuals to engage in the "activities" of exploration and creation, and this aspect of "character" is the driving force behind history, personal development, and artistic

creation. Paradoxically, those very aspects of our experience which appear to be most exclusively human are also those which link us most profoundly with the rest of the real.

This notion is consistent with Cary's depiction of the tribe as in a certain sense "unnatural," and of authoritarian governments of any sort (tribal, communist, or fascist) as ultimately doomed to fail in their attempt to thwart deeply rooted, universal curiosity and creativity. With no constructive outlet, this suppressed energy surfaces in the form of neuroses, violence, and social anarchy, becoming a source of danger both to individuals and to society. Social stability can be achieved only in some form of democratic state, in which each person is encouraged to enrich the whole culture by pursuing his or her own imaginative visions. These notions are, in turn, consistent with Cary's depiction of morality as dependent upon a tension between creative self-realisation and compassionate sympathy for others. If the development of whole societies is stimulated by the self-realisation of "Promethean" individuals, the continuity of those same cultures depends upon the exercise of personal self-control on the part of a majority of their members. In turn, the development and continuity of a mature and fully realised self capable of creative action depends upon compassionate interaction with others, even to the point of self-sacrifice in order to achieve some concrete good for another person. Cary's notion that people risk the diminution or loss of selfhood whenever they fail in compassion or respect for another is another aspect of the "risk" inherent in the freedom and necessity of the human condition. His literary "moral order" links the polarity of freedom and necessity to that of self-assertion and compassion, in that he holds his protagonists responsible for the consequences for others of their freely chosen actions even though contingency restricts their ability to predict or to control such events.

Cary can be identified as a twentieth-century "existentialist" because many of these ideas sound remarkably like those of Tillich, Buber, Marcel, and Berdyaev; some of them

even resemble Sartre's. But the consistency of his notions reveals that Cary's "existentialism" is much more than a random collection of ideas that were prevalent during the first half of the Twentieth Century. It is his own creation, the product of years of speculation. His novels dramatise the fruits of his exploration of specific notions of history, psychology, creativity, and morality adapted from Carlyle, Wordsworth, and Kierkegaard. The tendency of these thinkers to privilege antinomy, polarity, and paradox over dialectic obviously has a powerful appeal for Cary, as he finds in them a way of explaining to his own satisfaction the apparent dichotomy of a world that he wishes to describe as "one whole."

One of the hallmarks of his particular brand of "existentialism" is that Cary employs these polarities to avoid depicting humanity either as outcast from this wholeness or as isolated within it. Human imagination and curiosity are part of the consistent "character" of the real, and human creativity is that aspect of cosmic "activity" which brings into existence a symbolic world in which people can be at home. Because feeling and intuition give everyone access to the real in which all participate, this symbolic world can be a public one which serves to mitigate the isolation of the self-conscious. Furthermore, Cary repeatedly emphasises that people not only participate in a shared reality but also meet and affirm one another in experiences of unselfish love. Therefore, despite his vivid depictions of injustice, folly, and brutality, most readers find in his novels an affirmation. As Cary describes it, human existence is a perilous but exciting adventure, given significant form by the creative imagination and redeemed by the love that (he claims) is as concrete, as ubiquitous, and as fundamental as elemental hydrogen.

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