

The  
Concept of America in English Literature  
of the  
Romantic Period.

A Ph.D. Thesis

prepared by

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This Preface will set forth at the outset the limits and intentions of this work.

Originally, the author intended to deal fully with all the aspects of the relations to America of every important British writer between the years 1774 and 1832. This project was abandoned after the discovery that it would only result in the endless repetition of two main concepts of America which influence British romantic thought: America as the home of the noble savage, and America as the land of freedom and opportunity.

Accordingly, it was resolved to concentrate upon these two aspects, ignoring matter which though interesting had little or no bearing upon the main development. Anti-American sentiment in British literature was abandoned without a qualm, as that aspect of Anglo-American relations has already been accorded more than its due importance. With greater reluctance, it was decided not to deal in detail with the influence of the literature of American adventure and travel stemming from Hakluyt. Although this literature played a very real part in keeping alive a taste for

romanticism throughout the classical period, its adequate treatment would require a thesis in itself. For the same reason, the role of the negro slave in America in English romantic literature was omitted.

In dealing with the concept which in its two forms comprises the subject of this thesis, the writer decided that he could not strictly confine himself to the dates which he had originally established. Ideas are more easily understood when traced from the beginning than when grasped in medias res, and in the case of the noble savage in particular, the ideas went back a very long time.

The interest in Red America began with the Renaissance. Europeans were caught up in the social and ideological conflicts and uncertainties which followed the introduction of new values and new political and economic factors into an established civilization. Many of them recoiled emotionally from a changing world which continually exacted difficult compromises. These people longed for an existence in which neither change nor choice was a factor--an existence of peace, freedom and rustic simplicity. This longing crystallized into

the concept of the noble savage in France during the sixteenth century--an idea which became popular in England during the succeeding two centuries. During the romantic period in English literature, however, this concept was gradually replaced by a concept of White America in which the life of the European upon American soil assumed the cardinal virtues of the noble savage.

The section dealing with White America will show how out of the stress of events in both America and Europe, the concept developed in England of America as a land of peace, freedom and rustic simplicity in which Europeans could find opportunities for happiness denied them at home.

But, although differing in particulars of origin and form, the concept of the noble savage outlined in Red America and the concept of White America are essentially and psychologically the same, originating in the same deep-rooted need of man's nature, the need for security and permanence. This story of how they arose and maintained themselves in the face of empirical evidence and social prejudice is a powerful illustration of the truth that the thoughts and actions of a society spring not always from the

rational convictions and experiences of its members, but often from life-longings which defy rational control.

But although both sections of this thesis deal with what is essentially the same concept, great difference in treatment is required. In the section dealing with Red America, the interest is predominately literary, whereas White America requires a treatment primarily political and economic. The noble savage was to the Europeans as the pastoral golden age had been to their ancestors: a delightful day-dream, a subject for philosophic argument or an excellent opportunity for satirical contrast with the present. At no time was there a possibility of his way of life being considered as more than a literary convention in England. White America, on the other hand, was to most Englishmen much more than an academic or literary question. It presented a challenge to existing political, social and economic institutions in England and called forth a literature that was motivated strongly by the prejudices and convictions of short-term controversy. Considered as literature, the poetry and prose dealing with the concept of White America is unrewarding--considered

PREFACE

in relation to the politics and economics of the period it can teach us much.

RED AMERICA--THE NOBLE SAVAGECHAPTER ONE--ORIGINS

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Of all voyages to America, the first voyage of Columbus caught to the greatest extent the imaginations of Europeans. Although they did not from this voyage learn of the existence of a hitherto undiscovered hemisphere, Europeans realized from the first accounts that Columbus had encountered a new race of mankind governed by a strange mode of living. By a fortunate coincidence this discovery presented the North American Indians in the most favourable light possible at one of the few periods in history when men's minds were open to receive new and strange ways of living. Because in this voyage quite by chance Columbus had encountered the Arawaks, one of the most peaceful tribes in the New World, and because the great admiral himself was not a narrow-minded intolerant Spaniard but an Italian who had had experience of many nations and had learned by adversity to adapt himself to alien customs, the first encounters between the Indians and the white men took place in conditions of almost idyllic cordiality: so much so indeed that subsequent events never dimmed, even in Spanish eyes, the brightness of this first reception. According to the Spanish historian, Peter Martyr (1455-1525), Columbus is supposed to have described the Indians as follows:

"It is certain that the land among these people is as common as the sun and water; and that 'mine and thine,' the seeds of all mischief, have no place with them. They are content with so little, that in so large a country they have rather superfluity than scarceness; so that they seemed to live in the golden world, without toil, living in open gardens, not intrenched with dikes, divided with hedges, or defended with walls. They deal truly with one another, without laws, without books, and without judges. They take him for an evil and mischievous man who taketh pleasure in doing hurt to another; and albeit they delight not in superfluities, yet they make provisions for the increase of such roots whereof they make their bread, contented with such simple diet, whereby health is preserved and disease avoided."<sup>1</sup>

while Las Casas (1474-1566), writing at a much later date, 1530-1534, speaks of the Indians encountered by Columbus:

"It seemed almost as if they were existing in the state of primeval innocence of our first parents, before their fall brought sin into the world."<sup>2</sup>

Not only the learned scholars, but the common soldiers of Columbus' expedition caught the attraction of the Indians' mode of life and left it with regret. Washington Irving, drawing upon Primer Viage de Colon, states:

"When the Spanish mariners looked back upon their own toilsome and painful life, and reflected on the cares and hardships that must still be their lot if they returned to Europe, it is no wonder that they regarded with a wistful eye the easy and idle existence of the Indians. Wherever they wend they met with caressing hospitality. The men were simple, frank, and cordial; the women loving and compliant, and prompt to form those connections which anchor the most wandering heart. They saw gold glittering around them, to be had without labour, and every enjoyment to be procured without cost. Captivated by these advantages, many of the seamen represented to the

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Martyr, Decad. i, lib. iii.: Transl. of Richard Eden. 1555, quoted in IRVING, W., The Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus. pp.138-139.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in IRVING, W., op. cit., p.150.

"admiral the difficulties and sufferings they must encounter on a return voyage, where so many would be crowded in a small caravel, and entreated permission to remain in the island."<sup>3</sup>

The accounts of the savage brought back by Columbus and his sailors fell upon ears ready to receive them. The time was one of intellectual crisis for Europeans. Medieval institutions were crumbling under the impact of economic pressures and of the new learning. Men's minds were tasting a new freedom and finding it good. Among the many manifestations of the new freedom were the Protestant religious revolt and the revolt of the scientists and philosophers against scholasticism. The resultant controversies extended over more than two centuries--a period of time when scholars were eager to examine and use any material which might serve to bolster their convictions, whether that material was the writing of a heathen philosopher rediscovered after the lapse of centuries, a planet glimpsed through a newly invented lens, or a new race of mankind. The accounts of the American Indian brought back by their first discoverers were particularly welcome to those humanists who wished to register a protest against the social conditions of their own time. The revival of classic literature had reintroduced many Europeans to the concept of the golden age with its life of pastoral simplicity untroubled by labour and change, while the writings of

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3 IRVING, W., op. cit., pp.150-151.

Herodotus and Tacitus had pointed the way to an identification of certain qualities of savage life with those of the golden age.<sup>4</sup> Europeans familiar with the classics and in revolt against their own time were not long in reading into the life of the American savage the virtues of the rediscovered civilization which seemed so much more attractive than their own. Thus at a time when the impact and authority of Greek and Roman literature was strongest in their minds, the American Indian was presented to Europeans as possessing in greater measure than their own society the heroic qualities which antiquity had sanctioned, and as living a life comparable to that which the ancients had styled the golden age.

The enthusiasm which the discovery of America imparted to men of scientific minds in Europe is reflected in this letter written by Peter Martyr to his friend, Pomponius Laetus:

"You tell me, my amiable Pomponius, that you leaped for joy, and that your delight was mingled with tears, when you read my epistle, certifying to you the hitherto hidden world of the antipodes. You have felt and acted as became a man eminent for learning; for I can conceive no aliment more delicious than such tidings to a cultivated and ingenious mind. I feel a wonderful exultation of spirits when I converse with intelligent men who have returned from these regions. It is like an accession of wealth to a miser. Our minds, soiled and debased by a common concerns of life and the vices of society, become elevated and ameliorated by contemplating such glorious events."<sup>5</sup>

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4 The influence of classical literature in shaping the modern concept of the noble savage can only be dealt with in a general way in this chapter. It is a topic upon which much detailed work remains to be done.

5 Letters of P. Martyr, let. 153, quoted by IRVING, W., op. cit., p.190.

Even at the fringe of the Renaissance influence, at the court of Henry VII in far-off England, the discovery was hailed as "a thing more divine than human". There a boy in his teens in Cardinal Morton's household listened to accounts of the savages at intervals in his classical study and contrasted the communal and happy life of the savages with the realities around him. Later in life he was to combine that golden recollection with the fruits of his classical study and the accounts of the savages contained in the newly published work of Peter Martyr to give the world Utopia, (1516) a romance in which a theoretically perfect life in America is contrasted with the life in contemporary England. But it was not in Spain nor in England, but in France that the concept of the noble savage awakened by Columbus' first voyage found its first permanent home.

It would have been extremely difficult for the concept of the noble savage to have found a permanent dwelling place in the Spanish mind. Spain had encountered the New World and its inhabitants in the first flush of national unity when it never doubted its faith in itself and its institutions. Long years of isolation and of crusades against the Moors had transformed Spanish Catholicism to a bigoted intolerance of other races and religions. Moreover, Spain was poor and the savages possessed gold. With the addition of a powerful economic motive to national and religious

grounds for intolerance, it was not long before the Spaniards were fast making the Indians their enemies and their slaves, and men are not inclined to find ideal qualities in either their own enemies or their own slaves. For reasons which will be discussed in the following chapter it was equally inconceivable that the concept of the noble savage should have maintained an early foothold in England. France alone among the nations who had direct access to the savages possessed the necessary qualifications for its development and growth: an introduction to savage life at a time when national and religious chaos had forced men to re-examine the values of their own society, and a prolonged association with savages in the only possible partnership by which they could engage in a favourable relationship with Europeans.

Although the French poet, Ronsard (1524-1585) introduced the concept of the noble savage into his verse, the most influential writer from the point of view of its later development in England was Montaigne (1533-1592). France, in Montaigne's time, was enduring the horrors of a religious civil war--horrors which were to cause many sensitive spirits to criticise their own institutions and beliefs, and to seek elsewhere in classical literature and primitive cultures for a world "nearer to the heart's desire." Montaigne was a pioneer in this movement, and it is in the light of his reaction to his own time that his essay Of the Cannibales must be understood.

Montaigne's essay is a reasoned statement of two basic principles underlying the European concept of the noble savage: first, that his manner of living is nearer to nature than that of contemporary Europeans, with the corollary that the latter's ancestors must have gone through such a stage themselves at some time in the past, probably in the golden age of classical tradition; secondly, that the Indian as an individual enjoys a freedom from external restraints and social conventions--to which freedom he must owe his own freedom from many characteristic European vices.

Montaigne admits the truth of all the explorers' charges against the Indians, their lack of letters and trade, their idleness, their anarchy, their polygamy, their fondness for warfare, their cannibalism, but instead of at once condemning them from some plane of ideal ethics, he examines their faults in comparison with the practise of his European countrymen and delivers a favourable judgment. The Indians have been judged, he maintains, from the standpoint of a society whose outlook is essentially egocentric:

"...we have no other ayne of truth and reason, than the example and Idea of the opinions and customes of the countrie we live in. There is ever perfect religion, perfect policie, perfect and complete use of things."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> MICHAEL, Lord of MONTAIGNE, Tr. J. FLORIO, *The Essays of Michael, Lord of Montaigne*, Vol. I, Ch. XXX "Of the Cannibales", p.244.

According to this principle, we regard as natural the fruits and flowers we have ourselves cultivated, and wild and savage those which we have left untended. This is the exact opposite of the truth, as the latter grow as Nature intended they should: we by our arts have altered or "savaged" Nature. He quotes Plato to prove that the products of Nature are superior to man's handiwork and applies the proposition to the savages:

"Those nations seem therefore so barbarous unto me, because they have received very little fashion from humane wit, and are yet neere their original naturalitie. The lawes of nature doe yet command them which are but little bastardized by ours, and that with such puritie as I am somewhat grieved the knowledge of it came no sooner to light, at what time there were men better than we could have judged of it. I am sorie, Lycurgus and Plato had it not: for me seemeth that what in those nations we see by experience, doth not only exceed all the pictures wherewith licentious Poesie hath proudly embellished the golden age, and all her quaint inventions to faine a happy condition of man, but also the conception and desire of philosophy. They could not imagine a genuitie so pure and simple as we see by experience; nor ever believe our society might be maintained with so little art and humane combination."<sup>7</sup>

Paradoxically, Montaigne has used classical authority to justify a society in which tradition and authority have seemingly no place, for what Montaigne finds admirable in the Indians is their freedom from the restraints of social institutions. He borrows freely from Peter Martyr's description of the Arawaks and applies the description to savages in general:

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p.245.

"...no name of magistrate, nor of politick superiority; no use of service, or riches or of povertie; no contracts, no successions, no partitions, no occupation but idle; no respect of kindred, no manuring of lands, no use of wine, corn or mettle. The very words that import lying, falshood, treason, dissimulations, covetousness, envie, detraction and pardon were never heard of amongst them."<sup>8</sup>

In this picture of society, here was a creature who seemed to have attained quite without effort and as a gift from heaven that personal freedom of choice and action which was denied to his more civilized European contemporaries. In this imagined freedom from wearisome restraints lay the attraction that made the Indian in subsequent centuries not merely a picturesque individual of another colour and a different mode of life, but a symbol of the idle, care-free existence which is the unsatisfied portion of every modern heart.

Underlying all Montaigné's judgments of the Indians one senses his own revolt against the conditions of life in his own time. He is careful to quote both classical and biblical precedents in approving the Indians' polygamous marriages, but he so stresses the point that these practises spring from the loves of the wives for their husband that one is convinced he is thinking of his own loveless marriage and the injustice of a society to whom marriage has become a convention for the transfer of property. Likewise, the Indian modes and motives of warfare seem far superior to him than those of the Europeans. The Indian fights not for

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p.245.

property but for honour, and there is in his warfare none of the rapine, greed and human misery that characterized European conflicts in Montaigne's time. The Indian cruelty to captives is but a test of honour, in which a resolute captive may win undying fame. Cannibalism is by no means so barbarous as is European religious persecution:

"I am not sorie we note the barbarous horror of such an action, but grieved, that prying so narrowly into their faults we are so blinded to ours. I think there is more barbarism in eating men alive, then to feed upon them being dead; to mangle by tortures and torments a body full of lively sense, to roast him to peeces, to make dogges and swine to gnaw and teare him to memockes (as wee have not only read, but seene very lately, yea in our own memorie, not amongst ancient enemies, but our neighbours and fellow-citizens; and which is worse, under pretence of pietie and religion) than to roast and eat him after he is dead."<sup>9</sup>

In all probability Montaigne embarked upon his essay Of the Canniballes as no more than an ingenious exercise of ratiocination. It no doubt amused him to take a race degraded by what is commonly considered the most bestial of human habits and to prove by consistent logic and by learned references to highly respected authorities that this despised savage was in fact superior to his European contemporaries in many of the most essential qualities which make for human virtue and happiness.

Montaigne is a key figure in the history of the development of the concept of the noble savage. Not only by enlarging the description of the Arawaks given by Spanish historians to cover the more savage inhabitants of America did he fix the type of savage which was to be applied

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p.249.

henceforth indiscriminately to all Indians, but by his prestige as a thinker in a literary age dominated by France he gave permanence to his own particular concept of the American savage. Again and again his arguments and his concept of the Indians are repeated in the poetry, prose and drama of both France and England.

Almost without qualification one might say that after the Restoration, English writers went for their concept of the American savage not to the early accounts of British voyages contained in Hakluyt but to the pages of Montaigne.

The subsequent century and a half of French contact with the New World served to strengthen and popularize the idea in France of savage virtue, for the French alone of all European nations who founded colonies in the New World entered into a relationship which fostered a favourable opinion of the savages.

New France and Acadia, unlike New England and the other English colonies in America, were not primarily agricultural communities but trading depots. The Indians were not idle nuisances to be harried from their boundaries or transformed into farmers, but necessary partners in the fur-trade. The fur-trade, moreover, offered the one outlet to freedom and riches to the sons of the poorer French nobility, who, condemned to a life of ceremonious idleness and poverty at home, found in Canada both new opportunities to amass a fortune and to enjoy a freedom from conventional

restraint. As coureurs des bois they lived a free life in the woods, uninhibited by either European or savage convention, and their boasts and tales in the taverns and halls of France did much to perpetuate the legend and to deepen the attractions of the freedom enjoyed by the noble savage in the woods of America. Nor did, as in the English colonies, the religious barrier long exist between the Indians and the French. One of the cardinal means of cementing friendship with the Indian tribes was to convert them to Christianity. To this powerful politico-economic motive was added the genuine fervour of the Catholic counter-reformation in France during the seventeenth century. "The winds of God were blowing over France", and it was mainly in the direction of New France that they blew. The religious barrier which had separated the French traders and settlers from the surrounding tribes was to a great extent broken down. Nor had the racial barrier been of sufficient consequent to prevent intermarriage. Catholicism recognises not racial but religious distinction, and both Church and State for reasons of policy encouraged marriage between Indian converts and Frenchmen. As a result of these factors, there grew up in France among aristocratic and literary circles a great attraction for the Indians and their ways. The celebrated traveller, Baron La Hontan, wrote after a visit to America, "The manners of the savages are perfectly agreeable to my palate," and skilled propagandists like Voltaire and Rousseau used the prevailing favourable sentiments towards the savages to give

credibility and attraction to criticisms and theories of their own.

As this chapter has shown, the concept of the noble savage originated in the Spanish accounts of the Arawak tribes encountered by Columbus on his first voyage. These accounts produced a profound impression upon Europeans and the savages were linked by classically-minded Renaissance humanists with the people of the golden age. Montaigne produced the most important outline of the concept of the noble savage and enlarged the concept of the Arawaks to embrace the Indian tribes in general. In France, partly because of the literary influence of Montaigne, and partly because political, religious and economic circumstances favoured its development, the concept of the noble savage maintained and enhanced its position at a time when there was little trace of it elsewhere in Europe.<sup>10</sup> The sudden appearance and popularity of this concept in England after the Restoration in sharp contrast to the previous prevailing antithetical tradition is one of the most eloquent testimonies of the intellectual dominance of the France of Louis XIV, a tour de force whose extent the next chapter will reveal.

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<sup>10</sup> The friendly relationship between the French and the Indians was as fatal to the wellbeing of the latter as the crueller treatment by the Spaniards and Englishmen. See BAILLY, A.G., Conflict of Cultures between the French and Algonquins

Almost from the time of the report of the first voyage of Columbus, the concept of the noble savage was accessible to educated Englishmen. Saint Thomas More's Utopia had been translated into English by 1556, while a year before, the Decades of Peter Martyr had been translated by Richard Eden. Montaigne's Essays were in all probability familiar to a few English scholars almost from the date of their publication in France, and after the publication of Florio's English translation in 1603 their circle of readers and influence widened appreciably. But almost without exception, these seeds of the concept of the noble savage fell upon stony ground in England prior to the Restoration while an antithetical concept of the savage flourished and grew. The reason lies partly in the English national character and religion and partly in the circumstances of their physical encounters with the Indians.

Because of their geographical location the English were unaccustomed to seeing foreign ways and customs than the French, and hence more insular in their outlook. Still more did the strong tide of nationalism that was flowing in England in the sixteenth century promote scorn of other nations and other ways. The first Englishmen who encountered the Indians were great travellers, but only secondarily from the romantic urge of adventure and the novelty of far

lands. Their hearts were rooted in England, and they braved the oceans of the world not to find a more congenial home or manner of living, but to obtain for themselves and their descendents a greater share of the good things in the "other Eden, demi-paradise" which held their heart, and to win for England a greater place among the nations of the world. An Englishman's life was a good life to them, and in whatever respects others differed from it they were judged harshly, and were tolerated only insofar as they were disposed to conform to the English concept of the good life. This attitude is one of the bases of what may be called for want of a better word the "realistic" concept of the Indian in English literature-- that of a wild-man to be made tame in conformity with the English pattern. In the narratives compiled in Hakluyt's Voyages this attitude is almost all-pervading. The first savages ever seen in England are described as follows:

"These were clothed in beasts skins & did eate raw flesh, and spake such speach that no man could understand them, and in their demeanour like to brute beastes, whom the king kept a time after."<sup>1</sup>

Master Christopher Hall who went with Martin Frobisher to the North-West in 1576 describes the Indians as "altogether voyd of humanity, and ignorant what mercy meaneth"<sup>2</sup> and

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<sup>1</sup> Voyages of the English Seamen, etc. Ed. R. HAKLUYT, Vol. V, p.91.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., Vol. V, p.145.

characterizes their living habits as "slutish" and "filthie" Master Marchant, who accompanied John Davis in 1585, is at first favourably disposed towards them, but before long he too refers to them as "brutish people" and "wicked miscreants." The Indians of Florida are credited with the practise of sodomy and the possession of venereal disease, as are also those of Hispaniola of whom Master Henry Hawkes writes:

"They are soone drunke, and given to much beastlinesse, and void of all goodnesse. In their drunkennesse they use and commit Sodomy; and with their mothers and daughters they have their pleasures and pastimes."<sup>3</sup>

A similar unfavourable impression is given of Indians from all parts of America. The California Indians "for the most part go naked, and are wild people...they use to eate up such Christians as they come by,"<sup>4</sup> while the Patagonians became a literary byword for two centuries for brutishness coupled with giant size.

A strong contributing factor to the English distaste of the Indians was protestantism, itself made more bigoted by religious persecution and finding in the revived canon of the Old Testament all too bloody sanctions for the exercise of religious and racial discrimination. One cannot read the accounts in Hakluyt without concluding that much of the distaste of the early English seamen for the Indians sprang from their horror of paganism identified in their own minds with witchcraft. Indeed this horror lay at the root of the English desire to convert the savages to  
<sup>3</sup> Ibid., Vol. VI, p.274.    <sup>4</sup> Ibid., Vol. VI, p.267.

Christianity and a settled way of life. The methods, however, were not to be the Jesuit compromise but the fire and sword tactics of the Children of Israel as recounted in the Old Testament. Master Edmund Haie's arguments in his account of Humphrey Gilbert's voyage of 1583 are the first clear-cut statement of English policy towards the Indians. It is the duty, argues Haie, of Englishmen to settle in America that they may convert the Indians to Christianity, thus saving their souls. The Indians will derive further solid benefits from a knowledge of improved agriculture and a reduction

"from unseemely customes to honest maners, from disordered riotous routs and companyes to a well-governed common wealth, and withal, shall be taught mechanicall occupations, arts, and liberall sciences: and which standeth them most upon, they shall be defended from the cruelty of their tyrannicall and blood sucking neighbours, the Canibals, whereby infinite numbers of their lives shall be preserved. And lastly, by this means many of their poore innocent children shall be preserved from the bloody knife of the sacrificer, a most horrible and detestable custome in the sight of God and man, now and ever heretofore used amongst them."<sup>5</sup>

Should the Indians be so "brutish" as to reject these proffered benefits, the English then are quite justified in dispossessing them in the same manner as the Israelites had once dispossessed the inhabitants of ancient Canaan:

"...And in so doing, doubtlesse the Christians shall no whit at all transgresse the bonds of equitie or civilitie, forasmuch as in former ages (yea, before the incarnation of Christ) the like hath bene done

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., Vol. VI, p.69.

"by sundry Kings and Princes, Governours of the children of Israel: chiefly in respect to begin their planting for the establishment of God's word."<sup>6</sup>

Thus with a modicum of rationalization a process calculated to the advantage of Europeans became a religious duty, for the arguments and attempts of the Elizabethans to convert the Indians to Christianity were purely nominal. Only one clergyman, a Master Woodfall, who accompanied Martin Frobisher to the North-West with the express intention of converting the savages to Christianity seems to have made any sacrifice in this direction, and he is noted by his chronicler in a tone of almost pitying wonder.<sup>7</sup> Professor Walter Raleigh, in his introduction to Macle hose's edition of Hakluyt's Voyages, concludes that amongst the explorers themselves only John Davis was sincerely interested in converting the Indians to Christianity.<sup>8</sup> Further confirmation, if such is needed, may be found in Philip Massinger's The City Madam in which the oft-cited desire to Christianize the Indians is treated as the hypocrisy which it all too often was.

Had there existed, as existed between the French and the Indians in New France, or after the Restoration between the Hudson's Bay Company and the Indians in the North--a community of economic interest between British settlers and

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., Vol. VI, pp.52-53.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., Vol. V, p.251.

<sup>8</sup> RALEIGH, W., The English Voyages of the Sixteenth Century, p.48.

traders and the Indians, in all probability the friction caused by national antipathies and religious prejudice might have diminished. But between the Indians and the earlier explorers who wanted gold or the later settlers who wanted agricultural land there could be but a hundred sources of antipathy and friction. Under these circumstances national and religious sanctions were all too often called upon to justify deeds which had their real origin in economic advantage, and in all such cases the reputation of the savages was blackened.

Against such a combination of economic interest and religious and national prejudice, the opinions of philosophers like Montaigne concerning the savages could find little favour among Englishmen. Nowhere is this fact better illustrated in literature than in Shakespeare's play, The Tempest. Professor Walter Raleigh called this play "a phantasy of the New World," and it is clear that Shakespeare in writing it drew largely on English accounts of voyages to America and upon Montaigne's essay Of the Caniballes.<sup>9</sup> But Shakespeare puts Montaigne's picture of the Ideal Commonwealth upon Gonsalvo's lips only to ridicule it, while his picture of the ideal cannibal, Caliban, is not that of the noble savage of Montaigne but his antithesis, the savage of the English seamen whom Shakespeare knew and of the Hakluyt that

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<sup>9</sup> The name "Caliban" is itself an anagram of the word "Canibal".

he had read. Caliban's behaviour is exactly what readers of Hakluyt would have predicted from a savage: his attitude to Trinculo and Stephano is typical of that of the Indians towards the European seamen--blind adoration and friendship followed by disillusionment, sullenness and revolt; his incapacity for sane drinking, his disregard of future welfare in his absorption with the present, his emphasis on sex as an instrument of fecundity above pleasure; his sullen desire for revenge, his devil worship, his very brutishness in appearance and manners are all conventional Elizabethan concepts of the savage. What is not conventional is Shakespeare's empathy, his ability to enter into and to understand the savage's viewpoint. Although inferior and a brute, Caliban is always a human being with a right to consideration. The good Prospero is the archetype of the best elements in the civilized European, a Bacon-like figure holding by virtue of superior "magic" dominion over the ruder savage; teaching him; making him better off materially; but taking from him that which is his own and reducing one who had once been free to the rank of a serf destined to fetch and carry for his master. The relationship between Prospero and Miranda and Caliban in the following scene is a fair statement of what was in Shakespeare's time, and has been since, the relationship between the two races--a situation where, despite Shakespeare's logic, the natural sympathies of the beholders go out to Caliban:

"CALIBAN: I must eat my dinner:  
 This Island's mine by Sycorax my mother,  
 Which thou tak'st from me: when thou cam'st first  
 Thou strok'dst me, and made much of me: wouldst give n  
 Water with berries in't: and teach me how  
 To name the bigger Light, and how the less  
 That burn by day and night: and then I lov'd thee  
 And show'd thee all the qualities o' the Isle,  
 The fresh springs, brine-pits, barren places and fertile.  
 Curs'd be I that did so: all the charms  
 Of Sycorax: toads, beetles, bats light on you:  
 For I am all the subjects that you have,  
 Which first was my own King; and here you sty me  
 In this hard rock, whiles you do keep from me  
 The rest o' the Island...

MIRANDA: Abhorred slave,  
 Which any print of goodness wilt not take,  
 Being capable of all ill: I pitied thee,  
 Took pains to make thee speak, taught thee each hour  
 One thing or other: when thou didst not (savage)  
 Know thine own meaning; but wouldst gabble, like  
 A thing more brutish, I endow'd thy purposes  
 With words that made them known: but thy vile race  
 (Though thou didst learn) had that in't, which good  
 natures  
 Could not abide to be with; therefore wast thou  
 Deservedly confined into this rock,  
 Who hadst deserv'd more than a prison.

CALIBAN: You taught me language, and my profit on't  
 Is, I know how to curse: the red plague rid you  
 For learning me your language."<sup>10</sup>

Although the prevailing impression of the savages in  
 England was decidedly unfavourable, it must not be supposed  
 that all Indians appeared to English eyes in terms of  
 undiluted blackness. By their enormous wealth and by their  
 struggle against the Spaniards, the empires of Mexico and

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<sup>10</sup> SHAKESPEARE, W., *The Tempest*, Act I, Scene 2. The  
 charge of attempted rape of Miranda by Caliban, a most  
 "unsavagelike" action, has been omitted from the above  
 passage. It was inserted by Shakespeare in order to  
 justify Prospero and Miranda for their treatment of  
 Caliban.

Peru won the respect of Englishmen and remained a legend of greatness. Sir Walter Raleigh drew upon this tradition in his accounts of his Guiana voyages, partly for propaganda purposes, and partly because the imaginative and optimistic Raleigh was capable of an immense amount of self-deception. He seems genuinely to have believed not only in the existence of El Dorado but the Anthropophagi as well. His Indian are great chiefs with great qualities. Raleigh's friend, Edmund Spenser, used the picturesque appearance of the Indian archers to provide imagery in The Faerie Queen:

"And in his hand a bended bow was seene,  
 And many arrowes under his right side,  
 All deadly dangerous, all cruell keene,  
 Headed with flint, and fethers bloody dide,<sup>11</sup>  
 Such as the Indians in their quivers hide:"

The romantic story of Captain John Smith and Pocahontas of Virginia is another exception to the general trend. In addition, certain tribes such as the Cimaroons forced a grudging respect for their fighting qualities and their loyalty against the Spaniards.

Indeed, one of the most curious relations between the English and the Indians sprang out of the national struggle against Spain for the wealth of America. Spain's title had been sanctioned both by initial possession and the pronouncement of the Pope. The English were driven to justify

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<sup>11</sup> SPENSER, E., The Faerie Queen, Book II, Canto XI. The picturesque appearance of Indians in England always provoked widespread attention and interest.

their intrusion by claiming actual kinship with the despised savages. Noting the resemblances of the naked Indians to the woodcuts of ancient Britons found in old histories, they drew the conclusion that their own ancestors, these Britons, were very like the Indians in appearance and manner of living. Soon writers desirous of justifying by any means England's title to land in America drew the conclusion that the Indians were of Welch descent. They combined the Welch legend of the journey of the prince, Madoc, to some unspecified western land in the twelfth century with the speech of Montezuma as recorded by the Spanish conquerors:

"You ought to have in remembrance, that either you have heard of your fathers, or else our divines have instructed you, that wee are not naturally of this countrey, nor yet our kingdome is durable, because our forefathers came from a farre countrey, and their King and Captaine, who brought them hither, returned again to his naturall Countrey, saying that he would send such as should rule and govern us, if by chance he himselfe returned not, etc."<sup>12</sup>

and found further confirmation in the narrative of Ingram, one of Sir John Hawkins' seamen, to connect the Indians with these supposed Welch colonists. Great stress was made of the resemblance between the Indians and the Welch language in certain words, particularly "Penguin", which in Welch signified "White-head." This theory so obviously trumped up to justify an enterprise embarked upon on other

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<sup>12</sup> HAKLUYT, R., op. cit., Vol. VI, p.60.

grounds never gained widespread credence, although it survived long enough for Samuel Butler to ridicule:

"So horses they affirm to be  
Mere engines made from geometry,  
And were invented first from engines,  
As Indians Britains were from Penguins."<sup>13</sup>

Most of the masters of English expeditions to America were educated men who from their reading of Peter Martyr and others expected to find the savages agreeable to them in many respects. By far the greater number of their accounts of voyages show in their relations with the Indians an early enthusiasm, worsening relations and final disgust. A marked exception is that of Captain Amadas and Master Barlowe who discovered Virginia in 1584 and who drew an idyllic picture of the Carolina Indians, finding them:

"most gentle, loving and faithfull, voide of all guile and treason, and such as live after the manner of the golden age,"<sup>14</sup>

a passage which from its wording indicates the prior influence of Peter Martyr or Montaigne and a judgment which subsequent expeditions to the territory most signally failed to confirm.

As the contents of this chapter have shown, far from accepting Indians as a pattern of ideal life, the vast majority of Englishmen in the sixteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth rejected such a

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<sup>13</sup> BUTLER, S., *Hudibras*. Part I, Canto II.

<sup>14</sup> HAKLUYT, R., *op. cit.*, Vol. VI, p.128.

concept and regarded the Indians as subhuman brutes to be Europeanized, or, failing that, to be exterminated, driven off or enslaved. This attitude, a product both of the English national character at the time and of English relations with the savages, became deeply ingrained in the early seventeenth century colonies in Virginia and New England. The fact that Englishmen at home were able after 1660 to modify almost completely their concept of the savage without being appreciably affected by constantly deteriorating relations between the two races in America is an eloquent testimony to the lack of interest displayed by Englishmen in matters relating to the concerns of their colonies. It bears equal testimony to the change from national confidence and ethical and literary self-reliance to the confusion and the uncertainty which the period of the English civil wars forced upon the minds of Englishmen.

CHAPTER THREE--A CHANGE IN THE ENGLISH ATTITUDE TOWARDS  
THE SAVAGE

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The first half of the seventeenth century was a troubled era in English history. Until 1649, religious and political dissensions culminating in civil war had engulfed the nation, and, although from 1649 to 1660 Oliver Cromwell had given England a strong government, the Protectorate was in reality minority rule maintained by force. Englishmen in 1660 were glad to call back Charles Stewart from his exile in France, hoping that at last the nation might have a measure of internal harmony and peace. Sixty years of turmoil had brought a change to the English character. Gone in great part was the reckless Elizabethan enthusiasm and individualistic self-confidence that delighted in extremes. Elizabethan qualities, denied an outlet against foreign enemies, had turned upon themselves and rent the land asunder with the result that reaction had set in. Englishmen were abandoning extremes and enthusiasm in all departments of human endeavour and seeking to establish norms--points of agreement which might enable men to regulate their relations with one another with a minimum of friction. In literature, as in other departments of living, the Restoration initiated a movement in the direction of order and uniformity of taste.

This quest for order in literature led to a study and application of classical literature in a new spirit--that of social self-criticism. The Elizabethans had studied the classics and had derived from them forms in which to express with a self-confidence that bordered on the naive their personal and national aspirations. Post-Restoration writers, on the other hand, sought from classical models standards and techniques wherewith to examine and criticize their own society. This new desire coincided with the achievement of the neoclassical French literature, then at the height of its brilliance and prestige, with the result that French thought and literature became and remained a powerful influence in English intellectual life.

To these long-term considerations favouring French influence upon English post-Restoration literature was subjoined another almost equally powerful. King Charles II and many of the most influential of the Cavalier nobility had lived many years in France and had acquired a taste for French literature. Literary success in the seventeenth century was very much a matter of royal and aristocratic patronage, and writers were not long in conforming to the taste of their patrons.

These influential returned emigres brought back with them from France the concept of the noble savage. A few of them had acquired a taste for Montaigne during their exile; still more had imbibed the concept directly through

association in taverns with ex-coueurs des bois, and had listened to boastful accounts of the free life in the forests of New France, and, although most of them could not imitate Prince Rupert and set up in fur-trading, nevertheless they could read of Indians in French romances, applaud them when served up on the stage in heroic fashion, and think of them with envy when the difficulties of life in England led them to prefer what seemed a more natural manner of living. There was much in the concept of a society which seemed to unite individual freedom with tranquil idleness which was pleasing to a generation that had endured the vicissitudes of repressive restriction and unbridled license. England had passed through circumstance analogous to those of France in Montaigne's time, and on that account Montaigne's picture of a people free from civil and religious warfare, affectation, lying and greed was singularly attractive. Abraham Cowley in the following passage almost paraphrases Montaigne:

"The civilest, methinks, of all nations are those whom we account the most barbarous; there is some moderation and good nature in the Toupinambaltians, who eat no man but their enemies, whilst we learned and polite and Christian Europeans, like so many pikes and sharks, prey upon everything that we can swallow. It is the great boast of eloquence and philosophy that they first congregated men dispersed,

"united them into societies, and built up the houses and walls of cities. I wish they could unravel all they have woven; that we might have our woods and our innocence again, instead of our castles and our policies. They have assembled many thousands of scattered people into one body: it is true, they have done so; they have brought them into cities to cozen, and into armies to murder one another: they found them hunters and fishers of wild creatures; they have made them hunters and fishers of their brethren; they boast to have reduced them to a state of peace, when the truth is, they have only taught them an art of war; they have framed, I must confess, wholesome laws for the restraint of vice, but they have raised first that devil, which now they conjure and cannot bind; though there were before no punishments for wickedness, yet there was less committed, because there were no rewards for it."<sup>1</sup>

but differs from him in relating the Indians with greater emphasis to the lost golden age of the European pastoral past.

By far the most potent influence in popularizing Montaigne's concept of the noble savage in post-Restoration England was John Dryden who depicted it graphically upon the stage in two plays, The Indian Queen<sup>2</sup> (1664) and The Indian Emperor (1665).

The plot of The Indian Queen is adapted from de Gomberville's French romance, Polixandre, and apart from the exotic and splendid spectacle provided by the feathered costumes of the Indian characters this play in no way

<sup>1</sup> COWLEY, A., The Essays of Abraham Cowley, "Dangers of an Honest Man in Much Company, p.98.

<sup>2</sup> Written in collaboration with Sir Robert Howard.

differs from heroic plays whose scenes are laid in other lands. The Indian costumes must have proved effective in attracting audiences, for they are alluded to by Aphra Behn in the novel, Orinooko; or the Royal Slave:

"Then we trade for feathers, which they order into all shapes, make themselves little short habits of 'em, and glorious wreaths for their heads, necks, arms and legs, whose tinctures are inconceivable. I had a set of these presented to me, and I gave them to the King's Theatre, and it was the dress of the Indian Queen, infinitely admired by persons of quality, and was unimitable."<sup>3</sup>

In the Epilogue to the Indian Queen, the authors, drawing upon Montaigne, equate the life of the Indians with "Nature", that of the Europeans with "Wit" or "Art":

"You have seen all that this Old World cou'd do,  
We therefore try the Fortune of the New,  
And hope it is below your Aim to hit  
At untaught Nature with your practis'd Wit."<sup>4</sup>

but it is in the charming and unusual Prologue that Dryden and Howard emphasize the innocence and attraction of Indian life and character a la Montaigne:

"As the Musick plays a soft air, the Curtain rises slowly, and discovers an Indian Boy and Girl sleeping under two Plantain-Trees; and when the Curtain is almost up, the Musick turns into a tune expressing an Alarm, at which the Boy wakes and speaks:

Boy. Wake, wake, Quevira: our soft Rest must cease,  
And fly together with our Country's Peace;  
No more must we sleep under Plantain shade  
Which neither Heat could pierce, nor Cold invade  
Where bounteous Nature never feels decay,  
And opening Buds drive falling Fruits away.

<sup>3</sup> BEHN, A., Orinooko; or the Royal Slave, Chapter I.

<sup>4</sup> DRYDEN, J., The Indian Queen, "Epilogue".

"Que. Why should Men quarrel here, where all possess  
 As much as they can hope for by Success?  
 None can have most, where Nature is so kind  
 As to exceed Man's use, though not his Mind.  
Boy. By ancient prophecies we have been told  
 Our World shall be subdu'd by one more old;<sup>5</sup>  
 And see that World's already's hither come."

The Indians recognize the conquering Old World as their audience and ingenuously plead for indulgence to their play. The simplicity and charm of this opening tableau must have been unusually attractive. Unfortunately, there is more of "practis'd Wit" than of "untaught Nature" in the play itself. No attempt is made, other than by costume and a few religious allusions, to differentiate the Indian characters from Europeans.

In writing The Indian Emperor, Dryden was guided by more accurate sources of information than romance and imagination. Research has shown that he consulted the leading Spanish historians of the Conquest of Mexico and was guided by historical circumstance in his construction of plot and character. Far greater realism is shown in this play, and the Indians are assigned distinctive qualities. In their struggle with the Spaniards they show themselves to be true "noble savages", a phrase which Dryden himself coined. The most powerful scenes are those relating to the three principal aspects of conflict between the races, economic, sexual and religious.

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., "Prologue".

Montezuma's high-minded scorn of personal greed is contrasted with the European lust for gold:

"You speak your Prince a mighty Emperour,  
But his Demands have shown him Proud and Poor;  
He proudly at my free-born Scepter flies,  
Yet poorly begs a Metal I despise."<sup>6</sup>

and his bearing throughout the play is a moral indictment of the base and rapacious conduct of the Europeans. Likewise, in his dispute with the Spaniards in Act I and with the Christian priest in Act V, he sustains against a Christianity corrupted by bigotry and greed the role of the noble savage who, although denied Christian revelation, is yet true to the spirit of that which Nature has given him, the laws of his own reason. Similarly, when Cortez attempts to instruct Cydaria in the polite European forms of gallantry, the unaffected simplicity of the Indian maiden pierces his sophistry:

"Strange ways you practise here to win a Heart,  
Here Love is Nature, but with you 'tis Art."<sup>7</sup>

Throughout The Indian Emperor Dryden reiterates that the Indians in their manner of living are nearer to Nature than are the Europeans. The note is struck in the very first scene when he deliberately paraphrases Montaigne. After Vasquez has remarked:

"No useful Arts have yet found footing here,  
But all untaught and salvage does appear."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> DRYDEN, J., The Indian Emperor, Act I, Scene 2.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., Act II, Scene 2.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., Act I, Scene 1.

he has Cortez reply:

"Wild and untaught are terms which we alone  
 Invent, for Fashions differing from our own:  
 For all their Customs are by Nature wrought,<sup>9</sup>  
 But we, by Art, unteach what Nature taught."

Dryden's The Indian Queen and The Indian Emperor

remained popular upon the English stage for upwards of forty years, during which time they must have impressed countless theatre-goers by their pageantry and language with the twin ideas of Montaigne; that the savage was closer to Nature than was the European, and that his life on that account was simpler, more virtuous and more happy.

The popularity of Dryden's treatment of Indian life in the New World led Aphra Behn to emulation. Although her novel, Orinoko, published in 1698, treats mainly of African slaves in the West Indies, Mrs. Behn in its opening pages follows Dryden in drawing an idyllic picture of the Indians. Although she infers that the facts recorded are the result of personal observation, her comparison of the attire and behavior of the sexes towards each other to that of "our first parents before the fall,"<sup>10</sup> shows that she was not unacquainted with Las Casas, while the following passage clearly owes its origin to Montaigne:

"And these people represented to me an absolute idea of the first state of innocence, before man knew how to sin: And 'tis more evident and plain, that simple

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., Act I, Scene I.

<sup>10</sup> BEHN, A., Orinoko; or the Royal Slave, Ch. I. Cf. Chapter I, Note 2.

"nature is the most harmless, inoffensive and vertuous mistress. 'Tis she alone, if she were permitted, that better instructs the world than all the inventions of man: religion would here but destroy that tranquillity they possess by ignorance; and laws wou'd but teach 'em to know offence, of which now they have no notion...they understand no vice or cunning but when they are taught by the white men."<sup>11</sup>

Further evidence of the changed viewpoint towards the Indians is provided in William Penn's accounts of the Delaware Indians. These accounts show not only a more detailed knowledge of Indian customs than do the narratives in Hakluyt, but also a real appreciation of Indian virtues, love for children, liberality, chastity, natural sagacity "without the help (I was going to say the spoil) of tradition;"<sup>12</sup> even their religion is commended--although "under a dark night," they yet "believe a God and immortality without the help of metaphysics."<sup>13</sup> Penn is highly critical of the treatment given them by Christian colonists. One paragraph in particular reveals his sympathy with the Indian manner of life--a sympathy akin to that of Montaigne, Cowley, Dryden and Mrs. Behn in its origin:

"...if they are ignorant of our pleasures, they are also free from our pains. They are not disquieted with bills of lading and exchange, nor perplexed with Chancery suits and Exchequer reckonings. We sweat and toil to live; their pleasure feeds them; I mean their hunting, fishing and fowling, and this table is spread everywhere. They eat twice a day, morning and evening; their seats and tables are on the ground."<sup>14</sup>

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11 Ibid.

12 PENN, W., The Fruits of Solitude and Other Writings, p.286

13 Ibid., p.286.

14 Ibid., p.284.

By Queen Anne's reign the concept of the noble savage had not only permeated literary circles in England but had become a matter of popular opinion as well. In 1712 four Iroquois chiefs, the "Four Kings" of ballad fame, visited England. Francis Parkman credits their visit with having contributed more than any other single factor to popularizing a war with France, while the late Professor G.S. Gordon wrote:

"...most of the literary people in England in the first half of the eighteenth century, when they thought of America at all, were more interested in the American Indian than in the Colonists: either as an object of Christian conversion, or from a sentiment for the virgin wilderness, and for the Redskin as the Noble Savage, the Natural Man. The celebrated visit of the four Indian Kings to London in the reign of Queen Anne... meant more to English curiosity than all the visits of the Colonial versifiers put together."<sup>15</sup>

Not only did these four Indian Kings stimulate the popular literature of the day, but, as later chapters will show, they stimulated the imaginations of Swift, Addison, Steele and Gay to write about the Indians. They also stimulated certain young bloods in London to call themselves Mohocks after them and to behave in a fashion which they considered that of the Natural Man--a procedure which eventually brought the "Mohocks" into conflict with the authorities to the great relief of the citizens.

Although the concept of the noble savage after the Restoration gained widespread favour in England and had

by the time of Queen Anne become the dominant view, it failed to supplant the original English concept completely, partly because the English are loathe to abandon a concept based upon their own experience in favour of a foreign one, and partly because there was much that could be argued in favour of the original English concept of the savage.

The most distinguished exception to the prevailing post-Restoration trend was the philosopher, Thomas Hobbes. Hobbes adopted a concept of Indian life substantially that previously held by the Elizabethan sea-dogs. The reason lies partly in Hobbes' reading from Hakluyt, but more particularly in the assumptions which lie at the base of his political theory. Hobbes, a scholar and a man by disposition fearful of physical violence, recoiled from the individualistic behavior of a society which had passed the greater part of a generation in religious and political warfare. This recoil did not lead him to question the institutional basis of European life and to long like Montaigne for a life unvexed by problems of church and state. To Hobbes, the state of English society in his own time was a revelation of man's natural behavior when the controlling forces of government and religion had broken down. He longed for and tried to justify the restoration of an over-riding political and religious power on the grounds that man was by nature lawless and aggressive. In phrases

that parallel Montaigne he identifies the condition of the American Indian with the natural state of man: to him, as to Montaigne, the Indian is "natural" through having no institutions to coerce him. But whereas Montaigne saw in such a state men doing and acting independent of institutional compulsion and rejoiced, Hobbes envisaged in the same state men being coerced and compelled by other men independent of social control and trembled at what he saw:

"In such condition there is no place for industry, because the fruit thereof is uncertain, and consequently no culture of the earth; no navigation, nor use of the commodities that may be imported by sea; no commodious buildings; no instruments of moving and removing such things as require much force; no knowledge of the face of the earth; no account of time; no arts; no letters; no society; and, which is the worst of all, continual fear, and danger of violent death; and the life of man, poor, nasty, brutish and short."<sup>16</sup>

But a more formidable opponent of the concept of the noble savage than Hobbes was the group of scientists who in the seventeenth century promulgated and supported the idea of progress. To prove human progress and the superiority of the moderns to the ancients in the face of the enormous prestige of classical thought and literature, the scientists centred their arguments around the material achievements in which it seemed to them they had surpassed all previous ages. One of the most indisputable of these achievements was the discovery of America and its inhabitants. From the Indians the scientists drew a convincing argument for progress. They cited pictures of Ancient Britons

<sup>16</sup> HOBBS. *The Leviathan* Part I, Ch. XIII, p.65.

to prove that their own ancestors were once as the Indians and subject to the powers and vagaries of Nature. They had in Europe learned to control Nature to their own desires and needs. The seventeenth century scientist, Glanville, in Ne Plus Ultra, sees in America a new and unrivalled field for the subjugation of Nature to Man's benefit. In this project the Indians will be full partners. The scientific poets of the Royal Society share his enthusiasm. Cowley paints a prophetic picture of what the newly civilized America will become:

"To live by wholesome laws you now begin  
Buildings to raise and fence your cities in:  
To plough the earth, to plough the very main,  
And traffic with the universe maintain;  
Defensive arms and ornaments of dress,  
All implements of life you now possess;  
To you the arts of war and peace are known,  
And whole Minerva is become your own.  
Our Muses, to your fires an unknown band,  
Already have got footing in your land,  
Incas already have historians been,  
And Inca poets shall ere long be seen."<sup>17</sup>

Sprat, Bishop of Rochester and President of the Royal Society, is enthusiastic over the prospects of converting the Indians to civilized life:

"...then will a double improvement thence arise both in respect of ourselves and them. For even the present skilful parts of mankind will not only increase those arts which we shall bestow upon them, but will also venture on new searches for themselves."

In these "new searches" the Indians must logically surpass

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<sup>17</sup> COWLEY, A., Of Plants.

<sup>18</sup> BURY, J.B., The Idea of Progress, p.95.

the Europeans, for nations who have been taught "inevitably surpass their teachers." Sprat appeals:

"to the case of the Greeks who outdid their Eastern masters, and to that of the peoples of the modern world who received their light from the Romans, but have 'well nigh doubled the ancient stock of trades delivered to their keeping."<sup>19</sup>

Poets envisaged the time when out of the wrongs inflicted by Europeans good would come and the previously uncivilized Indians play their part on more than equal terms with their former masters:

"Long rolling years shall late bring on the times  
 When with your gold debauch'd and ripen'd crimes,  
 Europe (the world's most noble part) shall fall;  
 Upon the banished gods and virtue call  
 In vain, while foreign and domestic war  
 At once shall her distracted bosom tear;  
 Forlorn, and to be pitied even by you--  
 Meanwhile your rising glory you shall view;  
 Wit, Learning, Virtue, Discipline of War,  
 Shall for protection to your world repair,  
 And fix a long illustrious empire there.  
 Your native gold (I would not have it so  
 But fear th'event) in time will follow too..."<sup>20</sup>

while Pope, in a later generation, embroiders this fancy:

"The time shall come, when free as seas or wind  
 Unbounded Thames shall flow for all mankind;  
 Whole nations enter with each swelling tide,  
 And seas but join the regions they divide;  
 Earth's distant ends our glory shall behold,  
 And the new world launch forth to seek the old.

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p.96.

<sup>20</sup> COWLEY, A., op. cit.

"Then ships of uncouth form shall stem the tide,  
 And feather'd people crowd my wealthy side,  
 And naked youths and painted chiefs admire  
 Our speech, our colour, and our strange attire!  
 Oh, stretch thy reign, fair peace! from shore to shore,  
 Till conquest cease, and slavery be no more;  
 Till the freed Indians in their native groves  
 Reap their own fruits and woo their sable loves;  
 Peru once more a race of kings behold  
 And other Mexico's be roof'd with gold."<sup>21</sup>

But by Pope's time the concept of the Indian's becoming Europeanized and outdoing the Europeans at their own civilization had become a myth which no one believed. And by Pope's time, the idea of progress, the great concept which the early empirical and rationalist philosophers had put forward to justify their new science in the face of the teaching of Scholasticism and Christianity, had permeated to the middle classes where it had become somewhat incongruously blended with material prosperity or the growth of trade and with orthodox protestant Christianity. The clergyman, Young, the author of Night Thoughts, provides a perfect illustration of the process in the following lines:

"Let those in praise of poverty refine  
 Whose heads or hearts pervert its use,  
 The narrow-soul'd, or the profuse,  
 The truly great find morals in the mine.

Happy the man! who large of heart  
 Has learnt the rare illustrious art  
 Of being rich: stores starve us, or they cloy;  
 From gold, if more than chemic skill

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<sup>21</sup> POPE, A., Windsor Forest.

"Extract not what is brighter still:  
'Tis hard to gain, much harder to enjoy.

Plenty's a means, and joy her end:  
Exalted minds their joys extend:  
A Chandos shines when other's joys are done:  
As lofty turrets by their height,  
When humbler scenes resign their light,  
Retain the rays of the declining sun.

Pregnant with blessings, Britain! swear  
No sordid son of thine shall dare  
Offend the donor of thy wealth and peace;  
Who now his whole creation drains  
To pour into my tumid veins  
That blood of nations! commerce and increase."<sup>22</sup>

In other words, the gold which was pouring into England through trade had come to be regarded by a large section of the community as God's blessing. To scorn it and to inveigh against trade had become in middle-class English eyes little less than blasphemy. Small wonder that the eighteenth century poetic heirs of the idea of progress found only scorn for the brute savage who blocked the course of trade. To Matthew Prior the Indian was "man, untaught and ravenous as the beast" who "infested" the woods of America like the bear, lynx and crocodile. Writers of blank verse epics glorifying Britain's commercial prosperity only tolerate the Indian after he has become sufficiently civilized to provide a market for their favourite produce. In the novels of Defoe, another representative--indeed almost a schoolmaster--of the prevailing commercialism, a similar attitude prevails:

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22 YOUNG, A., The Merchant.

only after he has become domesticated, Christianized and useful does the savage, like Crusoe's Man Friday, become "noble".

This adverse view of the Indians was held throughout the eighteenth century by those who endorsed the principles of English commercial society; by all orthodox Protestants who regarded the heathen as children of darkness and the devil. It was fed upon accounts of the Indians in Hakluyt's Voyages, histories of the Buccaneers and the reports from the American colonists who had always subscribed to it.

But despite this reassertion of the original English concept of the savage, the concept of the noble savage more than held its own in England throughout the eighteenth century. It did so partly because it was a useful talking point in the religious and social controversies which went on throughout the century, partly because it was a useful weapon for satire, but chiefly, one suspects, because it provided an idyllic relief from a strenuous materialism which exhausted but did not satisfy human nature.

CHAPTER IV--RELIGION, MORALS, MANNERS AND THE NOBLE SAVAGE

"When civil dudgeon first grew high,  
 And men fell out, they knew not why;  
 When hard words, jealousies, and fears  
 Set folks together by the ears,  
 And made them fight, like mad or drunk,  
 For Dame Religion as for a punk;  
 Whose honesty they all durst swear for,  
 Though not a man of them knew wherefore;  
 When Gospel-trumpeter, surrounded  
 With long-ear'd rout, to battle sounded;  
 And pulpit, drum ecclesiastic,  
 Was beat with fist instead of a stick;..."<sup>1</sup>

These opening lines of Butler's Hudibras (1663) illustrate the change in the religious climate of England which had developed in reaction against the conditions imposed by warring religious bigotry and intolerance in the preceding half-century. Fanaticism and enthusiasm had brought about most of the differences which had divided Englishmen in the past. For the century following the Restoration there was a determination on the part of most influential Englishmen that enthusiasm and fanaticism were to be avoided. Many of them went so far as to regard religion as a social custom to be perfunctorily observed with little other significance in life. Others, notably the Quakers and to a lesser extent the Methodists at a later date, tended to pietism, a far greater emphasis upon the inward or emotional experience of religion and upon moral conduct than upon controversial points of theological doctrine. Still others, and these included perhaps the most

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1 BUTLER, S., op. cit., Part I, Canto I.

influential thinkers and men of letters, sought to remove from Christian dogmas the irrationalities which had provoked discord in the past and to arrive at a religious belief so reasonable that all men must subscribe to it. This latter aspect of the search for social order and harmony provoked by half a century of anarchy placed English society fully in line for the first time with an intellectual movement which had been developing in Europe from the Renaissance.

The European Deist movement may be regarded as another aspect of the revolt against traditional authority as enshrined in the institutions of formal Christianity--a revolt which developed after the Renaissance. Medieval society had built up its concept of truth upon two great pillars, Revelation and Tradition, and one lesser one, Reason. By Revelation the truth had been vouchsafed by God to chosen individuals: by Tradition it had been enshrined and preserved in institutions: Reason was merely that faculty by which the individual was enabled to discern the truth or falsehood of Revelation or Tradition. Revelation, then, was the internal property of but few men: Tradition was an external property derived from the past: Reason alone was innate and common to all men. The European scholars who revolted against scholastic tradition and medieval institutions in favour of a more individualistic way of thinking and behaving had little

quarrel with this scholastic concept of Reason. Instead they enlarged it to the destruction of Tradition. It became the basis of a new truth: if by his own Reason any man might determine the truth or falsehood of a Revelation or a Tradition, what was to prevent him from using that Reason to determine the truth directly for himself? As Reason was a common factor to all men, did it not follow as a corollary that the truth must lie only in those ideas which are the common properties of all mankind, and that variants from those ideas are merely corruptions of natural Reason imposed by unscrupulous persons for their own ends?

These arguments were gradually arrived at in a process which went on in Europe for more than two centuries. The Reformation was the first step in this process, and many, contented to rest there, added their weight to the upholders of Tradition insofar as the main dogmas of Christianity were concerned. Revelation and Authority were cherished with too great an emotional conviction by both Catholics and Protestants to be attacked directly by Reason with impunity. As a result, the scientists and philosophers in their search for a truth that could be held by all individuals without the benefit of Authority and Revelation were forced to compromise. They split the universe into two portions: matter, a field in which Man's Reason was supreme in discovering

truth; and spirit, the field of religion where Revelation and Tradition were admitted as guides to truth. As might be expected, bolder spirits among those alienated from orthodox religion by the results of its fanaticism were not long in overstepping the boundaries and trespassing in the sacred precincts of Revelation and Authority. Hobbes completely denied the existence of spirit, but the intellectual climate of Europe did not yet favour such a view, and his ideas were greeted with general disapproval. More popular were the views of Lord Herbert of Cherbury (1583-1648) who applied empirical methods to the spiritual world. According to Lord Herbert, all men possessed "natural instincts" or "common notions" which alone were principles of certainty.<sup>2</sup> No nation or society, however, held these principles uncorrupted by error, yet in the errors and corrupt beliefs of all societies the truth lay imbedded--like a pearl in the shell of an oyster. Error was particular and the product of circumstance: truth was universal and immutable. Therefore, whatever among the various nations of mankind was universally acknowledged by all men to be true was the truth, and only that:

"Religion is a common notion, for there has never been a century nor any nation without religion. We must therefore see what universal consent has

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<sup>2</sup> This is but an enlarged statement of the faculty of human "Reason" posited by the scholastic theologians.

"brought to light in religion, and compare all that we find on this subject, so as to receive as common notions all the things which are recognisably present and constant in the true religion."<sup>3</sup>

The individual need not trouble himself, however, to examine the beliefs of all mankind to arrive at the truth: the common notions are innate, and he has but to give free play to his own inner faculty of Reason to bring them out:

"...if you desire a more expeditious method, I will give it to you; Retire into yourself and enter into your own faculties; you will find there God, virtue and the other universal and eternal truths."<sup>4</sup>

After consulting the religions of the world and verifying them in his own heart, Lord Herbert lays down as universal "common notions" or truths that there is a Supreme Power who must be worshipped by mankind; that the best part of Divine Worship consists in ordering one's faculties in accordance with the moral law of nature; that all breaches of the moral law should be expiated by sincere repentance; finally, that in a future life after death rewards and punishments are administered for earthly conduct.

Followers of Lord Herbert soon noticed the very close correspondence between the natural religion as laid down by himself and the few facts about the religious beliefs of the Indians recorded by those Europeans who had come into contact with them. It had been for a long time generally

<sup>3</sup> WILLY, B., The Seventeenth Century Background, pp.125-126

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p.126.

believed that the Indians embodied in their present state what all European nations must have been like in their past. This belief seems to have been held consistently by all historians throughout the eighteenth century. It is cited by Logan in The Elements of the Philosophy of History, published in 1781:

"The history of the aborigines of America is curious; and we deliver it not as the annals of the new world, but as it belongs to the antiquities of mankind, and delineates the picture of all nations in the rude state."<sup>5</sup>

To the Deist "the rude state" meant relatively uncorrupted by custom; consequently the religious beliefs and conduct of the Indians seemed to them to be closer to the so-called natural religion than was that of European Christians. As we have seen, William Penn, no Deist but a member of a society like the Deists in revolt against the orthodox tradition, had written of the Indians that although they had no "tradition" of belief, "yet they believe a God and immortality without the help of metaphysics." Now "to believe a God and immortality without the help of metaphysics" was precisely what the Deists desired. Consequently the Indians furnished material to be used in showing the superiority of the natural religion to orthodox Christian beliefs, morals and manners--material in which Deists in both England and France delighted, as

<sup>5</sup> LOGAN, J., The Elements of the Philosophy of History, p. Quoted in Chambers's Cyclopaedia of English Literature. Vol. II, p.529.

abundant illustrations of the satire of the time will show at further points in this chapter.

Even to many who, like Hobbes, conceived the Indians' life as "nasty and brutish", the very existence of these people and their lack of mention in the Scriptures furnished material wherewith to attack orthodoxy. Prior asks pertinent questions, believing them to be unanswerable, in the following lines:

"And man, untaught and ravenous as the beast,  
Does valley, wood, and brake, and stream infest:  
Derived these men and animals their birth  
From trunk of wood, or pregnant womb of earth?  
Whence then the old belief, that all began  
In Eden's shade and one created man?...  
And, since the savage lineage we must trace  
From Noah sav'd, and his distinguished race;  
How should their fathers happen to forget  
The arts which Noah taught, the rules he set..."<sup>6</sup>

Indeed, throughout the eighteenth century, English and French writers, whether Christians or Deists, found in the spirituality of the Indians talking points to support their views. Pope, echoing in his Essay on Man the Deism of his friend, Lord Bolingbroke, repeats in verse the Indians' common notions of belief in God and immortality of the soul:

"Lo, the poor Indian! whose untutored mind  
Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind;  
His soul proud Science never taught to stray  
Far as the solar walk or milky way;  
Yet simple Nature to his hope has given,  
Behind the cloud-topt hill, an humbler Heaven;

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<sup>6</sup> PRIOR, M., Solomon, or the Vanity of the World.

"Some safer world in depths of wood embrac'd,  
Some happier island in the watery waste,  
Where slaves once more their native land behold,  
No fiends torment, no Christians thirst for gold."<sup>7</sup>

while the pious Blackmore in his epic, Creation, cites the Indians as a further proof of the existence of God through recognition of design in the universe:

"Let such a sphere to India be conveyed,  
As Archimedes or modern Hugens made;  
Will not the Indian, though untaught and rude,  
This work th'effect of wise design conclude."<sup>8</sup>

The orthodox Christian found the concept of the noble savage in many ways as useful as did his Deist opponent. The so-called "natural" religion of the savage was in his mind a clear "proof" of the universal desire of man to worship, thus confuting the atheist. Moreover, the Indians' faithful practise of the virtues of their imperfect faiths was a standing sermon to Europeans who abused the faith of the greater light which God had given them. Daniel Defoe used the religious interest of the savage to good advantage in Robinson Crusoe. Mair has pointed out<sup>9</sup> that Crusoe's conversation on religion with his man Friday was a satire on Locke's controversy with the Bishop of Worcester, while Will Atkins' conversion<sup>10</sup> through his own attempt to explain Christianity to his Indian wife was intended as a sermon to all Christians.

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<sup>7</sup> POPE, A., An Essay on Man.

<sup>8</sup> BLACKMORE, R., The Creation.

<sup>9</sup> MAIR, G.H., English Literature--Modern, p.29.

<sup>10</sup> DEFOE, D., Robinson Crusoe, Ch. XLIII.

Swift uses the Indians' worship of both good and evil spirits to point out a great flaw in the Deistic argument, their failure to deal with the problem of evil:

"To me the difference appears little more than this, that they are put oftener upon their knees by their fears, and we, by our desires; that the former set them a praying, and us a cursing. What I applaud them for is in limiting their devotions and their deities to their several districts, nor ever suffering the liturgy of the white God, to cross or to interfere with that of the black. Not so with us, who, pretending by the lines and measures of our reason, to extend the dominion of one invisible power, and contract that of the other, have discovered a gross ignorance of the natures of good and evil, and horribly confounded the frontiers of both."<sup>11</sup>

One of the orthodox Christian responses to the Deist challenge was the establishment of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, intended as an instrument for the conversion of the savages. One of its missionaries was the celebrated John Wesley, fresh from Oxford and full of the popular concept of the noble savage. Before he had ever seen a savage he wrote in a letter dated 10 October, 1738:

"They have no comments to construe away the text; no vain philosophy to corrupt it; no luxurious, sensual, covetous, ambitious expounders to soften its unpleasant truths. They have no party, no interest to serve, and are therefore willing to receive the Gospel in its simplicity. They are as little children, humble, willing to learn, and eager to do the will of God...An Indian hut affords no food for curiosity, no gratification of the desire of grand or new or pretty things. The pomp or show of the world have no place in the wilds of America."<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> SWIFT, J., A Discourse Concerning the Mechanical Operation of the Spirit.

<sup>12</sup> KENYON, E., The Life of John Wesley. pp.101-102.

nor did the single interview which Wesley had by means of an interpreter altogether dispell his illusions with regard to the Indians. He was impressed by the beauty of their religious concept of a trinity of sky spirits who took unto themselves the souls of all the tribe who died.<sup>13</sup>

But, whether Deist or Christian, the leading thinkers and writers in England during the century following the Restoration were agreed in the need for reform in the manners and morals of the nation. In social relations, as in religion this reaction moved in the direction of eliminating excess of feeling and irrationality from human conduct and regulating social behavior by agreed conventions or norms which tended to put the least possible strain upon the social fabric. Simplicity, dignity and an avoidance of extremes were the social and literary ideals, however imperfectly and incompletely lived up to, of the new age. Although these ideals grafted upon the basic Christian ethic were arrived at largely through a study of the Latin classics and contemporary French literature, nevertheless, they too were claimed by their supporters to be in accordance with man's universal nature. The concept of the noble savage proved quite as useful in supporting the theory of "natural" conduct as it had done in supporting that of "natural" religion and for quite the same reasons. The accepted belief that the Indians

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<sup>12</sup> Although Wesley revised his opinion of Indians in general after hearing the settlers' account of them, he never lost his faith in the Choctaws, the tribe he himself had visited.

were nearer to a state of nature than their European contemporaries gave European writers a splendid opportunity to satirize the manners and moral vices of their own communities on the ground of their comparative irrationality. As the satire of European religion is almost inextricable from that of European manners and morals, it is thought advisable to make no effort in the balance of this chapter to differentiate between the two but to present examples from the ever-increasing tide of satire as they appeared in chronological order.

Among the first to use the concept of the noble savage to display irrationalities in English society were Joseph Addison and Richard Steele. Taking advantage of the widespread interest occasioned by the visit of the four Indian Kings to London in Queen Anne's reign, they set forth an imaginary account of London society as seen through the eyes of the savages. This account appeared in The Spectator, No. 50, and was immensely popular, being reprinted and imitated in other periodicals for many years after its original publication. The suggestions for this paper came from Jonathan Swift, who half repented that it had been produced:

"The SPECTATOR is written by Steele, with Addison's help; 'tis often very pretty. Yesterday it was made of a noble hint I gave him long ago for his

"Tatlers about an Indian, supposed to write his travels into England. I repent he ever had it. I intended to have written a book on that subject. I believe he has spent it all in one paper, and all the under hints there are mine too..."<sup>14</sup>

A similar account is also the theme of Swift's French acquaintance Voltaire who in L'Ingenu brings a man educated among the Huron Indians in Canada to France where he is astounded at the comparative irrationality of European life and religion. Indeed, a favourite method of criticising the irrationality of European life in eighteenth century novels was to have one's hero live among the Indians. In Candide Voltaire makes the Indians of El Dorado the acme of all that is rational in mankind. Smollett in Humphrey Clinker has a celebrated doctor at Bath argue in favour of the non-suppression of "stinks" because the savages "in a state of nature, undebauched by luxury, unseduced by whim and caprice,"<sup>15</sup> find them agreeable. Although Smollett's account of Lismahago's captivity among the Indians in this same novel is delivered in a burlesque manner, Lismahago's final conclusions do not differ from the conventional concept of the noble savage:

"He said, moreover, that neither the simplicity of their manners, nor the commerce of their country would admit of those articles of luxury which are deemed magnificent in Europe; and that they are too virtuous and sensible to encourage the introduction of any fashion which might help to render them corrupt and effeminate."<sup>16</sup>

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14 SWIFT, J., Journal to Stella.

15 SMOLLETT, T., The History of Humphrey Clinker, p.17.

16 Ibid., p.203.

and, as in the novels of Voltaire, and, at a later date, of Bage, the natural reason of the savage is used to confound the irrationality of orthodox Christianity:

"The lieutenant told her, that, while he resided among them, two French missionaries arrived in order to convert them to the Catholic religion; but when they talked of mysteries and revelations, which they could neither explain nor authenticate, and called in the evidence of miracles which they believed upon hearsay; when they taught that the Supreme Creator of Heaven and earth had allowed his only Son, his own equal in power and glory, to enter the bowels of a woman, to be born as a human creature, to be insulted, flagellated, and even executed as a malefactor; when they pretended to create God himself, to swallow, digest, revive and multiply him ad infinitum, by the help of a little flour and water, the Indians were shocked at the impiety of their presumption. They were examined by the assembly of sachems, who desired them to prove the divinity of their mission by some miracles. They answered that it was not in their power. 'If you were really sent by heaven for our conversion,' said one of the sachems, 'you would certainly have some supernatural endowments, at least you would have the gift of tongues, in order to explain your doctrine to the different nations among which you are employed; but you are so ignorant of our language, that you cannot express yourselves even on the most trifling subjects.'"<sup>17</sup>

Charles Johnstone's picaresque novel, Chrysal; or the Adventures of a Guinea (1760) is a thinly-veiled satire of contemporary England. Few of its pages record a virtuous character, and few nations or races of mankind find praise in it. It is more significant, therefore, that in Chrysal the matter relating to the Indians is an exception from the general scurrility that pervades the novel.

An English general (obviously Abercrombie) planning an expedition against the French in America, squanders the

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p.205.

time of his troops in useless drill. An Indian Agent (obviously Sir William Johnson) remonstrates, representing the bad effect his delay will have upon the morale of the Indians "who judge of things only by common sense."<sup>18</sup> He will not for the sake of the general's credit trump up some fictitious reason to explain his activities:

"Though they have not the advantages of learning, they see by the light of natural reason through all the boasted wiles of policy; and, as they never mean deceit themselves, detest it in others, however speciously disguised."<sup>19</sup>

When the general condemns them as "perfidious and deceitful wretches" who ought to be exterminated, the agent replies that if ill-treated, the Indians being of quick sensibility will retort in kind, but if well-treated:

"They would be the most affectionate, steady, and careful friends. I speak from experience. I treat them as rational creatures; and they behave as such to me. I never deceive them; and they never deceive me. I do them all the good offices in my power, and they return them many-fold. In short, I practise to them the behavior I wish to meet from them, and am never disappointed. All the evils which have been suffered from them have proceeded from the unhappy error of thinking ourselves possessed of a superiority over them which nature, that is, Heaven, has not given us. They are our fellow-creatures; and in general above our level in the virtues which give real pre-eminence."<sup>20</sup>

In Henry Mackenzie's novel, The Man of the World, (1773) the noble savage is depicted as enjoying a freedom and a happiness unknown in contemporary Europe:

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18 JOHNSTONE, C., Chrysal: or the Adventures of a Guinea, Vol. 3, p.138.

19 Ibid., p.139.

20 Ibid., p.139.

"When we consider the perfect freedom subsisting in this rude and simple state of society, where rule is only acknowledged for the purpose of immediate utility to those who obey, and ceases whenever that purpose of subordination is accomplished; where greatness cannot use oppression, nor wealth excite envy; where the desires are native to the heart, and the languor of satiety is unknown; where, if there is no refined sensation of delight, there is also no ideal source of calamity; we shall the less wonder at the inhabitants feeling no regret, for the want of those delicate pleasures which a more polished people are possessed of. Certain, it is, that I am far from being a single instance of one who had even attained maturity in Europe, and yet found his mind so accommodated, by the habits of a few years, to Indian manners, as to leave that country with regret."<sup>21</sup>

As subsequent events in the novel show, Annesley's fears are abundantly justified. Everywhere among Europeans in America and England he is cheated by people who hasten to assure him that he is "no longer among the savages."

Strikingly similar ideas are expressed by Hector St. John de Crevecoeur in Letters from an American Farmer (1782). Crevecoeur had had actual experience of life among the Indians, but his judgments had been so coloured by his previous whole-hearted adoption of the concept of the noble savage derived from his readings of Rousseau and Voltaire that he merely reiterates the theme of Indian freedom and innocence. In letter XII "Distresses of a Frontier Man" he finds the Indian life superior on rational and religious grounds to that of the European:

21 Mackenzie, H., The Man of the World, Vol. 2, pp.182-184

"Without temples, without priests, without kings, and without laws, they are in many instances superior to us; and the proofs of what I advance are, that they live without care, sleep without inquietude, take life as it comes, bearing all its asperities with unparalleled patience, and die without any kind of apprehension for what they have done, or what they may expect to meet with hereafter. What system of philosophy can give us so many necessary qualifications for happiness? They most certainly are more closely connected with nature than we are; they are her immediate children, the inhabitants of the woods are her undefiled offspring; those of the plains are her degenerated breed, far, far removed from her primitive laws, from her original design."<sup>22</sup>

Crèvecoeur concludes that by taking his family to the wilderness, a parent can give them the best of both worlds. Free from the vices and the unhappy restlessness of European life, they will enjoy the healthy outdoor activities, the healthy frugality and the peace of mind of the noble savage; at the same time, by keeping them employed in farming and by educating them according to the precepts of reason, he will keep them free from the laziness and the mental sloth which to Crèvecoeur are the Indians' sole faults.

Crèvecoeur's recommendations for an ideal education are precisely those which Robert Bage makes his hero experience in Hermsprong; or Man as He is Not (1796).

Hermsprong, a paragon of all virtues, modestly attributes his surpassing achievements to the Indian environment of

<sup>22</sup> de CREVECOEUR, H.St.J., Letters from an American Farmer, p.216.

his childhood. Space permits the inclusion of but one extract to illustrate the manner in which in this novel the untaught reasoning of the Indian is shown as more than a match for that of an educated European. The hero's mother would convert the Indian chief, Lontac, to Christianity. After listening patiently to her account of the miracles of the Bible, the latter tells her a story of a talking bear encountered by his own ancestors:

"'Was ever any thing so preposterous!' cried my mother. 'Sure it is impossible you should believe it.'

'Why impossible?' answered Lontac, 'it is tradition handed down to us from our fathers. We believe because they said it.'

'Bears speak!' again exclaimed my mother.

'A serpent,' answered Lontac, 'spake to the first woman; an ass spake to the prophet; you have said so, and therefore I believe it.'

'But,' said my mother, 'they were inspired.'

'So was the half white-bear. The Great Spirit inspires everything.'

'But this is so excessively absurd,' said my mother.

'I have not called your wonders absurd,' Lontac replied, 'I thought it more decent to believe.'

'What have I told you so preposterous?' asked my mother.

'Many things far removed from the ordinary course of nature,' Lontac replied, 'I do not presume to call them preposterous. It is better to believe than to contradict.'

Such obstinate politeness provoked my mother almost as much as contradiction could have done; she told my father what a stupid creature she had undertaken to instruct...

'I despise them,' said my mother, 'prodigiously.'

'Do, my dear,' my father replied, 'as much as you can with civility, people who are always doing you services, and shewing their regard. I despised them myself, till I found them my equals in knowledge of many things of which I believed them ignorant; and

"my superiors in the virtues of friendship, hospitality, and integrity."<sup>23</sup>

Bage's ideal European suffered the same fate as that which befell Mrs. Shelley's Frankenstein at a later date: just as the monster became confounded with his creator, so did the white hero, Hermsprong, become the epitome of the noble savage. One reads in Hayley's Triumphs of Temper:

"Hermsprong arose; his rivals all declin'd;  
He sway'd with sweet ascendancy her mind:  
His savage virtues grew supremely dear,  
Gracefully frank, and amiably austere;  
Soon for the hero of her heart she chose  
This bright reverse of fashionable beaux,..."<sup>24</sup>

English playwrights were as quick as the novelists throughout the eighteenth century to see the advantage of the concept of the noble savage in ridiculing European foibles and vices. This device was used with good effect by John Gay in Polly (1728), the sequel to The Beggar's Opera. In this work, the author transports the characters of The Beggar's Opera, Polly and MacHeath, to America, where after many vicissitudes MacHeath is hanged and Polly becomes betrothed to the Indian prince, Cawwawkee. European vices are contrasted with Indian virtues in this production. The following dialogue between Cawwawkee and his captors, the pirates Morano, Vanderbluff, Capstern and Laguerre is characteristic of the satirical manner of the play, a manner which is doubly effective as the pirates

<sup>23</sup> BAGE, R., Hermsprong; or Man as he is Not., pp.21-23.  
<sup>24</sup> HAYLEY, W., The Triumphs of Temper. Canto I.

profess throughout the play to be only imitating the conduct of contemporary English politicians:

"MOR. Meer downright Barbarians you see, Lieutenant. They have our notional honour still in practise among 'em.

VAN. We must beat civilizing into 'em to make them capable of common society, and common conversat'on.

MOR. Stubborn prince, mark me well. Know you, I say, that your life is in my power?

CAW. I know too, that my virtue is in my own.

MOR. Not a mule, or an old out-of-fashion'd philosopher could be more obstinate. Can you feel pain?

CAW. I can bear it.

MOR. I shall try you.

CAW. I speak truth, I never affirm but what I know.

MOR. In what condition are your troops? What numbers have you? Act reasonably and openly, and you shall find protection.

CAW. What, betray my friends! I am no coward, European

MOR. Torture shall make you squeak.

CAW. I have resolution; and pain shall neither make me lie or betray. I tell thee once more, European, I am no coward.

VAN. What, neither cheat nor be cheated! There is no having either commerce or correspondence with these creatures.

JEN. We have reason to be thankful for our good education. How ignorant is mankind without it!

CAP. I wonder to hear the brute speak.

LAG. They would make a shew of him in England.

JEN. Poh, they would only take him for a fool.

CAP. But how can you expect anything else from a creature who hath never seen a civiliz'd country? Which way should he know mankind?

JEN. Since they are made like us, to be sure, were they in England, they might be taught.

LAG. Why, we see country gentlemen grow into courtiers, and country gentlewomen, with a little polishing of the town, in a few months become fine ladies.

JEN. Without doubt, education and example can do much.

POLLY. How happy are these savages! who would not wish to be in such ignorance?

MOR. Have done, I beg you, with your musty reflections. You but interrupt the examination. You have treasures, You have gold and silver among you, I suppose?

CAW. Better it had been for us, if that shining earth had never been brought to light.

"MOR. That you have treasures then you own, it seems, I am glad to hear you confess something.

CAW. But out of benevolence we ought to hide it from you. For, as we have heard, 'tis so rank a poison to you Europeans, that the very touch of it makes you mad.

MOR. Bold savage, we are not to be insulted with your ignorance. If you would save your lives, you must, like the beaver, leave behind you what we hunt you for, or we shall not quit the chase. Discover your treasures your hoards, for I will have the ransacking of them.

JEN. By his seeming to set some value upon gold, one would think that he had some glimmering of sense."<sup>25</sup>

As English politicians did not relish being so compared with the noble savage, the performance of Gay's comic opera was banned, a procedure liable to prevent other playwrights from embarking upon similar experiments in future. It did not, however, altogether do so.

Sir Richard Steele had published in The Spectator the story of Inkle and Yarico, in which a beautiful Indian maiden saves the life of a young English merchant, Thomas Inkle, through love, and accompanies him to the Barbadoes, whereupon:

"Mr. Thomas Inkle, now coming into English territories, began seriously to reflect upon his loss of time, and to weigh with himself how many Days interest of his Money he had lost during his stay with Yarico. This thought made the Young Man very pensive, and careful, what account he should be able to give his Friends of his Voyage. Upon which considerations, the prudent and frugal Young Man sold Yarico to a Barbadian Merchant; notwithstanding that the poor Girl to incline him to commiserate her Condition, told him she was with Child by him: But he only made use of that Information, to rise in his demands upon the Purchaser

This pitiful story created a tremendous impression, and references to it are common in the poetic epistles of the

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<sup>25</sup> GAY, J., Polly, Act 2, Scene VIII.  
 as in The Spectator, March 13, 1711.

eighteenth century. It was turned into a comic opera by George Colman, the Younger, in 1787, "performed in every London theatre, and in every theatre of the kingdom with the same degree of splendid success."<sup>27</sup> In this production, Trudge, Inkle's servant, has also brought back an Indian maiden, Wowski, to whom he behaves in an honourable fashion. The contrast gives frequent opportunities of pointed satire at the expense of conventional Christianity, of which the following passage is a fair specimen:

"WOWS. Iss. Great many: but now you get here, you forget poor Wowski!

TRUDGE. Not I: I'll stick to you like wax.

WOWS. Ah! I fear! what makes you love me now?

TRUDGE. Gratitude, to be sure.

WOWS. What that?

TRUDGE. Ha! this is it, now, to live without education. The poor dull devils of her country are all in the practise of gratitude, without finding out what it means; while we can tell the meaning of it, with little or no practise at all. <sup>28</sup> Lord, what a fine advantage Christian learning is!"

One of the most popular dramatists in the last decade of the eighteenth century was the Irishman, John O'Keefe. O'Keefe was an enthusiastic supporter of the ideas of the French Revolution at its outset, as his Le Grenadier (1789) celebrating the fall of the Bastille proves. In the same year, O'Keefe produced another play, The Basketmaker, designed to prove the uselessness and irrationality of the rights and privileges claimed by the French nobility. He accomplishes this feat by an ingenious use of the concept

<sup>27</sup> INCHEBALD, Mrs., The British Theatre, Vol. 20, Introduction to "Inkle and Yarico", p.5.  
<sup>28</sup> COLEMAN, G. Inkle and Yarico. Act 2. Scene 1.

of the noble savage. The scene is laid in Canada, where Count Pepin, the French aristocrat, and William, an humble basketmaker, are captured by the Indians:

"COUNT P. Oh, heaven defend me! (Runs behind William who stands erect, and with undaunted composure looks at them; they stop and gaze on him with wonder.)  
 OTCH. He look brave man, and no fear death.  
 WILL. 'Tis mercy, when fallen into a miserable captivity, yet friends, my death can do you little good, my life no harm, it may be useful to you, give me leave, and I'll try. (Bows with submission, smiles and entreats their patience. Steps aside, and pulls reeds, grass and wild flowers, sits on the stump of a tree, and begins to weave them--the Count still crouching behind William, sings--the Indians, by degrees, approach, listen, and look on his work with curiosity and pleasure; having finished the wreath, he rises, and advancing, places it on OTCHEGROO's head. During this the Count sneaks behind a tree. OTCHEGROO looks greatly pleased; walks solemn and pompous.)  
 OTCH. Be it fine crown?  
 SOK. Very fine and beautiful, pretty handsome. (All look with admiration at the crown, then make much of William; SOKOKI pauses, runs and drags the Count from behind a tree, then pulls grass and reeds, which he gives to him.) Here, weave.  
 COUNT. What are these for, my dear fellow? (Trembling.)  
 SOK. For you to weave me fine crown.  
 COUNT. Weave! I'm no weaver! I'm a gentleman.  
 SOK. Gentleman! vat be dat.  
 COUNT. Why, Sir, a gentleman is--a me, what I am.  
 OTCH. But what can you do?  
 COUNT. Do! don't I tell you I'm a gentleman, and do nothing.  
 OTCH. Den de gentleman be good for notting.  
 SOK. Knock him brain out. (They yell and raise their clubs.)  
 COUNT. Oh, my sweet friend, save me! (Runs behind William).  
 WILL. Hold (to the Indians) you mistake, I am but a poor mechanic, and owe even my subsistence to the labour of my hands; if you confer favors on your captives, they are more properly due to him who is far my superior in birth, rank, wealth, and education.

"COUNT. So I am, gentlemen, the lad tells you very true; if ever we get back, my dear boy, I'll make you such amends...(apart to William) hem! (recovering his importance) yes, my honest wild bucks, as he says, trades-people like him, are low vulgar bourgeois, a different species from us, they are born only to make and weave, and do and contribute to the ease of us noblemen.

OTCH. While you do nothing?

COUNT. Oh, yes, I'll shew you what I can do, (throws himself into a fencing attitude) ha, ha! what think you of that? (sings a short strain) or that? or (dances and sings, in the midst of which SOKOKI pushes him.)

SOK. Vat think you of dat.

COUNT. Ha, ha, ha! Very comical, pleasant. What infernal savages.

OTCH. But vat de use in all dis?

COUNT. Use!--'tis useful--and 'tis used when we use it. (Confused)

SOK. Knock him brain out. (they raise their clubs)

WILL. Stop, as you seem to approve of my poor efforts to oblige you, besides that little coronet, I can make you many other things that you may find of real utility, I shall want a person to pull and bring me the necessary materials, in such employment; tho' he's not inured to work, this gentleman--

COUNT. Say man (apart)

WILL. This man can be of service to me if you will spare his life.

OTCH. We spare him for you.

COUNT. My best fellow. (apart to William)

SOK. And he shall be your servant.

COUNT. Eh, how--what, servant!

SOK. No! knock him brain out.

COUNT. Hold, hold, I will be any thing.

SOK. Vat he have so fine cover, he no deserve, you shall have his fine cover cloaths, we strip him, and put on him bear skin; do no stand cry prate. Go wait upon your master. (gives him a bill-hook)

COUNT. Master! ay, now this low bred rascal will pay me home in kind. (aside)

OTCH. Build a good house from de sun, and de rain, make him soft bed of bever hair, and put dis big bear skin over to make him warm. (gives one he had been sitting on to SOKOKI) Catch de white bird for him eat, de sly bird for him song, fish for Goberques, and cook him good Sagaminty, draw de maple wine, sing,

"dance, every ting to make pleasure for the great good man; (to William) and him slave there can eat what him leave, and sleep at door of him house. (to the Count)

COUNT. 'Eat what him leave, sleep at him door!' Oh that I had been brought up a carpenter; plague of my fencing-master!

WILL. Your next favor is to search for the lady, that I understand was seized; grant her kindness and protection--Come Count, don't despond, tho' fortune has unexpectedly reversed our situation, I shall still remember you're my fellow creature.

COUNT. You're very good--Oh that I should live to be told, and even as a compliment, that Pepin Comte de Montemart, Baron de la Bombe Orgueil, Vicomte de Ribambelle, and Chevalier de la Toison D'or, is fellow creature to a basket-maker.

SOK. Go to make your Massa bed. (pushes Count)

1st INDIAN. Go to build your Massa house.

2nd INDIAN. Go to catch your Massa fish. (hustling him)

SOK. Go to devil. (pushes him off) (Exeunt)."

Like the novelists and the playwrights, the poets, although in shorter compass, delighted to contrast the simplicity of the Indians with the greed of the civilized Europeans. Cowley, who seems to have vacillated between enthusiasm over the idea of progress and nostalgia for a life of primitive simplicity, struck a note which was to become characteristic:

"Of old the wiser Indians never made  
 Their gold or silver the support of trade,  
 Useless to life at best, and sometimes hurtful too,  
 With nuts instead of coin they bought and sold;  
 Their wealth by cocoas, not by sums, they told;  
 One tree, the growing treasure of the field,  
 Both food and clothes did to its owner yield;  
 Procured all utensils, and, wanting bread,  
 The happy hoarder on his money fed.  
 This was true wealth: those treasures we adore,  
 By custom valued, in themselves are poor,

"And man may starve amidst their golden store.  
 Too happy India! had this wealth alone,  
 And not thy gold, been to the Spaniards known."<sup>30</sup>

Somerville also puts the Indians forward as examples of wiser virtue to be imitated by their less natural European brethren:

"The wiser savages behold,  
 Who truck not liberty for gold;  
 Regardless all her subtile wiles,  
 Regardless of her frowns or smiles;  
 If frugal Nature want supplies,  
 The lance or dart unerring flies:  
 The mountain board their prey descends,  
 Or the fat kid regales their friends;  
 The jocund tribe, from sun to sun,  
 Feast on the prize their valour won;  
 Cease babbling muse, thy vain advice,  
 'Tis thrown away on avarice."<sup>31</sup>

Instances in English poetry of the inhumanity of the Europeans to the Indians may be greatly multiplied. They were often occasioned by religious or national prejudice. Butler in Hudibras uses the cheating of the savages by the Pilgrim Fathers to hit out at the Puritans,<sup>32</sup> while a popular theme, especially at times when war was imminent with Spain, was the cruelty suffered by the poor innocent Indians at Spanish hands in the mines of America. Here a British poet could take a self-righteous tone at the expense of the national enemy. The following is a characteristic effusion:

"We envy not Golconda's sparkling mines,  
 Nor thine Potosi, nor thy kindred hills,  
 Sparkling with gold..."<sup>33</sup>

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30 COWLEY, A., On Plants, Canto I.

31 SOMERVILLE, W., The Fortune Hunter.

32 BUTLER, S., Hudibras.

Charles Churchill's satire is more sweeping in its condemnation and more brilliant in its execution than any example yet given. The following lines are an epitome of the eighteenth century concept of the noble savage and a condemnation of European morals and manners at one and the same time:

"Happy the savage of those early times,  
 Ere Europe's sons were known and Europe's crimes!  
 Gold, cursed gold slept in the womb of earth,  
 Unfelt its mischief, as unknown its worth:  
 In full content he found the truest wealth;  
 In toil he found diversion, food, and health;  
 Stranger to ease and luxury of courts,  
 His sports were labours, and his labours sports;  
 His youth was hardy, and his old age green;  
 Life's morn was vig'rous, and her eve serene;  
 No rules he held, but what he made for use;  
 No arts he learn'd, nor ills those arts produce;  
 False lights he follow'd, but believed them true:  
 He knew not much: but liv'd to what he knew.  
 Happy, thrice happy now the savage race,  
 Since Europe took their gold and gave them grace!  
 Pastors she sends to help them in their need,  
 Some who can't write, with others who can't read.  
 And on sure grounds, the gospel pile to rear,  
 Sends missionary felons every year;  
 Our vices with more zeal than holy pray'rs,  
 She teaches them, and in return takes theirs.  
 Her rank oppressions give them cause to rise,  
 Her want of prudence means and arms supplies.  
 Whilst her brave rage, not satisfied with life,  
 Rising in blood, adopts the scalping knife.  
 Knowledge she gives, enough to make them know  
 How abject is their state, how deep their woe;  
 The worth of freedom strongly she explains,  
 Whilst she bows down and loads their necks with chains  
 Faith too she plants, for her own ends imprest,  
 To make them bear the worst and hope the best;  
 And while she teaches on vile int'rest's plan,  
 As laws of God the vile decrees of man,  
 Like Pharisees, of whom the Scriptures tell,  
 She makes them ten times more the sons of hell."<sup>34</sup>

The examples cited in English fiction, drama and poetry indicate that English writers were interested in the Indians in the eighteenth century primarily as an illustration of some form of freedom which they valued: freedom to worship in a natural manner unencumbered by the restraints and irrationalities of priestcraft; freedom to live in a natural manner free from the irrationalities, conventions and compromises of civilization; above all, freedom from the pressure of materialism which with the growth of commerce seemed to be engulfing the nation. The concept of the noble savage was a "useful" symbol, fully in keeping with the desire for a life of peace, harmony and greater simplicity of the generations following the civil war, and sanctioned by the classical tradition of the golden age. Few writers were interested in the Indians for their own sake. There are curious speculations as to the origin of the Indians in the writings of Nicholas Rowe, William Penn and others, but these were applied less for their own sake than to prove some religious or social belief which their author advocated. Of purely disinterested works dealing with the Indians, one encounters only an Esquimaux pastoral by Samuel Johnson, that of Ajut and Amingait in The Rambler--and this in an age of pastorals; a fantasy by Robert Paltock, itself partly a social satire, and a few worthless ballads by such minor poets as Penrose, Logan and Grainger.

But the truest indication that the Indians were

interesting to Europeans primarily as a symbol of their own desires is shown by the manner of treatment accorded them in the poems, plays and novels already mentioned. Almost without exception, the Indians are never realized as individuals of flesh and blood. They are a collection of virtues among whom flesh and blood Europeans wander and make comparisons detrimental to their own society. Few details of the actual life of the Indians were needed for such treatment. Indeed nothing better illustrates the essentially theoretical and unhistorical nature of eighteenth century thought than the slow advance in understanding Indian life and customs made by the scientists and historians of the period. For instance, the Abbe Raynal, in his History of the Two Indies, (1770) one of the most popular and influential works of its time, "is unable to decide between the comparative advantage of the savage state of nature and the most highly civilized society,"<sup>35</sup> while the historian Robertson in his History of America, although he does not himself subscribe to the concept of the noble savage which he admits is popular among his contemporaries and although he showed a detailed knowledge of many Indian customs and ways of thinking, nevertheless fully believed in and envied the Indian his individual freedom of conduct and independence of behavior. This being the case, it would be unfair to dismiss the concept

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35 BURY, J.B., op. cit., p.168.

of the noble savage summarily, as Basil Willy has done in his otherwise admirable The Eighteenth Century Background as a product of "the unspoiled paradise in America envisaged by Montaigne...a mirage" which had been driven by "closer acquaintance with that country...further and further off until it settled finally, for the eighteenth century, in Tahiti."<sup>36</sup> It is true that in the latter part of the century, the concept of the noble savage was extended to include the savages of other lands than America, notably the negroes, on account of the slave-trade agitations and the Tahitians because of their novelty. In addition, British writers had found equivalents to the noble savage nearer at home by applying the qualities hitherto given to the Indians to their own ancestors, thus initiating the Ossianic tradition, and later to the poorer members of their own society who in consequence of the greater simplicity enforced upon their life were supposed to possess primitive virtues. But although no longer the only channel of the virtues of a primitive life, the concept of the noble savage nevertheless continued throughout the eighteenth century to hold its own in English and French literature as a list of such names as Voltaire, Rousseau, Churchill, Johnstone, Smollett, MacKenzie, Bage, Crèvecoeur and O'Keefe would indicate. It was, however, by 1770 embarking into an altogether new phase of treatment, a phase whose consideration must be reserved for the

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36 WILLY, B., The Eighteenth Century Background, p.14.

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succeeding chapters.

CHAPTER V--THE TRANSITION TO ROMANTICISM AND THE  
NOBLE SAVAGE

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As the previous chapter has shown, the development of the concept of the noble savage in English literature was one of the manifestations of the search for social order through rationalism which followed the Restoration. By the mid-eighteenth century this idea had become well established in English literature. Its stock characters, the Indian sage who confutes the irrationalities of European religion and society, the Indian maiden whose pure love is free from affectation and selfish demands, had become an integral part of fiction. Moreover, the Indian manner of life had come to stand for a combined simplicity of living and a perfect freedom from conventional restraint. The development and persistence of this belief in the freedom of the Indians is a proof of man's power to cherish upon the slimmest basis of evidence the illusions that are closest to his heart: for the concept of the noble savage was among Europeans much less of a truth founded upon observation than it was a symbol answering a great human need. Europeans who desired a simpler and more rational society wished to believe in the noble savage because the existence of a society uninhibited by the restraints of social institutions and the vices which these breed, and the existence of a form of worship that was "natural" and unencumbered by the forms and squabbles of

designing priests gave them both an example and a hope in their own efforts at social and religious reform.

It is not strange, therefore, that with the transition from classicism to romanticism the concept of the noble savage did not die. Both movements have since the middle ages been striving for the same ultimate goal-- the freeing of the individual from the intellectual and the institutional bondage of what seemed to them to be a faulty past. That both classicists and romanticists in the process of creating this freedom formed new traditions and forged fresh chains should not obscure the great underlying unity of purpose which has characterized the development of post-Renaissance European civilization. Nevertheless, the differences in method and technique between classicism and romanticism were bound to produce modifications in the treatment of the concept of the noble savage.

The early scientists and philosophers who had laid the foundations of modern classicism had ridiculed feeling, deprecated enthusiasm and viewed the world in the hard clear light of reason. They had done this because they were unable to dissociate in their own minds sentiment and enthusiasm from the bigotry and fanaticism which seemed to them to be chaining mankind. Moreover, their early spectacular successes in physical science encouraged them both to adhere to the new methods of thought and to

enlarge the scope of their application.

By the mid-eighteenth century Reason and its methods had triumphed in dominant English literary circles. The technique of this classicism was to apply rational analysis and comparison to the behavior of mankind in order to establish moral and social norms. Once such norms had been established, all individual behavior was judged in relation to them. The technique is similar to that of modern scientific historians and sociologists. But while admirable for certain purposes, the purely rational attitude and technique was not long in revealing serious limitations. The tendency to look at the individual always in relation to social standards and needs often caused the classicist to overlook the individual in relation to his own needs, which may or may not conform with those of contemporary society. Secondly, the establishment of norms as a guide to thought was a gross over-simplification which led to the acceptance of solutions of problems without probing the deeper springs which govern human behavior. All too often, the normal facts of the contemporary environment were accepted with too little investigation as unalterable truths.<sup>1</sup> The

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<sup>1</sup> This in fact is the case of the "freedom" enjoyed by the noble savage. Eighteenth century thinkers, relying upon Montaigne, took it for granted. It remained for the romantics, who wished to believe in the existence of a free society, to discover for themselves that the Indians were even less free from social bondage than were Euro-  
peans.

result in the majority of individuals who adopted the rationalist outlook was a debased rationalism--little more than a coarse hedonism coupled with a worship of material prosperity. Form became a fetish, and the "norms" of classicism were as rigidly imposed as ever dogma and feudalism had been by the medieval Church and State.

Such a movement, which ignores or suppressed an area of human experience, could not take place without arousing individuals to express, consciously or unconsciously, their dissatisfaction. Classicism had become to some minds quite as much a tyrant as had medievalism been to the rationalists in the past. Just as Reason had been turned against the upholders of Revelation and Authority, so now the disaffected turned the weapons of Reason against Reason's self. They agreed with the rationalist that the state of nature was the happiest state of mankind, but they differed with him as to the basis of that state. It did not seem to them that the state of nature was basically rational. Reason, they argued, is not basic; for, underlying Reason, are human feelings and emotions. These must by their primary nature be basic, and Reason may or may not follow them. Let every man, therefore, but follow the urges of his own nature: the result will be personal happiness for the individual and a golden age for

society. In the new romanticism, the noble savage was thought of in the beginning as in the old classicism as an individual untrammelled and free from social restrictions. European customs still suffered by comparison, but no longer because they were less rational: instead because they stifled the natural feelings and instincts of men. This was in essence the view of Jean Jacques Rousseau, the "founder of modern romanticism", and his views are reflected in many of the late eighteenth century writings about the Indians. The child of nature is the child of nature still, but his life is now happy because his behavior and his worship spring directly from his heart. The Indian's physical enjoyment, his games, his dancing, singing, family affection, the beauty of the scenery which surrounds him and its effect upon making nobler and more sensitive his feeling and character all come in for praise, while the worth of the European's superior intellectual attainment is played down.

The following examples indicate a criticism of European religion based quite as much upon feeling and emotion as upon Reason--they are examples of the new religious feeling which has crept into Deism with Rousseau. Henry MacKenzie has Annesley listen to an Indian sage speak of religion:

"You have sometimes told me of your countryman's account of a land of souls; but you were a young man when you came among us; and the cunning among them may have deceived you; for the children of the French king call themselves after the same God as the English do; yet their discourses concerning Him cannot be true, because they are opposite to one another. Each says that God will burn the others with fire; which could not happen if both were his children. Besides, neither of them act as the sons of truth, but as the sons of deceit. They say their God heareth all things, yet do they break the promises which they have called upon him to hear; but we know that the spirit within us listeneth, and what we have said in his hearing, that we do. If in another country the soul liveth, this witness shall live with it; whom it hath here reproached, it shall there disquiet; whom it hath here honoured, it shall there reward. Live, therefore, my son, as your father hath lived; and die, as he dieth, fearless of death.' With such sentiments the old man resigned his breath, and I blushed for the life of Christians while I heard them."<sup>2</sup>

Although reason is used throughout this passage, it is subordinate to feeling. An obvious attempt is made by the author to use the dying Indian to "move" the reader, and the emphasis has shifted from the European religion, to be satirized and altered, to the feelings and beliefs of the Indians themselves. A similar change may be noted in the following passage from Crèvecoeur:

"If they do not fear God according to the tenets of any one seminary, they shall learn to worship him upon the broad scale of nature. The Supreme Being does not reside in peculiar churches or communities. He is equally the great Manitou of the woods and of the plains; and even in the

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<sup>2</sup> MacKENZIE, H., op. cit., pp.185-186.

"gloom, the obscurity of those very woods, his justice may be as well understood and felt as in the most sumptuous temples. Each worship with us hath, you know, its peculiar political tendency; there it has none but to inspire gratitude and truth: their tender minds shall receive no other idea of the Supreme Being, than that of the father of all men, who requires nothing more of us than what tends to make each other happy. We shall say with them, Soungwaneha, esa caurounkyawga, nughwonashauza meattawek, hesalonga,--Our Father, be thy will done in earth as it is in great heaven."<sup>3</sup>

The anti-intellectualism which is one facet of the romantic reaction against classicism also found expression in the early romanticists' reaction to the noble savage. Crèvecoeur's outburst:

"What system of philosophy can give us so many necessary qualifications for happiness?"<sup>4</sup>

is echoed by the arguments of the hero in Bage's Hermesprung

"Nature in her more simple modes, is unable to furnish a rich European with a due portion of pleasurable sensations. He is obliged to have recourse to masses of inert matter, which he causes to be converted into a million of forms, far the greatest part solely to feed that incurable craving known by the name of vanity. All the arts are employed to amuse him, and expel the tedium vitae, acquired by the stimulus of pleasure being used till it will stimulate no more; and all the arts are insufficient. Of this disease, with which you are here so terribly afflicted, the native Americans know nothing. When war and hunting no more require their exertions, they rest in peace. After satisfying their more immediate needs of nature, they dance, they play;--weary of this, they bask in the sun, and sing. If enjoyment of existence be happiness, they seem to possess it; not indeed so high raised as yours sometimes, but more continued, and more uninterrupted."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> CREVECOEUR, H.St.J., op. cit., pp.227-228.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p.216.

<sup>5</sup> BAGE, R., op. cit., Vol. 2, p.21.

Hermsprong goes on to counter the argument that the Indians are illiterate and hence deprived of the higher pleasures which reading bestows with the following argument:

"...is reading all pleasure? or is it pleasure at all? Are there not among you, who read because they have nothing else to do? or pass without absolute inaction, those hours which must be endured before the wonted hours of pleasure arrive? Or, is reading all profit? Is knowledge the sure result? Your contradictions, disputations, eternal as it would seem, in politics, in religion, even in philosophy, are they not calculated rather to confound than to enlighten the understanding? Your infinite variety, does it not tend to render you superficial? And was it not justly said by your late great novelist, every man now has a mouthful of learning, but nobody a bellyful? In variety of knowledge, the aborigines of America may be your inferiors."<sup>6</sup> What they do know, perhaps they know better."

while William Richardson, Professor of the Humanities at Glasgow University, in a prose tale, The Indians (1781), wholeheartedly endorses the life of the savage as preferable to the learning of Europe:

"'Away with your culture and refinement,' said Ononthio, 'Do they invigorate the soul, and render you intrepid? Do they enable you to despise pain and acquiesce in the will of heaven? Do they inspire you with patience, resignation and fortitude? No! They unnerve the soul. They render you feeble, plaintive and unhappy. Do they give health and firmness? Do they enable you to restrain and subdue your appetites? No! They promote intemperance and mental anarchy. They give loose reins to disorder. The parents of discontent and disease! Away with your culture and refinement! Do they better the heart or improve the affections? The heart despises them.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., Vol. 2, pp.22-23.

"Her affections arise spontaneous. They require no culture. They bloom unbidden. They are essential to our existence, and nature hath not abandoned them to our caprice. All our affections as we receive them from nature are lively and full of vigour. By refinement we are enfeebled. How exquisite the sensations of youth! In the early seasons of life ye are moved with every tale of distress, and mingle tears of sympathy with every sufferer. Ye are then incapable of perfidy, and hold vice in abhorrence. In time ye grow callous; ye become refined; your feelings are extinguished: ye scoff at benevolence, and reckon friendship a dream. Ye become unjust and perfidious; the slaves of avarice and ambition; the prey of envy, of malice and revenge. Away with your refinement! enjoy the freedom and simplicity of nature. Be guiltless--Be an Indian."<sup>7</sup>

and Mrs. Grant of Laggan, whose childhood had been passed on the banks of the Mohawk in America, wrote in An Ode: on Reading One Upon the Same Subject by Professor Richardson of Glasgow:

"When by the Mohawks wild sequester'd stream  
Indignant grief my labouring heart opprest.  
Yes! there those generous tribes I saw,  
Who, sway'd alone by nature's law,  
The unerring paths of rectitude pursue;  
Who cherish friendship's holy flame,  
And valour's greenest laurel claim,  
Of rigid faith inexorably true.

Saw them reluctant yield their poplar groves,  
And flow'ry vales in wild luxuriance gay;  
Forsake their fame, their friendship, and their loves  
When sunk beneath the European sway:  
While peace and joy, with all their smiling train  
Recede before th'insatiate lust of gain."<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> RICHARDSON, W., The Indians, a Tale, pp.194-195.

<sup>8</sup> GRANT, Mrs. of Laggan, An Ode: on Reading One Upon the Same Subject by Professor Richardson of Glasgow.

verses typical of the new romanticism in which Feeling rather than Reason is used to appeal to the reader.

But more far-reaching than the substitution of Feeling for Reason in the treatment of the concept of the noble savage was the change in technique which that substitution imposed. In classicism, reform was to be effected by rational comparison, in which attention was properly centred upon the faults of the society to be reformed. In inducing reform by an appeal to Feeling this process is reversed and attention is concentrated upon the projected ideal. The classical method of comparing individual manners and behavior with social norms did not serve when dealing with the intuitive truths of romanticism, and in the finest classical forms the romanticists gained little success. The romanticist in his effort to focuss attention upon the individual and to compel judgment from that individual's standpoint rather than from the standpoint of society was faced with the problem that men and women normally judge all other human beings except themselves by social "norms." Only when, through great affection or strong fellow feeling they identify themselves with the characters, or in unusual circumstances for which few precedents exist, or in moments of physical and emotional crisis which so absorb the

beholders that social judgment is temporarily suspended in a feeling of identity--only in such instances as these can the truths of romanticism be revealed in the light which romanticism demands. Consequently, in presenting the noble savage, the romanticist was careful to invest him with sympathetic qualities, to depict him in moments of strong emotional and physical crisis, and above all, to make him real to the reader by depicting as authentically and graphically as possible his customs and surroundings; weaving by these means a three-fold chain of sympathy, excitement and curiosity about the reader in order that his case might obtain a hearing beyond the prejudices of contemporary social beliefs.

Classical writers in dealing with savages had been content to rely upon first principles, accepting with little question the authority of any established author whose views and beliefs had become a conventional norm. As the savage was used by them primarily as a contrast to the European society which they knew and treated in detail, lack of detailed knowledge of his life and habits was no handicap to them. To the romanticist, intent upon realizing his savage as a convincing ideal human being, such a lack of attention to detail was no longer possible. Consequently, the romanticist, when writing of the savage,

went to great pains to acquire detailed knowledge both of his customs and the setting in which he lived. Chateaubriand visited America and lived with the Indians. The poems of Bowles, Moore, Wordsworth, Campbell, Elliott, Montgomery and Southey, as the notes affixed to them show, are the products of detailed readings from first-hand accounts of the savages. Many of their poems merely record factual incidents, while the basic Indian hero of much of the most ambitious poetry relating to the savages was directly drawn, as internal references in the poetry show, from the account of an interview between the Pawnee chief, Logan, and Lord Dunmore, Governor of Virginia, which appeared in British papers in 1775. Nor is this surprising, for after the eighteenth century convention of shadowy virtues, it must have been stimulating indeed to hear such an utterance from a flesh-and-blood Indian as the following:

"I appeal to any white man to-day, if ever he entered Logan's cabin hungry, and he gave him not meat; if ever he came cold and naked, and he gave him not cloathing. During the course of the last long and bloody war, Logan remained idle in his tent, an advocate of peace: nay, such was my Love for the Whites, that those of my own country pointed at me as they passed by and said, 'Logan is the friend of White Men.' I had even thought to live with you, but for the injuries of one man, Colonel Cressop, the last spring, in cold blood, and unprovoked, cut off all the relations of Logan, not sparing even my women and children. There runs not a drop of my blood in the veins of any human creature. This called on me for revenge.--I have sought it.--I have killed many.--I have fully glutted my vengeance.

"For my country, I rejoice at the beams of peace.  
But do not harbour the thought that mine is the  
joy of fear; Logan never felt fear. He will not  
turn his heel to save his life. Who is there to  
mourn for Logan? Not one."<sup>9</sup>

The effect of a closer study of Indian customs and physical background upon romantic writers enabled them to portray for the first time in European literature the savages as convincing and sympathetic persons interesting in their own right. This gave a more enthusiastic reception to the concept of the noble savage which was linked with that of liberty. In the reaction against individual liberty which overtook romanticism after the excesses of the French Revolution, the concept of the noble savage likewise suffered. A perfect illustration of this process may be found in the poetry of William Wordsworth. In his youth, Wordsworth linked the savage with liberty and rejoiced:

"Once, Man entirely free, alone and wild,  
Was blest as free--for he was Nature's child.  
He, all superior but his God disdained,  
Walked none restraining, and by none restrained,  
Confessed no law but what his reason taught,  
Did all he wished, and wished but what he ought."<sup>10</sup>

But Wordsworth's reaction to the French Revolution led him to distrust a state of society where men walked "none restraining and by none restrained," and to welcome the social restraints of orthodox tradition. It is not surprising, therefore, that in his mature judgment of

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<sup>9</sup> The Scots Magazine, 1775, Vol. XXXVII, p.158.

<sup>10</sup> WORDSWORTH, W., Descriptive Sketches.

Indian society, the noble savage became the ignoble savage. In The Excursion, the savage of Wordsworth's earlier imagination is contrasted with that of his later conviction. Thus the earlier concept:

"There Man abides,  
 Primeval Nature's child. A creature weak  
 In combination, (wherefore else driven back  
 So far, and of his old inheritance  
 So easily deprived?) but, for that cause  
 More dignified and stronger in himself;  
 Whether to act, judge, suffer, or enjoy.  
 True, the intelligence of social art  
 Hath o'erwhelmed his forefathers, and soon  
 Will sweep the remnant of his line away;  
 But contemplations, worthier, nobler far  
 Than her destructive energies, attend  
 His independence, when along the side  
 Of Mississippi, or that northern stream  
 That spreads into successive seas, he walks;  
 Pleased to perceive his own unshackled life,  
 And his innate capacities of soul  
 There imaged: or when, having gained the top  
 Of some commanding eminence, which yet  
 Intruder ne'er beheld, he thence surveys  
 Regions of wood and wide savannah, vast  
 Expanse of unappropriated earth,  
 With mind that sheds a light on what he sees;  
 Free as the sun, and lonely as the sun,  
 Pouring above his head its radiance down  
 Upon a living and rejoicing world."<sup>11</sup>

Such was the concept of the noble savage that led the Recluse when all else had failed to seek him in his native home, hoping to find there human happiness:

"But that pure archetype of human greatness  
 I found him not. There, in his stead, appeared  
 A creature, squalid, vengeful, and impure;  
 Remorseless, and submissive to no law.<sup>12</sup>  
 But superstitious fear and abject sloth."

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<sup>11</sup> WORDSWORTH, W., The Excursion, Book III.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

Other romantic writers abandoned the concept of the noble savage because a closer study of savage life dispelled the illusion of its freedom which was so dear to their hearts. The accounts of travellers and actual observation convinced them that the Indians, even more than the Europeans were cramped and inhibited as individuals through the tyranny of social beliefs and customs. In America, as in Europe, the natural seeds of good innate in the individual were stifled before they could reach their growth by social chains. Chateaubriand, who had seen the savages, did not agree with Rousseau, who had not, as to their superiority over the more civilized Europeans:

"...je ne suis point, comme M. Rousseau, un enthousiaste des sauvages; et, quoique j'aie peut-être autant à me plaindre de la société que ce philosophe avait à s'en louer, je ne crois point que la pure nature soit la plus belle chose du monde. Je l'ai toujours trouvée fort laid partout où j'ai eu occasion de la voir. Bien loin d'être d'opinion que l'homme qui pense soit un animal dépravé, je crois que c'est la pensée qui fait l'homme."<sup>13</sup>

As a result of their discovery that the precious liberty of the noble savage was a myth, many romantic writers were faced with the problem of reconciling an attractive, widely held concept which could be usefully employed to illustrate romantic ideas with their discovery that the concept was in reality not founded upon fact. As a result, there is little

<sup>13</sup> de CHATEAUBRIAND, F.A., Atala, Preface to 1st Ed., pp.11-12.

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reference to Indians in the works of many romantic writers. Some writers, however, found solutions by which the discrepancy between the ideal and the reality could be bridged. These solutions, of two kinds, the nobility of occasional circumstance, and the "Garden of Eden" legend, will be dealt with in the next two chapters.

CHAPTER VI--THE NOBILITY OF OCCASIONAL CIRCUMSTANCE

Even pessimists with regard to human nature are forced to admit that particular individuals on particular occasions have displayed unusual qualities of heroism and endurance, and that when these unusual achievements are detailed, they provoke both interest and admiration in their fellow men. It is also true that when a combination of circumstances places individuals into situations which are unusually tragic or pathetic, the recital of these circumstances is bound to provoke interest and pity in those who read and listen. The depiction of the heroic or pathetic crisis was a favourite device of romantic poets. Not only did it focuss attention upon the individual, but it also awakened those feelings of admiration, sympathy and pity so dear to the romantic temperament. Romanticism thrives upon crises when attention is naturally focussed upon the individual, but finds it difficult to depict convincingly the humdrum of existence when social considerations loom so much larger than individual wishes. Consequently, although in their greatest poems, the romantic poets wrestled with the problem of depicting all life in terms of a consistent romantic vision or philosophy, in a far greater number of poems--and this is particularly true of minor romantic poets--they confined themselves to the much easier task of depicting moments of heroic or pathetic crisis. All too often such efforts were little more than

the versifying of some story which they had encountered during their reading and which owed its interest to the most superficial aspect of romanticism, the desire for strangeness or novelty.

As the latter half of the eighteenth and the early part of the nineteenth centuries were periods when Englishmen were becoming intensely interested in out-of-the-way regions of the earth, it is not surprising that incidents extracted from travel narratives and histories of almost every known region found their way into verse, provided they possessed the qualities of arousing picturesque, pathetic or heroic interest. As might be expected, a good share of this occasional poetry related to the American Indian, and in a manner likely to perpetuate the legend of the noble savage. In these poems, however, Indians are not so much the subjects of the verse as excuses for the verse to be written. The thought in most cases seldom rises above the banal, but by putting it into a new dress, the authors hoped to obtain for it a fresh viewing. Bowles' Song of the American Indian, for instance, frankly attempts no more than to use the Indian as an excuse for indulging a taste for picturesque natural description. The temper of the poem never rises above the following lines:

"Sometimes thou shalt pause to hear  
 The beauteous Cardinal sing clear;  
 Where hoary oaks, by time decayed,  
 Nod in the deep wood's pathless glade;  
 And the sun, with bursting ray,  
 Quivers on the branches gray.  
 By the river's craggy banks,  
 O'erhung with stately cypress ranks,  
 Where the bush-bee hums his song,  
 The trim canoe shall glance along."<sup>1</sup>

The five songs dealing with the Indians written by Robert Southey in his youth are attempts to win a fresh hearing for sentimental commonplaces about death and man's inhumanity to man by putting them in a new dress. In The Huron's Address to the Dead, the living brother recounts the virtues of the dead warrior and consoles himself with faith in his ultimate happy passage to the souls of the blessed:

"Safely may our brother pass!  
 Safely may he reach the fields,  
 Where the sound of the drum and the shell,  
 Shall be heard from the Country of Souls!  
 The Spirits of thy Sires  
 Shall come to welcome thee:  
 The God of the Dead in his Bower  
 Shall receive thee, and bid thee join  
 The dance of eternal joy.

Brother, we pay thee the rites of death,  
 Rest in thy Bower of Delight."<sup>2</sup>

There is much more feeling in Southey's second song, The Peruvian's Dirge over the Body of his Father. In this poem, the death of a slave gave Southey a splendid opportunity to praise the pristine freedom and communism of the

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1 BOWLES, W.L., Song of the American Indian.

2 SOUTHEY, R., The Huron's Address to the Dead.

noble savage before the white man came:

"Wretched, my Father, thy life!  
 Wretched the life of the slave!  
 All day for another he toils;  
 Overweared at night he lies down,  
 And dreams of the freedom that he once enjoy'd.  
 Thou wert blest in the days of thy youth,  
 My Father! for then thou wert free.  
 In the fields of the nation thy hand  
 Bore its part of the general task;  
 And when with the song and the dance,  
 Ye brought the harvest home,  
 As all in the labour had shared,  
 So justly they shared in the fruits."<sup>3</sup>

Likewise in this poem is the natural religion of the savage contrasted with the machinations of priestcraft:<sup>4</sup>

"My Father, rest in peace!  
 Rest with the dust of thy Sires!  
 They placed their Cross in thy dying grasp;  
 They bore thee to their burial-place,  
 And over thy breathless frame  
 Their bloody and merciless Priest  
 Mumbled his magic hastily.  
 Oh! could thy bones be at peace  
 In the field where the Strangers are laid?...  
 Alone, in danger and in pain,  
 My Father, I bring thee here:  
 So may our God, in reward,  
 Allow me one faithful friend  
 To lay me beside thee when I am released!  
 So may he summon me soon.  
 That my Spirit may join thee there,  
 Where the strangers never shall come!"<sup>5</sup>

The Song of the Araucans during a Thunder Storm is a war song in which the Indians fancy that the souls of their ancestors ride on the storm to encourage their descendants to victory over the white men who had robbed them of their

<sup>3</sup> SOUTHEY, R., The Peruvian's Dirge over the Body of His Father.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Southey's mature views as stated in Chapter VII.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

rightful heritage by deceit and force.

The Song of the Chikkasah Widow and The Old Chikkasah to his Grandson deal with crises in Indian grief in which revenge is justified as an act showing love and appreciation of the dead. These poems, particularly The Peruvian's Dirge over the Body of his Father, are interesting as examples of the manner in which the pathos naturally connected with the relations of the Indians to the white men was used by the then radical Southey to support his European political and religious views. They have, however, no great literary merit.

Thomas Moore's Song of the Evil Spirit and The Snow Spirit are purely decorative and musical in their appeal. Moore, in America, as elsewhere, was able to turn the anecdotes and legends which he picked up into song. There is something more than song, however, in his ballad, The Lake of the Dismal Swamp, a pathetic tale of an Indian brave who had lost his mind over the death of a maiden and had gone to the Dismal Swamp in search of her. This ballad is simply, but beautifully written, with a hint of the supernatural at its close:

"Far he follow'd the meteor spark,  
The wind was high and the clouds were dark,  
And the boat return'd no more.

But oft, from the Indian hunter's camp,  
This lover and maid so true

"Are seen at the hour of midnight damp,  
To cross the Lake by a fire-fly lamp,  
And paddle their white canoe!"<sup>6</sup>

In The American Forest Girl, Mrs. Hemans merely recasted into verse the dramatic scene in which Pocahontas saves the life of Captain John Smith. The Indian Woman's Death Song illustrates the strength of feminine love and the depth of Indian character in words inspired by an anecdote in Long's Expedition to the Source of the Saint Petersburg River, which describes how an Indian woman, hearing of her husband's death, deliberately let her canoe drift over a cataract, singing a death chant as she went to join him in the land of souls. The Indian with his Dead Child illustrates both the Indian's deep-rooted family affection and the injustice of the White Man. It is based upon the following anecdote from Tudor's Eastern States of America:

"An Indian, who had established himself in a township of Maine, feeling indignantly the want of sympathy evinced towards him by the white inhabitants, particularly on the death of his only child, gave up his farm soon afterwards, dug up the body of his child, and carried it with him two hundred miles through the forest to join the Canadian Indians."<sup>7</sup>

a theme well calculated to combine pathos with a high concept of the savage. The following are characteristic extracts:

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<sup>6</sup> MOORE, T., The Lake of the Dismal Swamp.

<sup>7</sup> Quoted by Mrs. Hemans in explanation of the poem.

"In the silence of the midnight  
 I journey with my dead:  
 In the darkness of the forest-boughs  
 A lonely path I tread.

But my heart is high and fearless,  
 As by mighty wings upborne;  
 The mountain eagle hath not plumes  
 So strong as Love and Scorn.

I have raised thee from the grave-sod  
 By the white man's path defiled;  
 On to th'ancestral wilderness,  
 I bear thy dust, my child!

I have asked the ancient deserts  
 To give my dead a place,  
 Where the stately footsteps of the free  
 Alone should leave a trace...

I have left the spoiler's dwellings,  
 For evermore, behind:  
 Unmingled with their household sounds  
 For me shall sweep the wind.

Alone, amidst their hearth-fires,  
 I watched my child's decay,  
 Uncheered, I saw the spirit-light  
 From his young eyes fade away.

When his head sank on my bosom,  
 When the death-sleep o'er him fell,  
 Was there one to say, 'A friend is near?'  
 There was none!--pale race, farewell!...

I bear thee unto burial  
 With the mighty hunters gone;  
 I shall hear thee in the forest-breeze,  
 Thou wilt speak of joy, my son!

In the silence of the midnight  
 I journey with the dead;  
 But my heart is strong, my step is fleet,  
 My father's path I tread."<sup>8</sup>

The effect in this poem is marred by the shrillness of its grief: in it one hears not the stoicism of the savage but the nervous hysteric of a European woman. The truth of this statement may be realized through a comparison with Wordsworth's The Complaint of a Forsaken Indian Woman.

Wordsworth's theme is taken from Hearne's Journey from Hudson's Bay to the Northern Ocean. A woman, unable because of sickness to keep up with a hunting band, has persuaded her companions to leave her behind them to perish in the snow. After their departure, she feels her loneliness; the thought of her child returns, and she wishes that she had not requested to have been left behind so soon. A theme in which individual desire conflicted with social obligation was congenial to a Wordsworth who was undergoing at the time of writing a phase in his development which produced his Ode to Duty. The desire of the individual is strikingly portrayed:

"Alas! ye might have dragg'd me on  
 Another day, a single one!  
 Too soon I yielded to despair;  
 Why did ye listen to my prayer?  
 When ye were gone my limbs were stronger,  
 And oh how grievously I rue,  
 That, afterwards, a little longer,  
 My friends, I did not follow you!  
 For strong and without pain I lay,  
 My friends, when ye were gone away."<sup>9</sup>

There is deep and tender pathos in the verse as she relates her thoughts of her child:

<sup>9</sup> WORDSWORTH, W., The Complaint of a Forsaken Indian Woman.

"When from my arms my babe they took,  
 On me how strangely did he look!  
 Through his whole body something ran;  
 A most strange working did I see;  
 As if he strove to be a man  
 That he might pull the sledge for me."<sup>10</sup>

The essence of regret is conveyed by this simple statement:

"Too soon, my friends, ye went away:  
 For I had many things to say."<sup>11</sup>

In the final stanza, longing and hopelessness combine to form a poignant contrast, expressed with typical Wordsworthian restraint:

"I'll follow you across the snow;  
 Ye travel heavily and slow;  
 In spite of all my weary pain,  
 I'll look upon your tents again.--  
 My fire is dead, and snowy white  
 The water which beside it stood;  
 The Wolf has come for me tonight,  
 And he has stolen away my food.  
 For ever left alone am I,  
 Then wherefore shall I fear to die."<sup>12</sup>

In this poem, Wordsworth has provided a realistic analysis of the psychological process which govern the relations between the individual and society following a crisis. The Indian woman recognizes and makes the sacrifice which clearly is her social duty, but, having made that sacrifice, in the anti-climax, the period of painful waiting which follows, her individualism reasserts itself to struggle on in a vain attempt to overcome and surmount the sacrifice she has made. Her behavior is revealed as tender, noble and simple. There

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10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.

is in this poem no trace at all of:

"...the creature, squalid, vengeful and impure,  
Remorseless, and submissive to no law  
But superstitious fear, and abject sloth."

encountered by the Recluse in The Excursion, written many years later.

An unpublished poem, Anacaona, composed by Alfred Tennyson during his residence at Cambridge between 1828 and 1831, provides the final example of the occasional use of the concept of the noble savage in romantic poetry. In this poem, Tennyson has drawn upon Washington Irving's description of the Indian princess, Anacaona of Xaraguay, the White Man's friend, and her cruel betrayal, as recorded in The Life and Voyages of Columbus. Tennyson has recaptured the spirit of Irving's narrative, giving a picture of the exotic beauty combined with the idyllic innocence of Hispaniola when the Spaniards landed:

"A dark Indian maiden,  
Warbling in the bloom'd liana,  
Stepping lightly, flower-laden,  
By the crimson-eyed anana,  
Wantoning in orange groves,  
Naked, and dark-limb'd, and gay,  
Bathing in the slumbrous coves,  
Of sunbright Xaraguay,  
Who was so happy as Anacaona,  
The beauty of Espagnola,  
The golden flower of Hayti?

"All her loving childhood  
Breezes from the palm and canna  
Fann'd this queen of the green wildwood,  
Lady of the green Savannah;

"All day long with laughing eyes,  
 Dancing by a palmy bay,  
 In the wooded paradise,  
 The cedar-wooded paradise  
 Of still Xaraguay;  
 None were so happy as Anacaona,  
 The beauty of Espagnola,  
 The golden flower of Hayti!

In the purple island,  
 Crown'd with garlands of cinchona,  
 Lady over wood and highland,  
 The Indian queen, Anacaona,  
 Dancing on the blossomy plain  
 To a woodland melody:  
 Playing with the scarlet crane,  
 Beneath the papao tree!  
 Happy, happy was Anacaona,  
 The beauty of Espagnola,  
 The golden flower of Hayti!"<sup>13</sup>

In the following stanzas Tennyson also captured the spirit in which the Indians welcomed the first White Men to reach their shores, while the closing lines convey with their sinister hint more effectually than would a bare recital the ultimate cruelty of the betrayal:

"The white man's white sail, bringing  
 To happy Hayti the new-comer,  
 Over the dark sea-marge springing,  
 Floated in the silent summer:  
 Then she brought the guava fruit,  
 With her maidens to the bay;  
 She gave them the yuccaroot,  
 Maizebread and the yuccaroot,  
 Of sweet Xaraguay;  
 Happy, happy Anacaona,  
 The beauty of Espagnola,  
 The golden flower of Hayti!

Naked, without fear, moving  
 To her Areyto's mellow ditty,  
 Waving a palm branch, wondering, loving,  
 Carolling, 'Happy, happy Hayti!'

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13 HALLAM, Lord TENNYSON, Tennyson, a Memoir, Vol. I, p.56.

"She gave the white men welcome all,  
 With her damsels by the bay;  
 For they were fair-faced and tall,  
 They were more fair-faced and tall  
 Than the men of Xaraguay,  
 And they smiled on Anacaona,  
 The beauty of Espagnola,  
 The golden flower of Hayti!

Following her wild carol  
 She led them down the pleasant places,  
 For they were kingly in apparel,  
 Loftily stepping with fair faces,  
 But never more upon the shore  
 Dancing at the break of day  
 In the deep wood no more--  
 By the deep sea no more,--  
 No more in Xaraguay  
 Wander'd happy Anacaona,  
 The beauty of Espagnola,  
 The golden flower of Hayti!"<sup>14</sup>

As the examples given in this chapter have shown, many English romantic poets portrayed the savages in occasional poems as objects of admiration or sympathy. Such poems, however, were too short to reveal a philosophy and appeared too infrequently to affect public opinion regarding the nature of the savage. All too often, they were little more than opportunities to write graceful poetic exercises. With the exception of The Complaint of a Forsaken Indian Woman, they are little more than the froth that rose to the surface of romanticism, and show that the traditional eighteenth century concept of the noble savage still had power to exercise the poetic fancy of English authors and readers in their

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

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lighter moments. More serious efforts, however, were made to reconcile the concept of the noble savage, as modified by discovery of his real nature, with the tenets of romantic individualism. These will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VII--THE "GARDEN OF EDEN", THE SOCIAL REBEL, AND  
THE NOBLE SAVAGE.

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As the extract in Chapter V, quoted from the Preface to Atala shows, Chateaubriand did not agree with the concept of the savage as publicized by Rousseau; nor did he in his romance, Atala (1801), make out a case for the special virtue of Indian society. The peace and happiness of the semi-civilized Christian Indians under Father Aubry's guidance were contrasted with the violence, suspicion and cruelty of existence with the warring pagan tribes. In this respect Chateaubriand's attitude is one with that of the English romantics, Southey, Campbell, Bowles and Wordsworth, with regard to the Indians. But although many romantics despaired of finding virtue in any society of human beings, they did not lose faith in the possibility of a state of nature existing under particular circumstances in individual cases. Only by a return to something like the Garden of Eden could such a state of nature exist, and many romantic writers made the journey thither in their imagination. If physically isolated or spiritually alienated from the society in which one lives, an individual is naturally spared that society's vices; at the same time, if his isolation is shared by a companion, preferably of the opposite sex, mutual contact will stimulate the free and unrestrained growth of the natural feelings and affections. Two lovers cut off from the world or joined in mutual rebellion against society

became a favourite romantic picture of natural happiness. And where better than among the Indians of America could this paradise be portrayed? The immense forests and the hazards of a warlike and wandering life provided both a picturesque background and ample opportunity for isolation, while in the continual conflict between native and white cultures in America, the romantic artist was given ample scope for studies in rebellion. In following this pattern, the concept of the noble savage was not lost but transferred from Indian society in general where it had existed in the age of classicism, to the Indian as an individual. A further consideration of Atala is fruitful in understanding exactly how this transfer took place, and its effects; for this romance set the pattern for much of the English poetry with regard to the Indians which followed.

In Atala the romantic version of the tragedy of the Garden of Eden is re-enacted. Two free and natural individuals, a man and a woman, are offered a life of happiness together in the wilderness, but the woman has swallowed the apple of social obligation in its most beneficent and holy disguise, and the result is tragedy. Chactas, the young Indian hero, is partly a product of years of civilized living under the tutelage of his white foster-father, Lopez. He has, however, retained his savage identity and rejected the religion and the vices of the white men. At the same

time he has kept apart from the Indians since childhood and has had no opportunity to become a slave to their customs and vices. Therefore, when he sets out to rejoin his tribe, he is free to do his own will, having accepted no social organization. Atala, the heroine, is also free. The Christian beliefs received from her mother have set her apart from the other maidens of her tribe, while she in turn has had no contact with organized Christian society. The two children of nature meet and respond with love. They escape into the forest where, one would think, a life of natural happiness was open to both. But Atala is only seemingly free: in youthful ignorance she has accepted one social tie, and has at her dying mother's request vowed to remain a virgin. She now realizes the implications of her vow, and, torn between her natural feeling and the social obligation of her oath, she resolves the problem by swallowing poison.

It is ironic that the literary artist in Chateaubriand so obscured the opinions of the romantic philosopher that in Atala the reader is not impressed by the power of social institutions to come between the individual and his happiness, but rather by the characters of Chaetas and Atala, and by the impressive natural scenery against which they move. In his creation of character, Chateaubriand is aided by the very popularity of the notions with

regard to Indians which his Preface disclaims. Chactas' raptures, and the impulsive animal nature of his love could, one feels, only be accepted against the harmonious background of the forests of the Mississippi and the preconceived notions current regarding the freedom of the Indian nature. Even Atala's scrupulous adherence to her vow--which in a Christian community accustomed to the daily breaking of religious commandments would seem far-fetched--is rendered credible by virtue of the widely accepted belief in the fidelity of the Indian to his word.

It is improbable the Chateaubriand's readers discriminated sufficiently between the actions of Atala and Chactas and the normal behavior of the savage as popularly conceived. To them, Chactas and Atala were not the exceptions Chateaubriand intended, but types of the noble savage following the dictates of their hearts in the forests of America. If a conflict between desires occurred, a choice was made and accepted, even if that choice meant death. Civilized life is a life of compromises, of continual balancing of desires, of the surrender of principle to the external compulsion of social necessity. Consequently, members of a civilized society long for a life in which they can exercise uninhibited choice. This, as has been shown, has been the principle behind the classical development of

the concept of the noble savage in Europe since Montaigne's time. Chateaubriand's Atala, despite the expressly stated intention of its author to the contrary, only served to imprint more deeply the concept of the noble savage upon popular consciousness by giving body to and making flesh and blood of what had hitherto been the abstractions of satire and argument.

Robert Southey's A Tale of Paraguay was founded upon fact and intended as a tribute to the labours of the Jesuits in Paraguay. More significant than the thin vein of Christian fatalism which permeates the poem is the essentially romantic character of the treatment. Like Chateaubriand and with similar effect, Southey repeats the Garden of Eden legend in the forests of America. There are two generations imprisoned within his paradise, and tragedy strikes the brother and sister, children of the first pair, because these true children of nature are unable to adjust themselves to social living, even though that society is, as Southey believed, of the highest moral order.

Quiera and his wife, Monnema are the only survivors of an Indian tribe whom smallpox has destroyed. In consequence, they have obtained a freedom from social vices and a natural happiness:

"These occupations were gone by: the skill  
 Was useless now, which once had been her pride.  
 Content were they, when thirst impell'd to fill  
 The dry and hollow gourd from Mondai's side;  
 The river from its sluggish bed supplied  
 A draught for repetition all unmeet;  
 Howbeit the bodily want was satisfied;  
 No feverish pulse ensued, nor ireful heat,  
 Their days were undisturbed, their natural sleep was  
sweet.

Feasts and carousals, vanity and strife,  
 Could have no place for them in solitude  
 To break the tenor of their even life."<sup>1</sup>

After the birth of a son, all wishes to rejoin society  
 disappeared:

"For they had gain'd a happiness above  
 The state which in their native horde was known:  
 No outward causes were there here to move  
 Discord and alien thoughts; being thus alone  
 From all mankind, their hearts and their desires  
are one."<sup>2</sup>

The tyranny of marriage, born of social custom, disappeared  
 and natural love took its place:

"And reassuming in their hearts her sway  
 Benignant Nature made the burden light,  
 It was the Woman's pleasure to obey,  
 The Man's to ease her toil in all he might,  
 So each in serving each obtain'd the best delight.

And as connubial, so parental love,  
 Obey'd unerring Nature's order here,  
 For now no force of impious custom strove  
 Against her law..."<sup>3</sup>

They refuse to call their son from some fierce animal as had  
 been the tribal custom, but name him Yeruti, the dove, thus  
 symbolizing that the natural ruling motive of mankind is

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1 SOUTHEY, R., A Tale of Paraguay, Canto I, St. 24-26.

2 Ibid., Canto I, St. 35.

3 Ibid., Canto I, St. 37-38.



naturally trained intellects and hearts reject the superstitious religious lore of the Indians and accept their mother's recollections of the Jesuits and their religion. They long to enter into the fellowship of Christians.

This desire is granted, for they are discovered by Dobrizhoffer and taken to the community of Christian Indians ruled over by the Jesuits. Southey paints a glowing picture of the happiness of this community and contrasts it with the greed and misery of the "civilized" European world:

"Thou who despisest so debased a fate,  
As in the pride of wisdom thou may'st call  
These meek submissive Indians' low estate,  
Look round the world, and see where over all  
Injurious passions hold mankind in thrall,  
How barbarous Force asserts a ruthless reign,  
Or Mammon, o'er his portion of the ball,  
Hath learned a baser empire to maintain,  
Mammon, the god of all who give their souls to gain.

Behold the fraudulent arts, the covert strife,  
The jarring interests that engross mankind:  
The low pursuits, the selfish aims of life;  
Studies that weary and contract the mind,  
That bring no joy, and leave no peace behind;  
And Death approaching to dissolve the spell!  
The immortal soul, which hath so long been blind,  
Recovers then clear sight, and sees too well  
The errors of its ways, when irretrievable.

Far happier the Guaranies' humble race,  
With whom in dutiful contentment wise,  
The gentle virtues had their dwelling-place.  
With them the dear domestic charities  
Sustained no blight from fortune: natural ties  
There suffer'd no divorcement, save alone  
That which in the course of nature might arise;  
No artificial wants and ills were known;  
But there they dwelt as if the world were all their own."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., Canto IV, St. 12-14.

But even the Christian paradise was too difficult for the children of nature educated in isolation. The task of adjustment was too much for them to bear:

"All thoughts and occupations to commute,  
 To change their air, their water, and their food,  
 And those old habits suddenly uproot  
 Conform'd to which the vital powers pursued  
 Their function, such mutation is too rude  
 For man's fine frame unshaken to sustain.  
 And these poor children of the solitude  
 Began ere long to pay the bitter pain  
 That their new way of life brought with it in its train."<sup>7</sup>

First the mother, then the daughter, died. The boy, accustomed to express fully his natural affection, had now no other resource but the fulness of grief--from that grief he too died. But to the Christian romantic, Southey, the death of the three children of nature became triumph. Their souls had been saved to return spotless to their Maker. Moreover, their natural virtue, faith, and pious resignation to death had made a profound spiritual impression upon the community and upon the Jesuits.

Southey worked for many years over A Tale of Paraguay. The poem embodied the substance of his earlier Pantisocratic dream, and by a happy modification of the Garden of Eden legend he was able to reconcile in it the concept of the noble savage with his own knowledge of the customs of the Indian tribes. He regarded it highly among his works--a judgment which posterity has not confirmed. Nevertheless,

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., Canto IV, St. 28.

the poem is a perfect illustration of the manner in which romantic writers, while rejecting the concept of the noble savage when applied socially, did not hesitate to apply the same concept to individual Indians in individual circumstances.

Nowhere is the Garden of Eden in America better painted than in Wordsworth's Ruth. Here a youth, although white, is garbed as an Indian:

"A military casque he wore  
With splendid feathers dress'd;  
He brought them from the Cherokees;  
The feathers nodded in the breeze,  
And made a gallant crest."<sup>8</sup>

and the life which he portrayed so alluringly to Ruth is in picturesque language essentially the wilderness life of the American Indian surrounded by gorgeous landscape and invested with all the attraction of social freedom so dear to the Romantic's heart:

"He told of girls, a happy rout!  
Who quit their fold with dance and shout,  
Their pleasant Indian town,  
To gather strawberries all day long;  
Returning with a choral song  
When daylight is gone down.

He spake of plants divine and strange  
That every hour their blossoms change,  
Ten thousand lovely hues!  
With budding, fading, faded flowers  
They stand, the wonder of the bowers,  
From morn to evening dews.

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<sup>8</sup> WORDSWORTH, W., Ruth.

"He told of the magnolia spread  
 High as a cloud, high over head!  
 The cypress and her spire,--  
 Of flowers that with one scarlet gleam  
 Cover a hundred leagues, and seem  
 To set the hills on fire.

The youth of green savannas spake,  
 And many an endless, endless lake,  
 With all its fairy crowds  
 Of islands that together lie  
 As quietly as spots of sky  
 Among the evening clouds.

And then he said, 'How sweet it were  
 A fisher or a hunter there,  
 A gard'ner in the shade,  
 Still wandering with an easy mind  
 To build a household fire, and find  
 A home in every glade!

What days and what sweet years! Ah me!  
 Our life were life indeed, with thee  
 So pass'd in quiet bliss,  
 And all the while,' said he, 'to know  
 That we were in a world of woe,  
 On such an earth as this.'

And then he sometimes interwove  
 Dear thoughts about a father's love!  
 'For there,' said he, 'are spun  
 Around the heart such tender ties  
 That our own children to our eyes  
 Are dearer than the sun.

Sweet Ruth! and could you go with me,  
 My helpmate in the wood to be,  
 Our shed at night to rear;  
 Or run, my own adopted bride,  
 A sylvan huntress at my side,  
 And drive the flying deer!"<sup>9</sup>

These lines epitomize the idyllic concept of the free hunting life of the Indians and reveal the secret of their attraction to romantic writers, an attraction doubly deep because it is conceived to exist "in a world

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

of woe on such an earth as this."

In Ruth, as in the other poems discussed, the Garden of Eden is not obtained. The failure this time is due to the fact that the youth is only partly a noble savage. He has imbibed from the environment and his experiences among the Indians the sense of individual freedom and the sensuous imagination credited to the savages; he has not, however, learned their self-discipline, nor has he abandoned the vices of the White Men. He is a hybrid of conflicting loyalties which lead to a lack of settle purpose. As a result, he vacillates in his behavior and finally abandons Ruth whom he had persuaded to share the wilderness life with him.

The problem of conflicting loyalties takes an even more important role in the remaining poems to be discussed in this chapter. Thomas Campbell's Gertrude of Wyoming (1809) is another example of the Garden of Eden in America. Campbell, it is true, makes the inhabitants of his Transatlantic paradise white. Moreover, Indians in general are painted as bloodthirsty, rude, and warlike, and he has an Indian band led by the Mohawk chieftain, Brandt,<sup>10</sup> bring his idyll to a tragic close. Nevertheless, Campbell had by no means purged his mind of many of the elements of the concept of

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<sup>10</sup> The Massacre of Wyoming was not perpetrated by Indians under Brandt but by white Loyalists led by Col. Butler.

the noble savage. Henry and Gertrude in their three months of married happiness pretend to be an Indian warrior and his bride:

"Three little moons, how short! amidst the grove  
And pastoral savannas they consume!  
While she, beside her buskin'd youth to rove,  
Delights, in fancifully wild costume,  
Her lovely brow to shade with Indian plume;  
And forth in hunter-seeming vest they fare;  
But not to chase the deer in forest gloom,  
'Tis but the breath of heaven--the blessed air--  
And interchange of hearts unknown, unseen to share."<sup>11</sup>

Nor is Campbell less reluctant than Chateaubriand or Southey to transfer the concept of the noble savage to an individual Indian. Albert, Henry and Gertrude are mere shadowy personifications of abstract virtues, and it is difficult to feel with them in their misfortunes. Not so, however, the aged Oneida warrior, Outalassi. Campbell has here created a figure who takes deepest possession of the reader's imagination. He is the incarnation of the noble savage of literary tradition, an ancestor of Chingachgook and Uncas:

"As monumental bronze unchanged his look;  
A soul that pity touched but never shook;  
Trained from his tree-rocked cradle to his bier  
The fierce extreme of good and ill to brook  
Impassive--fearing but the shame of fear--  
A stoic of the woods--a man without a tear."<sup>12</sup>

Thus the outer man, but underneath a shy tenderness combined with a wistful loneliness best revealed in the song in which

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<sup>11</sup> CAMPBELL, T., *Gertrude of Wyoming*. Part II, St. II.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, Part I, St. XXIII.

he takes farewell of the boy, Henry, whom he has restored to the white people in consequence of a promise made to the boy's dying mother--a song which, as Campbell expressed it, "true to nature's fervid feelings ran." After the song, he turns and vanishes into the forest, lonely yet free, self-reliant and strong, "an eagle of the wilderness."

In the character of Outalassi the note of conflicting loyalty and of rebellion against his own society is struck. Outalassi allows his feelings of friendship for the whites to overcome his tribal loyalty. In retribution, he suffers the loss of all his blood-kindred:

"Scorning to wield the hatchet for his bribe,  
 'Gainst Brandt himself I went to battle forth:  
 Accursed Brandt! he left of all my tribe  
 Nor man, nor child, nor thing of living birth:  
 No! not the dog that watch'd my household hearth,  
 Escaped that night of blood, upon our plains!  
 All perished!--I alone am left on earth!  
 To whom nor relative nor blood remains,  
 No!--not a kindred drop that runs in human veins!"<sup>13</sup>

His tragic sacrifice fails to save those whom he loves.

Albert and Gertrude are killed, and young Henry, his foster-son, throws himself upon the ground in an agony of grief and loss. The old Indian is shaken with mingled grief and joy. He feels his son's pain, for it has been his, but at the same time he realizes that henceforth he will be no longer alone. The tragedy has reunited foster-father and son: henceforth their ways will be together in the

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., Part III, St. XVII.

wilderness in a comradeship of revenge. Torn by feelings which cannot be denied expression, he bursts into song:

"Because I may not stain with grief  
The death-song of an Indian chief."<sup>14</sup>

The case of Outalassi illustrates a new use to which the concept of the noble savage was being increasingly put in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. The experience of conflicting loyalties on the part of many romantic writers torn between national patriotism and the to them more attractive political theories of their country's opponents at the time of the French Revolution led them to examine the conflict between Indian and White cultures in America in a new light. In still other writers, the struggle against Napoleon not only developed and strengthened the feeling of nationalism in England, but extended that feeling, teaching many Englishmen to sympathize with small nations and other races in their struggles against alien invaders. Both the conflict between loyalties on the part of individuals and the nationalistic sympathy is reflected in poems of the period dealing with the struggles between Indians and White Men in America. In Madoc (1805), Southey has his Welchmen chivalrously espouse the cause of Queen Erillyab and the Hoemen against the might of Aztlan; in A Tale of Paraguay, he castigates the treatment of the

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14 Ibid., Part III, St. XXXIX.

Guaranies by the Spaniards:

"Heart-hardened by the accursed lust of gain,  
O fatal thirst of gold! O foul reproach for Spain!"<sup>15</sup>

while, as the plan of his unfinished Oliver Newman, dealing with King Philip's War in New England, would indicate, one of its manifest intentions was to demonstrate that had the New Englanders enlarged their concept of Christianity, this bloody war need not have occurred. Bowles, in The Missionary of the Andes (1815), sees in the Napoleonic invasion of Spain a just retribution for the Spanish oppression of the Indians in America.

But in none of these poems can the issue be, as it was in Churchill's satire in the eighteenth century, a clear-cut one between Europeans, "fell invaders" on the one hand, and the Indians, "the virtuous and the brave," on the other; for with it now were blended two widely discordant concepts. The first of these is the romantic individualism which despairs of social virtue and delights in drawing individuals in isolation and rebellion against society; the second is the belief shared by Southey and Bowles in the superiority of Christianity over other religions, and the faith that Christianity, had it been applied fairly in the New World, would have brought ultimate happiness to the Indians and closed the cultural gap between the two races.

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<sup>15</sup> SOUTHEY, R., op. cit., Canto III, St. III.

When three such discordant concepts are united in a single story or poem, the author is faced with two great difficulties: how to achieve a solution which provides a unified effect in the reader's mind; and how to create character. Atala and A Tale of Paraguay have already revealed the first of these dangers. Both Chateaubriand and Southey combined a belief in the happiness of mankind in a pure state of nature with a faith in the virtues of social and traditional Christianity. Both beliefs appear to have been cherished and expressed with equal emotional conviction. As a result, the reader is never clear as to the ultimate intention of either work. In Atala, which state is Chateaubriand justifying, the state of nature or Christianity? Was the lover's paradise he described so glowingly a fool's paradise and the real paradise that of the soul after death? Likewise, in A Tale of Paraguay, which is the reader to take as desirable, the idyll of isolated natural happiness, or the no less idyllic description of a Christian community of Indians? Are the deaths of Yeruti and Mooma a confession of the failure of Christianity, or do they represent a Christian triumph? Their authors' solutions of these two conflicts by death with presumably compensation in the Hereafter may stand the test of theology, but to all who are engaged in the search for happiness in this world they are no solutions at all.

Difficulties as great stood in the way of creating sustained and unified character. As patriots fighting for their native land, the Indians appealed to the nationalist sympathies of English romantics to invest them with the traditional patriotic virtues and to show their invaders as cruel oppressors. On the other hand, the fact that these "patriots" worshipped the dark gods with cruel rites, whereas the "cruel oppressors" were Christians had to be taken into consideration. Moreover, the problem of the conflicting loyalties of the cultural renegade possessed a painful and absorbing personal interest to many romantic writers. One of the great technical triumphs of Robert Southey was that in Madoc and Oliver Newman he was able to resolve these difficulties and reduce these discordant concepts to something like a unified sustained expression of romantic philosophy.

In Madoc, by an imaginative reconstruction of history, Southey removed the conflict between the White Man's greed and the principles of the White Man's religion in dealing with the Indians. Madoc and his followers were not commercial-minded Europeans of the Renaissance but Christian knights of the Middle Ages. Moreover, they were men fleeing from the fratricidal strife and bloodshed of their own society in the hope of finding a land where it would be possible to practise Christian ideals of peace and love. Having sacrificed their dearest social ties to Christian ethics,

Madoc and his followers were in Southey's eyes the purest representatives of natural man; for to him the acceptance of Christianity is equated with the restoration of the virtues possessed by Adam and Eve before the Fall. Against these noble Christians are opposed the Hoeman and the Aztecs who are not free, but are bound in the chains of social custom as exemplified by a cruel and bloody religion, but who, as individuals, keep in their own breast that part of the natural virtues which Adam bequeathed to all men, a light which, in Southey's words, has never:

"...howe'er bedimmed,  
Wholly been quenched; still in the heart of man  
A feeling and an instinct it exists,  
His very nature's stamp and privilege."<sup>16</sup>

Welch intervention in America sets into action a tremendous struggle in the Indians whether to follow nature and yield to their individual feelings or to cling to the social customs of their fathers. On the one hand is the natural coincidence between the light of nature in their hearts and the truths of Christianity, a coincidence remarked by the noblest Aztec, Yehudthiton, upon hearing the Christian message:

"I asked of mine heart if it were so,  
And as he said, the living instinct there  
Answered, and own'd the truth."<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> SOUTHEY, R., Madoc, Part I, Book VIII.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., Part I, Book VIII.

On the other hand lay all the binding force of tradition--customs sanctioned by time-honoured habits of belief and obedience and enforced with all the severity of religious fear:

"...if we forego the rites  
Of our forefathers, if we wrong the gods  
Who give us timely sun and timely showers,  
Their wrath will be upon us; they will shut  
Their ears to prayers, and turn away the eyes  
Which watch for our well-doing, and withhold  
The hands dispensing our prosperity."<sup>18</sup>

At first the Welchmen in America achieve a quick and easy triumph for Christianity. Awed by their might in battle, grateful for the salvation of their king through Christian medicine, the Aztecas listen eagerly to the words of the blind priest, Cynetha, as he expounds the true religion. The native priests are confounded. Yuhidthiton, "chief of the chiefs of Aztlan," recognizes the truth of the new religion by its coincidence with "the living instinct" in his heart, and all the people acclaim it. The Welchmen, however, overestimate the power of the natural instinct in the individual breast when opposed by long established custom. They do not destroy the altars, the priesthood and the outer vestiges of the social error, but allow them to continue, hoping that as the people are drawn to "the proper influence of unexampled good," the vestiges of custom would wither away from neglect. The priests of the old

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., Part I, Book VIII.

religion "to save their craft" work upon the people's fears and win back their allegiance. In the war that follows, almost superhuman sacrifices are made by the Aztecas at the instigation of their priests but in vain. Finally, knowing they cannot dislodge the Christians, they emigrate to another land.

Within this plot generous and noble individuals among the Indians stand out in tragic circumstances. Chief among them is Malinal, brother of Yuhidthiton, who has accepted Christianity, and who alone of the Aztecas cleave to Madoc, realizing to the full the price of social separation:

"...and bearing, for that truth  
 Reproach and shame and scorn and obloquy,  
 In sorrow come I here, a banished man;  
 Here take, in sorrow, my abiding place,  
 Cut off from all my kin, from all old ties  
 Divorced; all dear familiar countenances  
 No longer to be present in my sight;  
 The very mother-language which I learnt,  
 A lisping baby on my mother's knees,  
 No more with sweet sounds to comfort me,  
 So be it!...."<sup>19</sup>

and the dignified Queen Erillyab whose loyalty to Madoc no danger can disturb, and young Lincoya also loyal, and Lincoya's sweetheart, Coatel, who pays for her devotion with her life.

The most tragic figure, however is Yuhidthiton himself, an individual who recognizes the truth, but who from love and loyalty to the society of which he is leader deliberately

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., Part II, Book XIII.

turns his back upon it to secure the perpetuity of tradition.

The very priests of the Hoemen and of Aztlan, outstanding in the service of an evil tradition, compel respect and pity for their devotion. Both Neolin and Tezozomoc, because they are willing to pay the ultimate sacrifice for their beliefs, wring from the reader an unwilling admiration. Nowhere in the epic is the strength of the barrier of custom that divides the two races better stated than in this speech of Neolin:

"Sons of the Ocean, why should we forsake  
The worship of our fathers? Ye obey  
The White Man's Maker; but to us was given  
A different skin and speech and land and law.  
The Snake-God understands the Red-Man's prayer,  
And knows his wants and loves him."<sup>20</sup>

In Madoc, Southey has given his version of the probable course of events had America been discovered by ideal Christians. Nowhere perhaps is his romantic pessimism and conservatism better displayed. The ideal Christian heroes have achieved a partial triumph: the Hoemen have been baptized, their fanes destroyed and the contaminating influence of their neighbours removed; but the triumph is far from complete as the large body of the Aztecas have migrated to perpetuate their corrupt customs in another land. More important still, the triumph achieved was not gained as the result of the conquest of custom by the superior moral force of natural virtue but by force of arms. It is easy to see

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., Part II, Book III.

that Southey is at heart convinced that the truth as exemplified in outstanding individuals who have themselves gone beyond social ties cannot of its own accord prevail against the corrupt allegiance men and women pay to a strongly organized society. The Garden of Eden which Madoc and his comrades searched for can never be obtained until one social truth coincident with natural truth predominates over the universe. This totalitarianism of truth is the moral lesson to be extracted from Madoc:

"Vain it is  
To sow the seed where noxious weeds and briars  
Must choke it in the growth."<sup>21</sup>

and although in the struggle, men and women on both sides display admirable individual qualities, true peace and happiness can never be attained until the struggle is finally ended.

Insofar as it relates to the relations between the Indians and the White Men, Oliver Newman repeats Southey's thesis that there is a natural instinct in the breast of the savage which will make him recognize and be conquered by Christian virtues of love and generosity. In this poem, however, the conflict is less sharp and a more optimistic view of human nature is taken than in Madoc. Oliver Newman, a clergyman in the reign of Charles II, has gone to America, partly to search for his regicide father, but principally to

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., Part II, Book II.

seek a sanctuary in the woods where alone among the Indians he fondly hopes to create a Christian paradise where the wars and vices of Europeans cannot penetrate:

"Visions of joy before his inward sight,  
Of regions yet by Englishmen unsought,  
And ancient woods, was that delightful dream,--  
The broad savannah, and the silver stream.  
Fair bowers were there, and gardens smiled,  
And harvests flourished in the wild;  
And, while he made Redeeming Love the theme,--  
Savage no longer now--  
The Indians stood around  
And drank salvation with the sound."<sup>22</sup>

At Cape Cod he is awakened from his dream by the sight of an Indian woman fettered with her two children. He is moved by her stoical endurance, but even more by her reproaches:

"Then frowning, as she raised her mournful eye,--  
'Bad Christian-man! bad Christian-man!' she said:  
And Oliver a sudden sense of shame  
Felt for the English and the Christian name."<sup>23</sup>

Despite the arguments of the inhabitants who believe that Indians are devils to be controlled by fear, Oliver buys the Indian woman and her children, hoping to try the effect of kindness upon them.

Southey never completed Oliver Newman, but his notes indicate the course his plot would have taken. Through these notes, it is clear that the kind treatment of Panya and her children by Oliver is the key incident in the poem. Through this action, Oliver wins an entrance into the

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<sup>22</sup> SOUTHEY, R., Oliver Newman, "Cape Cod".

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

Indian tribe to which they belong, where by the same kindness and truth he established himself in the trust and affection of the savages. By his personal influence, he is able to bring the war with the Sakonet tribe to a close. The New England government rewards him, and he marries, Annabelle, whom he has hopelessly and secretly loved. Although this marriage deters him from his missionary dream, he has so far succeeded as to win Pamyra and her children to Christianity and to prove to the sceptical New Englanders that in their religion they possessed a solution, which, if applied, was capable of dealing with the Indian menace.

In William Lisle Bowles' The Missionary of the Andes, the reader encounters familiar concepts: there is a natural paradise, a secluded valley in the Chilean Andes, to which Attacapac, an aged chief, has withdrawn to bring up virtuously his children, a boy, Lautero, and a girl, Olola. However, seven years before the action of the poem beings, this Garden of Eden has been invaded by the Spaniards who snatched his boy from him; and his daughter, the prop of his old age, had, immediately before the action of the poem, left him through hopeless love of a white man whom Attacapac had befriended. Attacapac forgot all other considerations in his own grief and echoed the words of Logan:

"When I descend to the cold grave alone  
Who shall be there to mourn for me?--Not one!"<sup>24</sup>

He is awakened from his grief by a messenger from his tribe who gives him tidings of the invasion of Chile by a Spanish Army under Valdivia, and he resolves to lead his countrymen in resisting the foe.

Meanwhile, his son, Lautaro, has been befriended by the Spanish commander, Valdivia, and has become the latter's most trusted servant. Lautaro has, moreover, become a Christian, the friend and follower of the good Anselmo, the "Missionary", whose ward he has married. He is thus tied by triple cords of gratitude, religion and love to the Spanish cause. But upon entering Chile, old memories return and old loyalties revive. Lautaro cannot decide what part to take in the forthcoming battle and withdraws with Anselmo apart from the contest. However, he sees an Indian warrior resembling his father struggling against odds and throws himself into the battle on the side of the Indians. The Spaniards are beaten; Valdivia is captured and slain; Lautaro is acclaimed and blessed by his dying father; to crown his joy, his wife and child are marvellously restored to him by the Indians who had made them prisoner, and the poem ends on a happy note with Anselmo expressing the pious wish the Spaniards themselves may, when invaded at home, give as good an account of themselves as the Indians had done on this occasion.

<sup>24</sup> BOWLES, W.L., The Missionary of the Andes, Canto First.

Despite its contemporary popularity and Byron's praise The Missionary of the Andes is a failure as a narrative poem. Both popularity and praise were due to the nationalistic nature of its theme at a time when Spain and England had just successfully resisted the arms of Napoleon. It is overloaded with mythological machinery which not only is an encumbrance to the narrative but gives a further air of unreality to the action. The sole dramatic interest lies in the internal struggle in Lautaro's breast between the old and the new allegiance, and this struggle is not given the development it deserves, being finally resolved by the merest coincidence. The subsidiary figures are stereotypes and drawn from recognizable literary sources: Attacamac is the conventional Indian sage; Olola, the betrayed Indian maiden, is a type of the natural woman, whose innocence knows no passion but love, and who dies of grief and shame when that love has been betrayed; Anselmo is the typical good priest who has already appeared before us in the pages of Chateaubriand and Southey with a similar personal history and in a similar role in the narrative; Zarinel, the minstrel, Olola's betrayer, who dies with a lock of her hair over his heart, is a cross between Marmion and the betrayer of Ruth in Wordsworth's poem of that name. Furthermore, the poem's patent efforts to justify the ways of God to man by an extension of cause and effect into the future are, like most

attempts of the kind, a manifest failure. It is true that Spain, the invader of Chili, was in turn invaded by France, but only a shallow moralist would call this divine justice. Two wrongs do not make a right in the eyes of man: how much less so should they do so in the eyes of God? Likewise the theory that by the death and suffering of thousands, God worked to enable His chosen, Lautaro and his mate, to reach a higher happiness may satisfy a Calvinist, but to most others it stamps the Deity as capricious, wasteful and cruel. What The Missionary of the Andes, in company with the other works cited in this chapter, does show, however, is that the concept of the noble savage had been radically changed in its application within a quarter of a century.

No longer was the Indian a simple child of nature, a constant lesson in manners, morals and straight-thinking to the more corrupt Europeans. The romantics had invested him with their own problems. He was now called upon to illustrate the individual's attempt at physical withdrawal from society, to illuminate the conflict between individual desires and social customs, and to outline the problem of the division of loyalty when nationalism and a sense of community impel in one direction while ideological predilections urge in another. With this change in its application, a decline in the use and importance of the concept of the noble savage was inevitable. His primary attraction had lain in the simplicity of his life, in his freedom from the

entanglements of social compulsion and the problem of choice. With these freedoms removed, the savage was reduced to the social condition of a European without enjoying his material advantages. Consequently, it is not strange that The Missionary of the Andes was the last ambitious work produced during the romantic period in English literature which dealt principally with the savages and enjoyed a considerable degree of popularity.

CHAPTER VIII--EPILOGUE

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After 1815, the date of the publication of The Missionary of the Andes the noble savage disappeared as a serious theme in British literature. It had, as we have seen, been so transformed by romantic writers as to be no longer attractive to European readers. Other factors also contributed to its decline. A renewal of economic progress in Britain, coupled with a gradual removal of many of the political and social restrictions against which the romantics inveighed lessened the doubt and the self-criticism which characterized the romantic period and led to a renewed optimism coupled with a revival of the idea of progress linked to commerce in something like its earlier eighteenth century manifestation:--this idea, as we have already seen, was antithetical to the concept of the noble savage.<sup>1</sup> Towards the close of the nineteenth century this anti-savage attitude was further increased by the development of American literature which, in dealing with the frontier, adopted an attitude markedly unsympathetic to Indians.<sup>2</sup>

As troubles accumulated in British society in the early twentieth century, and a period of social uncertainty and questioning again arose, attempts were made, notably on the part of D.H. Lawrence, to revive the concept of the

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<sup>1</sup> Tennyson's rejection of this concept and the reasons in Locksley Hall are characteristic of the Victorian attitude to the savage.

<sup>2</sup> J. Fenimore Cooper's concept of the savage is a curious hybrid of realism and the European romantic concept of the noble savage. Later American writers were more distinctly hostile.

noble savage--but even Lawrence became disillusioned after repeated encounters with savage life in various parts of the world. It is quite fair to say that in British literature, the noble savage existed as a serious literary and intellectual source of stimulation from the Restoration to the period of the close of the Napoleonic Wars. That it was able to survive so long in the face of evidence directly opposed to it, and that it was able to engage the attention of so many distinguished thinkers and writers as are here mentioned, is one of the best testimonies that may be adduced of the power of the human mind to support and maintain a pseudo-scientific sociological theory that has a deep-rooted psychological attraction. Throughout the history of this concept, human ingenuity was exercised in many ways to prove to Europeans that what was naturally repulsive to their social concepts of behavior was actually of superior merit. Montaigne's classic defence of cannibalism typifies what is characteristic of the whole support behind the concept: the continual revulsion of civilized Europeans against certain features of contemporary living.

Today, in the same way, the concept of the noble savage still survives and is popular in both Britain and America. It is, however, no longer regarded as a serious study but as phantasy. During and since the last war, there has been a marked increase in the popularity of

magazines of phantasy and science fiction which posit vicarious Utopias to a culture desirous of finding a Utopia. In these magazines, the concept of the noble savage occurs in story after story, transferred to the primitive inhabitants of far-off solar systems, where simplicity, freedom and peaceful manners of living challenge the Earth's more complex and warlike civilization. Throughout these stories, often coupled with the concept of the noble savage, occurs the Garden of Eden legend, so expressive of the romantic longing for a fresh beginning. The fact that science discounts the possibility of life under the conditions envisaged by the phantasy writers weighs as little to their readers as did the reports of travellers to America upon the philosophers and literary men of Britain in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Men's phantasies point the way as surely as their conscious thoughts to the true desires of their being, but it is better to recognize them for what they are rather than to accept them as realities. As far as the concept of the noble savage is concerned, the men who contribute to the serious thought of Britain today are wiser than their ancestors; but which of their most dearly cherished and rationalized social theories will be treated as phantasies one hundred and fifty years hence? One wonders.

CHAPTER I--INTRODUCTION

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By 1763 a number of colonies of English speaking people had become firmly established on the eastern seaboard of what is now the United States of America. All the steps essential to a further expansion into the interior of the continent had been taken. The French barrier to the West had been removed by the Treaty of Paris, and the sole remaining political obstacles, the opposition of the Spaniards and of the Indians, were too feeble to be regarded as serious threats. Moreover, the political and legal institutions which the ancestors of the American colonists had brought from England were peculiarly fitted to develop that system of federalism by which an essential unity may be maintained in the face of formidable geographical difficulties. Within less than three centuries, the foundation of one of the world's mightiest empires had been laid. Quite the most remarkable feature about this foundation is that it had come about as a by-product of the internal affairs of England, and that it excited little attention in the cultural life of the nation which had brought it about. A brief survey of England's relations with America prior to the American Revolution will make clear the factors underlying her remarkable lack of interest in what ultimately became her greatest contribution to Western Civilization.

The first phase of England's relations with America coincided roughly with the latter half of the sixteenth century. It was essentially a wealth-hunting, exploratory phase which manifested itself in a highly successful attempt to wrest the gold of America being exploited by Spain from the Spaniards by force on the high seas, and an unsuccessful attempt to discover rich mineral-bearing regions remote from Spanish influence, or, failing this, a short route to Cathay and the spice islands of the East.

This phase undoubtedly influenced the spirit of Elizabethan literature. The exploits of the Elizabethan sea-dogs and the impact of the voyages of exploration could not fail to stimulate the sense of expansion, the imaginative audacity, the spirit of individual self-reliance and of national pride which characterized Elizabethan thought and expression.<sup>1</sup> In all probability the wealth thus gained gave an added impetus to the production of literature. But America was but one of many influences impinging upon the Elizabethan consciousness.

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<sup>1</sup> The influence of America upon Elizabethan literature would well repay detailed investigation. Some idea of the scope and range of the subject can be gained by a reading of RALEIGH, W., Early Voyages of the Sixteenth Century, published originally as the Preface to Maclehose's edition of Hakluyt's Voyages.

More direct, concentrated and continuous literary and ideological influences from Europe and from the past were to determine the form and substance of English literature. Hence this short-lived but brilliant phase of English endeavour in America disappeared without adding any definite concept of America to English literary tradition.<sup>2</sup>

The exploratory, gold-hunting phase in America was seriously affected in the closing days of Elizabeth's reign by increased Spanish naval military efficiency and by the growing conviction that there existed no commercially feasible north-west passage to the East. It closed completely in the early seventeenth century with the failure of Raleigh's Guiana Voyage and with James I's rigid enforcement of international law.

The disappearance of this phase of activity in America left many wealthy and influential Englishmen not only with large investments in ships and men peculiarly fitted to traverse the Atlantic, but also with interest and imaginations directed westward. These were reluctant to abandon projects in America, and it was not long before they saw in colonization a solution to their

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<sup>2</sup> America is the scene of a proportionately large part of Hakluyt's Voyages. Their role in keeping alive a taste for travel-books and for stories of adventure should not be under-rated.

difficulties. One of the chief bases for wealth in England at the time was the ownership of large estates worked by tenants. Many of the accounts of voyages to America had reported glowingly of the fertility of the soil and the salubriousness of the climate in its temperate regions. Would it not be possible to occupy large areas of land there to be worked as estates? The increased cost of the initial transportation of tenants, implements and food to sustain the colony and of the shipment back of the commodities produced was a formidable obstacle, but it could be more than compensated for by the increased size of the estates which could be had in America by the nominal grant of a Royal Charter. Moreover, enclosures in England during the Tudor period had filled the land with displaced persons who eked out a precarious and uncertain existence. Could not such persons be persuaded by the prospect of security to become American tenants on terms favourable to their landlords, or, failing this, might not criminals be transported to America as servants? Such measures had the two-fold advantage of ridding the country of an unwanted part of its population and at the same time furnishing cheap labour to the would-be proprietors of American plantations. Moreover, the initial investment

on the part of ship owners need not be too heavy for immediate profits. By forming joint-stock companies and extending the investment in American plantations to the court and the gentlemen of England, the promoters of such a scheme would ensure both political and economic support to keep the proposed colonies going and a lower initial outlay on their own part. That their share in the ultimate profits would be less did not greatly matter, for the originators of the scheme counted upon gaining their profits through the employment of their ships and crews which must be chartered by the companies so formed. Nor did the previous failures of Gilbert and Raleigh deter them. Gilbert had failed because his colony had been located too far north and had been insufficiently supported; Raleigh because he had lacked the stability to give effect to his dreams and had too long neglected his colony, and because his colonists had been more interested in prospecting than in agriculture.

Thus, an economic motive was back of the founding of Virginia, a motive which the originators were careful to disguise by an appeal to the patriotism of Englishmen. They commissioned the writing of a number of popular ballads, glorifying the work of colonization in terms

calculated to appeal both to the imagination and the belly of the listener:

"Let England knowe our willingnesse,  
For that our worke is good.  
Wee hope to plant a nation,  
Where none before hath stood.

To glorify the Lord 'tis done,  
And to no other end;  
He that would crosse so good a worke,  
To God can be no friend;  
There is no feare of hunger here  
For corn much store here growes,  
Much fish the gallant rivers yield,  
'Tis truth, without suppose.

Great store of fowle, of venison,  
Of grape and mulberries,  
Of chestnuts, walnuts and such like,  
Of fruits and strawberries,  
There is indeed no want at all  
But some, condition'd ill,  
That wish the worke should not go on,  
With words doe seeme to kill...<sup>#3</sup>

while for the more educated, Francis Bacon, himself a member of the Company, composed an essay, praising "the ancient, primitive and heroicall work" of plantations.<sup>4</sup>

This combined appeal to idealism and self-interest, the chance to build a new nation in a land teeming with plenty, resembles very closely the concept of America as it ultimately developed in Europe in the nineteenth century. In this case, however, the detection of the

<sup>3</sup> An American Garland, Ed. C.H. FIRTH. "News from Virginia".

<sup>4</sup> Bacon's essay contains advice which, had it been heeded, would have led to an altogether different development of colonization in America and a different attitude in England to it.

insincerity of its founders led to a revulsion of feeling against the idea in English literature which persisted throughout the period of colonial development.

As the latter part of the ballad already quoted would indicate, the idea of emigration to America seems to have been regarded by man in England with suspicion from its very foundation. As early as 1605, the three dramatists, Chapman, Marston and Jonson, in their play Eastward Ho!, ridicule the accounts of the wealth of Virginia then being circulated, and are actually imprisoned for suggesting that the Scotch be sent to colonize Virginia for the good of the nation.<sup>5</sup> Nor could all the glowing ballads and reports of life in Virginia put forth by the Company long hide the harsh reality of conditions in the colony. Massinger's play, The City Madam (1632), illustrates the popular attitude to Virginia:

"L. FRUGAL: How! Virginia!  
High heaven forbid! Remember, sir, I beseech you  
What creatures are shipped thither.  
ANNE: Condemned wretches,  
Forfeited to the law,  
MARY: Strumpets and bawds,  
For the abomination of their life,  
Spew'd out of their own country.  
LUKE: ...Such indeed are sent to labour there."<sup>6</sup>

The discovery that Virginia was suited to tobacco growing and the popularity of that drug in England led

<sup>5</sup> CHAPMAN, J., MARSTON, J., JOHNSON, B., Eastward Ho!  
Act III, Sc. I.

<sup>6</sup> MASSINGER, P., The City Madam, Act V, Scene II.

to the financial success and the expansion of plantations in America. Similarly, the cultivation of sugar cane in the West Indies led to the formation and expansion of colonies there. This development increased the demand for cheap labour--a demand which was partly met by the transportation of political prisoners and Irishmen and Scotsmen captured during the Civil Wars. After the Restoration, the situation became particularly acute, for the English poor regarded America as a trap and showed no inclination to go there voluntarily. Child purchase and kidnapping were resorted to on an organized scale. As a result, a large and popular ballad literature grew up around the suffering of unfortunate human beings who by sentence or by kidnapping were doomed to the plantations,<sup>7</sup> and, although Daniel Defoe in the early eighteenth century, in Moll Flanders and Colonel Jack, laboured to convince the people of England that transportation to America was a blessing to this transported, his efforts had little success. The labour situation in the colonies was finally solved by the introduction of negro slavery on a large scale, but not before it had developed a marked prejudice against America on the part of the greater number of the English population.

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<sup>7</sup> For specimens of this literature, see An American Garland, Ed. C.H. FIRTH.

Not all colonies in America were founded for economic reasons. The New England colonies sprang into being primarily as a haven of refuge from persecution and violence for English Puritans. Later still, colonies of Catholics and Quakers were established in America for similar reasons. These colonies were popularly regarded in England quite as unfavourably as were the other plantations. As the history of the English drama shows, Puritans had long been the butt of literary derision prior to the outbreak of the Civil War. After the Restoration, the anti-Puritanism of the English literary circles not only continued but was enlarged to include Catholics and Quakers. In the popular ballads it was hinted that religious grounds for emigration were with these sects but cloaks that hid ulterior motives of a more sinister nature: the Puritans, Quakers and Catholics had in reality gone to America to exploit the poor Indians and to indulge in scandalous immorality free from observation and censure.<sup>8</sup>

Thus American colonization during the seventeenth century developed in circumstances extremely unfavourable to the growth of any concept favourable to America arising in English literature. The constituents of the

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<sup>8</sup> For illustrations of the alleged hypocrisy and immorality of these sects in popular literature see C.H. FIRTH, op. cit.

colonies, dispossessed peasants, paupers, transported criminals, artisans, rebel Irishmen, Scots, Puritans, Dissenters, Catholics and Quakers were subjects either beneath the notice of a literature whose canons of taste were essentially aristocratic, or else objects of ridicule because of religious, political, social or national prejudice. To the English poor, because of the harsh conditions exacted by colonial proprietors, whether religious or otherwise, America, far from being a land of hope, seemed a land to be dreaded.<sup>9</sup>

It might be supposed that during the period from the Restoration to the Treaty of Paris, as social amenities increased in the colonies and as the sharp edge of religious prejudice became gradually blunted by time, that a greater appreciation of America might have developed. Particularly, as a greater measure of personal contact between Englishmen and the colonies was developing.<sup>10</sup> Such, however was not the case. America remained to almost all educated Englishmen the home of the noble savage, and the wilderness where British troops

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<sup>9</sup> Although the original founders of Pennsylvania and Maryland acted from benevolent motives, economic motives were all too apparent with their successors. New England, whose proprietors emigrated to America, exacted too rigid a way of life to be popular with most emigrants.

<sup>10</sup> For details of the relationship between English men of letters and the colonies see GORDON, G.S., Anglo-American Literary Relations, Chapter I.

encountered their French enemies in places with outlandish names. Less space was devoted to Plantation Affairs in the periodicals than to the affairs of remote Eastern kingdoms such as Persia,<sup>11</sup> and such references as were made to the colonists were almost invariably contemptuous or uncomplimentary.<sup>12</sup> Even Bishop Berkeley, second to no man in England in his appreciation of the possibilities of America, paints a dismal picture of the morals, manners and behavior of its inhabitants.<sup>13</sup> Nor is this antipathy or lack of interest difficult to explain. It lies in the fact that society in America was developing in a different direction from that in England.

English society had since the Restoration been gravitating in the direction of greater balance and social order, towards an ideal in which, although an individual was guaranteed an essential legal equality, he was in point of fact gradated into one of a series of castes or orders, each of which observed a tacitly understood mode of behavior in its dealings with other

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11 An examination of the files of The Scots Magazine between the years 1739 and 1753 reveals that the space devoted to Plantation Affairs equalled that given to Kuli Khan in Persia, and that of 8,181 publications listed, only 153 might be construed by their titles to deal with America, and few of these with the colonies directly, and this despite the fact that during most of this time a war with Britain's enemies was going on in America.

12 See The Scots Magazine, Vol. V., p.121, April, 1743, and Ibid., Vol. II, p.529, June, 1740, appropos the behavior of the Carolina Volunteers.

13 See BERKELEY, G., A Proposal for the Better Supplying of Churches in our Foreign Plantations, etc.

orders. This process evolved with the full co-operation of an English literature whose canons were aristocratic, and whose interests were confined almost exclusively to the upper and middle classes.

America, on the other hand, had been peopled by elements who did not naturally fit into the new English system: by criminals and paupers, classless men; by Irishmen and Scots outside the English system; or by members of dissenting sects who, although externally exclusive, were in their church organization essentially democratic. The majority of middle and upper class Anglican emigrants had gone, it is true, to the Southern Colonies and to the West Indies, and there maintained a feudal society. But the feudalism of the South and of the West Indies, dependent as it was upon the slavery of men and women of another race, lacked the complex grades from high to low which characterized English eighteenth century society. It was a feudalism of sharp contrasts, more akin to that of France,<sup>14</sup> and in reality antithetical to the British eighteenth century aristocratic outlook.<sup>15</sup>

Nor did the physical environment of America permit these essentially equalitarian elements to develop a social

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14 This correspondence of circumstance led no doubt to that sympathy between the southern gentleman and the French aristocratic radical which featured the latter half of the eighteenth century.

15 Even in the Southern colonies, this feudalism was to a degree negated by the turbulent democratic conditions which existed in the hinterland beyond tide-water.

gradation along English lines. On the frontier, all pretensions based upon qualities other than individual merit with respect to survival were absurd, and in the colonial period, frontier life and values dominated the town. No colonist, therefore, had to go beyond a certain point of deference to an employer to to a richer neighbour, nor <sup>could</sup> such an employer or neighbour enforce deference, for the colonist, if dissatisfied with his treatment, had only to move westward and set up farming on his own account. In consequence, American society developed in a manner which to the Englishman was unbelievably equalitarian. To the European visitor, the colonist appeared outspoken, frank, inquisitive and independent to the point of rudeness. The chief complaint of British officials and visitors in America with regard to the colonists was that the latter did not know their place.

A second important difference between the British post-Restoration social development and that of the colonies was in the attitude towards the law. The English reaction against the domestic troubles of the mid-seventeenth century was so strong as to make Englishmen loth to make any important constitutional or legal innovations. As years of domestic stability passed, the

constitutional settlement of 1688 came to be regarded with almost sacred reverence, so much so that it seemed to most Englishmen unthinkable that it should ever be altered. So great was the strength of this sentiment in England in the eighteenth century that when innovations were required, rather than disturb the hallowed settlement, they were introduced without formal legal sanction and supported by a tacitly understood force of custom and tradition.<sup>16</sup> This reverence for the constitutions was gradually extended to cover all law. As a result, Englishmen came to be both legal-minded and conservative in their lawmaking, and regarded lawbreaking and the making of sweeping legal and constitutional changes with horror or distrust.<sup>17</sup>

The more important of the American colonies, Virginia and those of New England, had, on the other hand, been formed prior to the English Civil War, and had taken with them and maintained the strongly theoretical political and religious atmosphere which characterized England at the time of their founding. In fact, it was partly to give practical form to political and religious theories that

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<sup>16</sup> As a result, there still exists in England no constitutional authority for the institution of Prime Minister and for the Cabinet System as established in the eighteenth century.

<sup>17</sup> This did not inhibit change, as the technique was developed of altering laws by a judicial reinterpretation rather than by parliamentary action. By this means, English law was kept up to date without risking social stability.

such colonies as Massachusetts Bay, Connecticut and Rhode Island were formed. Moreover, they had had no civil convulsion to make their inhabitants change their conception of government and law. Consequently, the American Colonies maintained a fondness for the enactment of laws upon a theoretical basis, nor were they averse to changing those laws when new theories obtained popular support. Laws and constitutions were with them essentially instruments of use rather than of respect; and, being instruments of practical use, they did not hesitate to violate them when they found it practical to do so.

This profound difference in attitude to the constitution and to law lay at the root of many of the disputes between British officials and the colonies and was a particular source of misunderstanding during the troubled years immediately before the outbreak of the American Revolution. It led to the impression being formed in England that Americans in general were both politically unstable and congenital lawbreakers.

The lack of sympathy between the English and their colonies in the eighteenth century lies in a fundamental divergence in national character which took place following the Civil War. English society gravitated in the direction of neoclassicism and social norms in government, conduct, religion, literature and language, whereas the American colonies were almost untouched by this reaction

and preserved something of the manners, the self-reliant individualism, the lack of reverence for law, and the colourful but uncouth language which characterized the Elizabethans.<sup>18</sup>

Had the colonies been able to create an indigenous literature to interpret their culture to England during the eighteenth century, it is hardly likely that the gap of sympathy would have been closed, for the very qualities of life in America were those which made the work of the Elizabethan dramatists and metaphysical poets so obnoxious to the canons of Eighteenth century critical taste. In any event, many reasons; the primitive and utilitarian conditions of life in the colonies; their scattered nature and lack of social contrasts; cultural isolation; the puritanism of the most intellectual section of the colonies; and colonial deference to a literary taste designed for different conditions of life; all combined to preclude the possibility of such a literature being created.

Throughout the first half of the eighteenth century, however, individual voices occasionally framed concepts regarding colonial America very similar to the concept of America which became important near the end of the century. The poets of commerce were inspired to list among notable

British achievements the development of colonies in America.

For instance, James Thomson writes in his Liberty (1732):

"Lo! swarming southward on rejoicing sons,  
Gay colonies extend; the calm retreat  
Of undeserv'd distress; the better home  
Of those whom bigots chase from foreign lands.  
Not built on rapine, servitude and woe,  
And in their turn some petty tyrant's prey;  
But, bound by social freedom, firm they rise;  
Such as, of late, an Oglethorpe has form'd,  
And, crowding round, the charm'd Savannah sees."<sup>19</sup>

but the description of the colonists here given, and the mention of the known to be far from flourishing state of Georgia were hardly likely to kindle colonial enthusiasm in his readers.

More significant of future concepts were the lines composed in 1729 by Bishop Berkeley:

"The Muse, disgusted at an age and clime  
Barren of every glorious theme,  
In distant lands now waits a better time,  
Producing subjects worthy fame:

In happy climes, where from the genial sun  
The virgin earth such scenes ensue,  
The force of art by nature seems undone  
And fancied beauties by the true:

In happy climes the seat of innocence,  
Where nature guides and virtue rules,  
Where men shall not impose for truth and sense  
The pedantry of courts and schools:

There shall be sung another golden age,  
The rise of empire and of arts,  
The good and great inspiring epic rage,  
The wisest heads and noblest hearts.

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<sup>19</sup> THOMSON, J., Liberty, Part V, "The Prospect".

"Not such as Europe breed in her decays;  
 Such as she bred when fresh and young,  
 When heavenly flame did animate her clay,  
 By future poets shall be sung.

Westward the course of empire takes its way;  
 The four first acts already past,  
 A fifth shall close the drama with the day;  
 Time's noblest offering is the last."<sup>20</sup>

but Berkeley's vision of America was regarded by his friends as the sole infirmity of a noble mind. Swift felt impelled to apologize for it, and, although Berkeley won official approval of his project for a college in the Bermudas through the sheer charm and force of his personality, once his presence had been removed the project was abandoned, nor did Berkeley himself unduly grieve when forced to abandon America for Ireland.

But while Berkeley's concept of America was not in harmony with the conscious development of thought in his own time, it was in tune with certain unconscious tendencies that made it significant for the future. As his poem indicates, what attracted Berkeley to America was that it offered an opportunity to emulate his ancestors, to break through the bonds of a worn-out culture to a fresh beginning. In such a process creative energy would be restored as of old, and living

20 BERKELEY, G., Verses on the Prospect of Planting Arts and Learning in America.

become more natural and primitive, avoiding "the pedantry of courts and schools." Berkeley's America was essentially a rebellion against the formalism and conventionality being imposed upon individuals by the critical norms of neoclassical rationalism. Nor was Berkeley alone in this revolt: there are indications that it impinged at scattered moments upon the consciousness of even the most neoclassical of his contemporaries. In a letter, half playful, half serious, dated July 24, 1725, Bolingbroke writes to Swift:

"My zeal for the propagation of the Gospel will hardly carry me so far; but my spleen against Europe has, more than once, made me think of buying the dominion of Bermudas, and spending the remainder of my days as far as possible from these people with whom I have past the first and greatest part of my life. Health and every other natural comfort of life is to be had there, better than here. As to imaginary and artifice pleasures, we are philosophers enough to despise them. What say you? Will you leave your Hibernian flock to some other shepherd, and transplant yourself with me to the middle of the Atlantick ocean? We will form a society more reasonable, and more useful than that of Dr. Berkeley's college: and I promise you solemnly, as supreme magistrate, not to suffer the currency of Wood's half-pence: nay the coiner of them shall be hanged, if he presume to set his foot on our island."<sup>21</sup>

But although Bolingbroke and, to a lesser extent, Arbuthnot, indulged in these idyllic daydreams of a society to be founded in America quite at variance with their usual

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<sup>21</sup> Printed in *The Works of the Rev. Jonathan Smith, D.D.*, Ed. T. SHERIDAN., Vol XII, p.158.

wordly outlook, the revolt with these men was but transitory and apologetic. Berkeley had given it conscious, open, and sustained expression, and the lack of support given him indicates that the general mood of English society was one of approval of its contemporary standards and ideals. But within this facade of social satisfaction, the romantic and individualistic antitheses to neoclassicism were unconsciously working. The ostensible use of the concept of the noble savage by neoclassical writers had been to induce a closer conformity to rational notions of belief and behavior. In reality, however, the true attraction of the savage lay in his correspondence to the unconscious spirit of rebellion which had been engendered in the human mind through continual and exacting social conformity. As social dissatisfaction increased throughout the century for various reasons, this romantic and individual antithesis could not fail to be drawn farther and farther into consciousness: first by a gradual transfer of attention to the savage life from being a means of inducing conformity to being an object of attraction in itself; secondly, by a transfer of the qualities normally associated with savage life to that part of civilized life whose background and manner of living was most closely associated with it, namely, America.

The foregoing paragraph outlines in a general way the psychological processes behind the rise of the concept of White America and links both it and its prototype, the concept of the noble savage, with the development of the romantic and individualistic antithesis to neoclassicism that was developing throughout the eighteenth century. It must not be supposed, however, that the manifestations of this process occurred with simplicity. Ideas, and literature their expression, are the products of individuals who react in individual ways to environments. Moreover, the historical catalysts in the process, the American Revolution, the French Revolution, the Agricultural Revolution, the Industrial Revolution and the Literary Revolution provided relations between individuals and environments of bewildering complexity. There are almost as many roads to the concept of White America as there are to romanticism itself. One man might find the way through politics; another directly through the concept of the noble savage; another through the classical pastoral tradition; still another through the pressure of economics, and so on almost ad infinitum. Part II of this thesis is an attempt to trace with a minimum of confusion the various paths leading to the concept of White America and influencing its direction and use; secondly to assess the historical and literary importance of the concept.

CHAPTER II--POLITICAL IMPACT OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

With few exceptions, sympathetic interest in Britain towards America had prior to the American Revolution been largely confined to the noble savage. As late as 1770, Oliver Goldsmith voices the typical literary attitude as he laments the fate of English countrymen who have been forced to leave their native land for America:

"Forced from their homes, a melancholy train,  
To traverse climes beyond the Western main;  
Where wild Oswego spreads her swamps around,  
And Niagara stuns with thund'ring sound?  
Even now, perhaps, as there some pilgrim strays  
Through tangled forests, and through dangerous ways;  
Where beasts with man divided empire claim  
And the brown Indian marks with murd'rous aim:  
There, while above the giddy tempest flies,  
And all around distressful yells arise,  
The pensive exile, bending with his woe,  
To stop too fearful, and too faint to go,  
Casts a long look where England's glories shine,  
And bids his bosom sympathize with mine."<sup>1</sup>

and in his The Deserted Village (1770), the prospect for the emigrant is as black:

"Good Heaven! what sorrows gloom'd that parting day,  
That called them from their native walks away;  
When the poor exiles, every pleasure past,  
Hung round the bowers, and fondly look their last,  
And took a long farewell, and wish'd in vain  
For seats like these beyond the western main;  
And shuddering still to face the distant deep,  
Return'd and wept, and still return'd to weep."<sup>2</sup>

Who could have foretold that within fifteen years the attitude of a large number of British people towards America would have radically changed; that writers would

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<sup>1</sup> GOLDSMITH, O., The Traveller.

<sup>2</sup> GOLDSMITH, O., The Deserted Village.

extoll the natural landscape of America, the manly qualities and independence of its inhabitants and prophecy a greater future for Britons in the transatlantic wilderness than that which they possessed at home, and this at the very time that a war was ending between the motherland and her colonies in America?

Paradoxical as it may seem, it was through their rebellion and independence gained through force of arms that the American Colonies aroused in Britain feelings of respect, sympathy and admiration. Not only did the struggle focus attention upon America for a considerable time, but the interest so created acted in harmony with powerful forces at work in Britain: forces which gradually came to see in the concept of White America a more adequate expression of their needs than that of the noble savage. This chapter will indicate the manner in which the American Revolution acted as a catalyst upon this process politically.

From the accession of the Hanoverian monarchs to the British throne, government had been exercised by parliamentary ministers who, as representatives of a few great landowning families, controlled by influence elections to the House of Commons. In the House of Lords their position

was secured by hereditary descent and by ministerial control over fresh appointments. The other elements of the nation, the king and the people, endured their rule: the king because of language difficulties, lack of popular support and essentially continental interests; the people because experience had taught them to avoid political disputes and to tolerate any government which offered stability combined with civil liberty and a minimum of interference with the business of every-day living. No party system had arisen to disturb the aristocratic tenure of office. Although frustrated ambitions or personal jealousies might form factions within parliament, nevertheless, the ease with which leaders of faction deserted their followers for temporary considerations of personal advantage precluded the formation of any permanent party system, and encouraged on the part of the British people in general an attitude of cynicism where politics were concerned. In 1760 the government of the British nobles seemed secure for a century to come. The position was radically altered with the accession of George III. The new king was determined to reassert the royal prerogatives which in the hands of his ancestors had fallen into disuse. Young, attractive for private virtues, tenacious of purpose and politically shrewd, George was a powerful

threat to the continuance of the oligarchy. As king, he possessed far greater power and resources than any of them, and he used these to buy support both in parliament and the army. The nobles now saw the power and the prerogatives which they had so long enjoyed that they seemed theirs by right of custom taken from their disposal and placed under the king's control. They could still enjoy the emoluments of office: many of them did so. But to others such enjoyment was negated by the fact that instead of being masters of the nation, they must become instruments of the royal will: these latter ranged themselves into opposition against the king and his ministers. In their newspapers they raised the cry that the king was emulating the Stuarts and taking to himself powers which belonged to parliament. Had King George III not made two major blunders, it is unlikely that the opposition would have come to anything, for he was personally popular and a rallying point for the allegiance of all those for whom Church and Crown were yet living symbols, while his method of ruling through puppet ministers and members enabled his supporters to claim with literal truth that England was still being ruled through its parliamentary institutions. Moreover, the Whig opposition was divided, and had, when in power,

been so venal that the more thoughtful elements in the nation were disposed to regard its patriotic support of the rights of Englishmen as merely a lever by which to regain office. All King George III needed to do to ensure his power was to avoid overstepping parliamentary tradition. Unfortunately for his designs, he either overestimated his power and popularity, or showed an unwillingness to compromise on two matters that gave credence to his opponents' arguments and roused a strong united opposition before which, for a time at least, he was forced to give way. These two blunders were his persecution of Wilkes and his treatment of the American colonies.

The libel action against Wilkes was not unusual, but the setting aside of Wilkes as the choice of the electors of Middlesex and the substitution in parliament of the defeated candidate was quite another matter. The king's parliament had used the majority vote to violate the electoral franchise. If the majority of the members of the House of Commons could arbitrarily choose any one of the candidates in an election as member of parliament, then not only could no Whig member henceforth be certain of his seat, but parliamentary government other than as an instrument of absolute monarchy was meaningless. These views were set forth in pamphlets and in letters to the press and aroused strong feeling in the country. The king,

however, was inflexible and triumphed over Wilkes and the opposition. A more serious storm was to involve the nation and give weight to the questions roused in men's minds by the case of Wilkes--a storm which was not a transitory affair involving principle and one individual only, but one which threatened the military safety and the economic welfare of the nation over a period of years.

During the eighteenth century, the American colonies had been fairly content with the degree of control over their internal affairs allowed them in their Colonial Charters and considered themselves to be loyal subjects of the Crown. They had, however, three grievances against the motherland: they resented the patronizing attitude of British soldiers and officials; they resented the manner in which their security was jeopardized by British ministers to suit the exigencies of British European diplomacy; and they resented restrictions upon their trade and profit imposed by the navigation laws. As long as the navigation laws were not strictly enforced, and as long as officials and soldiers stood as bulwarks between the colonists and the threat of French and Indian invasion, the benefits derived from British rule outweighed the indignities and inconveniences. After the Treaty of Paris, the benefits of British rule in America were no longer so apparent, while its vexations and inconveniences became

multiplied. The American colonies expected the British government to abandon them to their fate with the restoration of peace and would have been well satisfied had it done so. Unfortunately, the British government made a conscientious effort to deal with the problems confronting it. Its treasury had been depleted by the last war, and it might well have been excused had it cut expenses and withdrawn its forces from America. It realized, however, that the final defeat of the French had not solved the problems of the continent. Garrisons were necessary against the possibility of an uprising in Quebec or a combination of Indian tribes against the Whites undoing the settlement work of centuries. To pay for these in part, the British government decided upon a revision and stricter enforcement of the port and navigation duties. When these failed to realize sufficient revenue, they resorted to direct taxation in 1765, with the alternative that the colonists could themselves levy the requisite supply and have this tax discontinued.

The colonists were resentful of the increased expense and inconvenience caused by the revised port duties and more efficient collection. More important, they suspected these measures to be preludes to more stringent regulations. They viewed with suspicion the presence of garrisons on their inland frontiers and the action of the navy in enforcing navigation laws. In times of far greater danger,

Britain had been less solicitous for the defence of the frontier. What if the presence of garrisons was in reality a future means of coercion to ensure submission if still stronger measures were passed by Westminster, measures such as increased taxation or the introduction of a state church? The official adoption of the French policy of protection and friendship to the Indians was a further ground for suspicion. With the passing of the Stamp Act, it seemed to many Americans that their worst suspicions were confirmed.<sup>3</sup> They were not yet, however, so suspicious as to be disloyal. The rapid allaying of the storm of protest after the repeal of the Stamp Act is evidence that the greater number of colonists wished to believe in the good intentions of the mother country. The imposition in 1770 of fresh taxes designed to raise revenue more than undid the good which the repeal of the Stamp Act had done; for this time, the colonists in their struggle with the mother country had to deal with George III who had finally cemented his grasp upon parliament and had found in Lord North a minister with the ability to carry out his measures. It was evident that unless the colonists gave way, the dispute could only be resolved by violence. At the same time, the personal predominance of

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<sup>3</sup> It was particularly unfortunate from the British point of view that the Stamp Act alienated the lawyers, merchants and newspaper proprietors, men who possessed the ability and the means of marshalling public opinion in the colonies.

the king over the British parliament was to produce what a few years before had seemed impossible, a strong party in both parliament and nation who were open sympathizers and supporters of the colonists in their struggle.

A major point of dispute between Britain and the colonies was the navigation laws. British opinion was almost unanimous that the mercantile system which the navigation laws upheld was both necessary and just: it was the classical economy of the time. Even the American colonists did not dream of attacking the mercantile system as such, or the navigation laws as part of an outmoded system. Such a procedure would have gained them no support. Instead they attacked the navigation duties not from their economic but from their political aspect. Port duties in reality were taxes upon trade; moreover, they were levied upon British subjects by a parliament in which they were not represented. Taxation without representation violated the rights of British subjects and was tyranny. Such an argument could not fail to win support in Britain, provided the public were persuaded that navigational duties were taxes in a literal sense. As Britons were not conditioned to look upon measures adopted primarily for the control of trade as taxes, it is not strange that the early arguments of the colonists found little sympathy in Britain and a considerable degree of opposition even in

America.

One powerful factor operated in their favour. The Whigs grasped at every possible argument which might convince the nation of the tyranny of the king and his puppet minister. They joined their interests to those of the colonies. It is questionable how sincere they were in the first instance, but there is little doubt that after the arbitrary measures put through the Houses of Parliament by Lord North to deal with the citizens of Boston, after all overtures from the colonists had been rejected, after measures such as the sending of the German mercenaries to America and the unleashing of the Indians to harry the colonial frontiers had been adopted, many Whigs were not only convinced that the king's designs in America were tyrannical but they trembled lest he succeed there, fearing that he would bring his conquering mercenaries back to England to impose his authority by force. The case of Horace Walpole illustrates how suspicion and fear of the royal intentions and power could lead the Whigs to throw the full weight of their support behind the struggles of the American colonists at the sacrifice of national pride and public favour. This man, aristocratic, fastidious, a cold-hearted snob, was in many ways the antithesis of all that America stood for, yet throughout the American Revolution, he gave the colonists his full support. In his

journals he gives his reasons for doing so:

"To me it would be preferable to have the nation humbled, provided it remained free, than to see it victorious and enslaved. From the Stamp Act, and from the military laws devised by Lord Mansfield for the Colonies, from his abolition of Juries and restoration of Popery in Canada, from the beginning of the war, and from the bloody acts contrived not only to punish, but to drive all the Colonies into rebellion, that all might be punished and enslaved, I had seen the evident tendency of the King's measures. I had as little doubt, but if the conquest of America should be achieved, the moment of the victorious army's return would be that of the destruction of our liberty. That army had been sent to fight for prerogative, was disciplined by Jacobite Scots, and was to combat men who fought for freedom. They would be at the beck of a Prince that thirsts for despotism, who had not only a Tory Administration, but of men who had been Jacobites, as Lord Mansfield and Lord Gower, and was supported by a zealous clergy, particularly of those bred at Oxford; and the greatest efforts of the Scots had been to represent the Opposition as inciters of the rebellion which the army had been sent to crush. Would that army, had it returned victorious, have hesitated to make the King as absolute as they had made him in America?"<sup>4</sup>

That this was no sudden opinion may be seen by references to prior entries in Walpole's Journal, one as early as May, 1774. Indeed, the whole burden of the Whig support of the American colonies in parliament throughout the war is that of resistance to unconstitutional tyranny, and many motions were put forward asking that the troops be disbanded immediately following the cessation of hostilities. The rejection of these motions served only to deepen suspicion into certainty: to the Whigs it

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<sup>4</sup> WALPOLE, H., Journal of the Reign of George III, Vol. II, pp.240-241, d. March, 1778.

seemed that only the military success of the colonists could save them.

But whatever the motives, Whig support gave the American colonies such a powerful means of communicating their case both in the Houses of Parliament and in the newspapers of the country as is seldom given an opponent in time of war. Many Whig leaders had been in power during the recent glorious war with France and had achieved great reputations for patriotism and ability. Lord Chatham, in particular, had caught the public imagination, and when Lord Chatham uttered words like these:

"I rejoice that America has resisted. Three millions of people, so dead to all the feelings of liberty as voluntarily to let themselves be made slaves, would have been fit instruments to make slaves of all the rest."<sup>5</sup>

or:

"If I were an American, as I am an Englishman, while a foreign troop was landed in my country, I never would lay down my arms, never! never! never! never!"<sup>6</sup>

they could not be brushed aside as the utterance of a traitor. Nor could Lord Camden, whose legal decisions had won him universal respect, be dismissed as a fool when he said:

"I will maintain it to my latest hour: taxation and representation are inseparable. This proposition is founded on the laws of nature; it is more; it is itself an eternal law of nature; for whatever is a man's own is absolutely his own;

<sup>5</sup> BROUGHAM, H., Historical Sketches of Statesmen, Vol. I, p.46.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p.50

"no man has a right to take it from him without his consent, either expressed by himself or his representative; whoever attempts to do it attempts an injury; whoever does it commits a robbery; he throws down and destroys the distinction between liberty and slavery."<sup>7</sup>

while politicians then less known and respected, men like Edmund Burke and Charles James Fox, made their reputations for their support of the colonies in parliament during the Revolution.

In Britain, both Whigs and Tories deluged the public with pamphlets putting forward every conceivable aspect of their case. So numerous were these productions that The Scots Magazine throughout the Revolution devoted a special section to them in its space allotted to book reviews. In addition, the newspapers gave their readers a wide range of viewpoint and versions of events. In The Scots Magazine, for instance, despatches and accounts of battles drawn from American sources were given equal prominence with official British despatches, and the proceedings of Congress were reprinted from American journals. Important pamphlets on both sides were reviewed at length, and some, notably Thomas Paine's Common Sense and Richard Price's Observations on Civil Liberty and the War with America, both pro-colonist, were printed in full in instalment form.

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., Vol. V, p.211.

The effect of these propagandizing activities coupled with the obvious military, economic and international aspects of the Revolution upon England's welfare led to a revival of interest in politics--a revival in which the nation tended to divide, as it had done more than a century before, into two great camps.

By far the greater number adhered to the King and his government. To a few of these the person and office of king were cherished with an emotional attachment. The Americans were rebels, and deserved no mercy. Taking a strictly legal view of the American Revolution, they saw in the arguments put forward by the colonists only specious excuses to hide a sinister design of establishing complete independence. Such were the views put forward by Samuel Johnson in his Taxation no Tyranny, Soames Jenyns and others. As the war went on and the rebels triumphed and more and more money was required in taxes to pay for yet fresh disasters, when they heard the Whigs proclaim in parliament and in the press that the American were right, the Americans were patriots and that Britain was headed for ruin, the exasperation of the British Tories knew no bounds, and to many of them the British Whigs were even worse traitors than their American brethren. The bulk of those who supported the king did so from a more moderate standpoint. Theirs was an attitude of strict legalism. To them the American

Revolution had been a tragedy for which the king and his ministers were partly to blame through initial injustice to the colonies. The colonists, however, by resorting to acts of unconstitutional violence to gain their ends, had forfeited their right to sympathy. Therefore, without enthusiasm and without hope, the majority of the people of England supported their government in an effort to punish the rebels.

Those who supported the colonies, although far fewer in number both in parliament and out, counted among their members some of the most influential elements in the population. The majority of the great middle and lower class Dissenters, with the exception of the Methodists, in the more urban and industrialized areas of Britain, awoke from their political sleep and returned to the parliamentary tradition of their fathers.<sup>8</sup> They adopted a more passionate belief in the Americans and hope in their success than did the Whig nobles who roused them, for the latter hoped to gain power out of the ultimate debacle of the government, whereas many of the dissenters had lost both profit and employment from the American Revolution and saw little prospect of trade being restored by the triumph of the colonies. The trade of West Scotland had been temporarily wrecked by the American Revolution, yet here men and women remembered their own forefathers' fight for freedom and not the loss of their pocketbooks. Thomas

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<sup>8</sup> See The Quarterly Review, Jan. 1817, No. 31, Vol. 16, p.532.

Campbell grew up in a family ruined by the American Revolution yet devoted to the American cause. Grant Thorburn in his Autobiography tells this story of his own father, a poor cooper of Dalkeith:

"One evening, about the beginning of September, 1775, the Edinburgh stage-coach stopped at my father's door and delivered the paper as usual. It contained the British account of the battle of Bunker's Hill, and concluded, of course, with the prediction of the total destruction of the American cause. My father, I remember, expressed much sorrow while reading the account to his family, and in his evening prayer remembered most fervently the poor oppressed Americans. Being then in my third year, I knew not the nature of the contest, but thought it strange that my father should be sorry when our side won--as we used to say at school."<sup>9</sup>

In England a similar kindling of sympathy with the American colonies occurred. Bristol, London and the Midlands were the areas most affected by the loss of trade, but they had also been the areas which had fought most strenuously for parliamentary supremacy against the Stewarts in the preceding century, and they too returned to the political traditions of their ancestors against their material interest. Samuel Rogers's biographer tells how the outbreak of the American Revolution affected his father:

"...one of Samuel Rogers's early recollections was, that on one evening after reading from the Bible at family prayers, his father explained to his children the cause of the rebellion in the colonies, and told them that our own nation was in the wrong

<sup>9</sup> THORBURN, G., Forty Year's Residence in America, p.172.

"and it was not right to wish that the Americans should be conquered. When the news of the battle of Lexington reached England. A battle begun by nine hundred British soldiers firing three volleys at the little troop of seventy men whom Captain John Parker, grandfather of Theodore Parker, had formed into the first line of the revolution-- Thomas Rogers put on mourning. Being asked if he had lost a friend, he answered that he had lost several friends--in New England. The recorder of London put on mourning for the same event at the same time, and Granville Sharp gave up his place in the Ordnance office because he did not think it right to ship stores and munitions of war which might be used to put down self-government in the American colonies."<sup>10</sup>

William Cobbett relates of his father's interest in the Revolution:

"He would not have suffered his best friend to drink success to the king's arms at his table."<sup>11</sup>

and by the following anecdote shows that his father was by no means an isolated instance of pro-American feeling in the country:

"It happened to be my turn to go thither (Weyhill), the very year that Long Island was taken by the British. A great company of hop-merchants and farmers were just sitting down to supper as the post arrived, bringing in the Extraordinary Gazette, which announced the victory. A hop-factor from London took the paper, placed his chair upon the table and began to read with an audible voice. He was opposed, a dispute arose, and my father retired, taking me by the hand, to another apartment where we supped with about a dozen others of the same sentiments. Here Washington's health, and success to the Americans, were repeatedly toasted."<sup>12</sup>

In rekindling popular interest in politics during

<sup>10</sup> CLAYDEN, P.W., The Early Life of Samuel Rogers, p.33.

<sup>11</sup> Quoted from COLE, G.D.H., The Life of William Cobbett, p.19.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p.19.

the American Revolution, British Whigs and Tories had in fact set into action forces before which, despite all repressive measures taken during the next fifty years, they had finally to give way. Whether or not they regarded British actions in America as tyranny, men soon came to see them as folly ruinous to the country's welfare, and in watching their country drift closer to what seemed to them to be inevitable ruin, knowing themselves powerless to intervene, they came to realize for the first time in over a century the full value of the franchise. Committees for the purpose of obtaining electoral reform spread in the land, and agitations were set in train for the repeal of the Test Acts and for Catholic Emancipation. At first the Whigs, seeing the advantage such an increase in the franchise would give their party, favoured their cause and argued in parliament in favour of electoral reform. But even those Whigs who had at first favoured the formation of Committees of Association began to be appalled at the thoroughgoing resolutions they were adopting. The Committee pressed for both a new mode of representation and for triennial parliaments: the Whig leaders, on the other hand, wished for no more than the status quo ante George III, or, as Horace Walpole put it:

"...I am for restoring the Constitution to what it was when it made us the happiest, wisest, and most glorious people that we ever were, and not from admiring the identical forms, but from the effects it produced...Subvert the established forms, and great clamour would arise, and every evil produced by the change would appear aggravated by comparison. The very spirit that has arisen proves that, however weakened the Constitution, it still retains energy enough to assert itself, and I hope to produce reformation. If it does, that Constitution is good enough that when at its perfection made us so happy, rich and great; and when impaired could by its own vigour redress itself. I have said nothing of the impropriety of attempting experiments when we are at war with America, France, and Spain, and when we are in danger of seeing Ireland separate from this country."<sup>13</sup>

But whatever Walpole and the Whig nobles thought, the new political spirit roused in Britain was to persist and, when conditions again encouraged it, to grow. The Tories might repress it, the Whig leaders lend it lukewarm support and temporize, the miscarriage of the French Revolution deal it a crushing blow, but for all that it was destined to triumph in the end. Moreover, as subsequent pages will show, continued faith and belief in America on the part of English radicals helped substantially to keep alive the flame which otherwise might have flickered out. To write, as a recent popular historian has done:

"Few Englishmen believed in their ability to succeed and fewer wished them success. For many, many years Americans were distrusted and despised as rebels and upstarts who had nearly ruined the greatest empire of the world since the Roman."<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> WALPOLE, H., *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p.384, March, 1780.

<sup>14</sup> PLUMB, J.B., England in the Eighteenth Century, p.132.

is to take into account merely the attitude of the official Tories who naturally did not conclude the struggle in a spirit of kindness to the new republic, and of the Whig leaders who having used America for their political advantage treated her simply as another country. The lower and middle class elements of the British nation who had linked the cause of the Americans with their new-found interest in politics abandoned neither with the Treaty of Versailles. For, unlike the Whig nobles, they had not yet got what they wanted. As long as there continued deprivation of their franchise and as long as they remained religious discrimination and tithes to pay to the official church, so long was America both a symbol of the freedom they desired and a focal point of their argument. The following extract aptly illustrates the latter point:

"'Let us come to the point. There must be a national religion. Grant that.'

'I pray thee,' Miss Cahill asked, 'which is the national religion of America?'

'Pshaw!' says the parson, rather angrily, 'they'll come to nothing for the want of it.'

'When they do, the argument will be in thy favour,' answered Miss Cahill."<sup>15</sup>

The awakening of men's aspirations during the American Revolution was not confined to the friends of America. The Tories, both by the arguments of opponents and by the logic of events, were forced to question in some degree the established order, to revise opinions, and to form modified plans for the future. Economists like Adam Smith found

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<sup>15</sup> BAGE, R., Man as He is., Vol. 1, p.99.

a sympathetic hearing when they proclaimed that the mercantile system was an antiquated and outmoded trading institution; the complaints of Catholics and Dissenters found growing and generous support in the very ranks whose interest it was to keep them down; High Church clergymen came to regard negro slavery as a moral evil, and all the arguments devised by previous generations to justify it as rationalizations. When George II, through the blunders of his Whig opponents, succeeded in restoring the Tories to office, he was unable to turn back the clock to 1770. The Tories of 1785 no longer thought as they did in 1770, and William Pitt, their leader, was far removed from Lord North in his conception of the duties and responsibilities of government. The static pattern which had dominated the political thought of a century had been broken, and a major role in that development had been played by the revolt of the American colonies.

### CHAPTER III--THE CULTURAL AND LITERARY IMPACT OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

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The last chapter has shown how the American Revolution wrought a political awakening in Britain and how through this awakening a sentiment was created favorable to the American colonies. Had the Revolution been but political and economic in its aspects, this newly aroused interest could hardly have found expression in English literature. There were few points of sympathy between the professed ideals of eighteenth century literary society and the reality of life in the colonies. Before White America could be properly appreciated, it was necessary that British writers and readers must come to doubt the value of their exclusive cultural convictions to such a degree as to make them consciously long for and imagine their antitheses. The popularity of the concept of the noble savage proves that such an unconscious longing had existed throughout the neoclassical age, but the manner of its use proves that the concept had not emerged into consciousness as a serious good way of life for White Men. To posit an ideal for members of another race is a much less serious thing than to imagine and apply the same ideal to members of one's own culture and race. The American Revolution delivered the first serious blow to the neoclassical standards which had been developing in Britain since the Restoration. It did this by destroying to a degree social complacency and by

creating a sustained atmosphere in which mood, imagination and feeling predominated over reason--a process essential if the seeds of future romanticism were to grow strong and flourish.

Most British poets during the American Revolution continued the quiet tenor of their lives in country parsonages or in the households of noble patrons, but they could not keep their minds in the same state of happy tranquillity. Although they tried patriotically, as in the past, to celebrate Britain's victories, they could not forget that these victories were won over men of their own blood and language. Even their deep-rooted love of Roman history added to their mental uneasiness. It had taught them to look upon civil war with particular horror, and, as the breach between the parties widened in England, their minds remembered all too well the last century of the Republic, and they feared a recurrence of ancient horrors in their own land. Furthermore, as failure followed failure, many sensitive spirits felt a conviction of the sin by the tenets of the very classicism they followed so religiously. Like ancient Rome, the greatness of Britain had, it seemed to them, departed, and for the same reasons. Britain had abandoned the primitive simplicity of its fathers and embarked upon the pursuit of luxury, wealth and too great refinement. The hitherto

conventional neoclassical devotion to simplicity became invested with emotional significance. With the end of the war, bitterness towards the American colonies was lost in the thankfulness of the reprieve. The nation had been granted another chance. The effect of these reactions to the American Revolution was to disturb the rational balance and give greater significance to mood and feeling in a poetry which still retained its classical form.

b Examples bearing out the truth of the foregoing generalizations are easy to find in the poetry of the period. For instance, the British recruiting campaign awoke in John Scott of Amwell instead of the traditional patriotic response a spirited protest against the futility of war:

"I hate that drum's discordant sound,  
Parading round, and round, and round,  
To thoughtless youth it pleasure yields,  
And lures from cities and from fields,  
To sell their liberty for charms  
Of tawdry lace and glittering arms;  
And when ambition's voice commands,  
To march, and fight, and fall in foreign lands.

I hate that drum's discordant sound  
Parading round, and round, and round:  
To me it talks of ravag'd plains,  
And burning towns, and ruin'd swains,  
And mangled limbs, and dying groans,  
And widow's tears, and orphan's moans:  
And all that misery's hand bestows  
To fill the catalogue of human woes."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> SCOTT, J., Ode XIII.

In 1775, Thomas Penrose, Curate of Newbury, saw England arrayed into two opposing camps as it had been in 1638 and was moved to compose The Helmets. In this poem, a curate by chance spends the night in

"a House built after the Gothic taste, upon a spot famous for a bloody encounter between the Armies of Charles and the Parliament."<sup>2</sup>

In the gloom of a hall decorated with trophies from the Civil War, the curate is startled to hear voices issue from two of the helmets. They rejoice together. One exclaims:

"I hear amidst the gale  
The hostile spirits shouting--once--once more  
In the thick harvest of the spears we'll shine--  
There will be work anon."<sup>3</sup>

to which his fellow rejoins:

"Hark!--I hear the voice  
Of the impatient ghosts, who straggling range  
Yon summit (crown'd with ruin'd battlements,  
The fruits of civil discord,) to the din  
The spirits, wand'ring round this Gothic pile,  
All join their yell--the song of war and death--  
There will be work anon."<sup>4</sup>

Their enthusiasm is temporarily dampened by the realization that in the new civil war to come helmets are obsolete, but they console themselves in the thought that they will be able to observe and enjoy the spectacle:

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<sup>2</sup> PENROSE, J., Explanatory note to The Helmets.

<sup>3</sup> PENROSE, T., The Helmets.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

"Yet more than this,  
 From our inactive station we shall hear  
 The groans of butcher'd brothers, shrieking plaints  
 Of ravish'd maids, and matrons' frantic howls,  
 Already hov'ring o'er the threatened lands  
 The famished raven snuffs the promis'd feast,  
 And hoarslier croaks for blood--'twill flow.  
 'Forbid it Heaven!  
 O shield my suffering country!--Shield it,' prayed  
 The agonizing priest."<sup>5</sup>

Despite its crudeness, there is in this poem an urgency, a temperature of feeling more akin to romanticism than to classicism.

Penrose wrote another poem, Address to the Genius of Britain (1776), which was a highly-charged appeal for peace with the American colonies, partly because the war had ruined Britain's commerce and peace would offer a chance for its restoration, but also for less purely rational considerations; for this poem rests its appeal quite as much upon imaginative and emotional factors as upon the purely rational factor of self-interest. Britons are reminded that the American colonists are their own blood-kindred and that even beasts would not behave so shamefully to their own kind. Even the soldiers of England, uneducated and illiterate, have been given by nature sufficient feeling to realize that this is no ordinary war:

"Spiritless now and sad  
 Embark the destin'd troops; the veteran brave,  
 That dauntless bore the variegated woes  
 Of long protracted war:--the veteran brave,

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

"That won on many a plain the bloody palm  
 Of victory, amidst the dying groans  
 Of slaughter'd thousands firmly undismay'd,  
 Now hangs in tender thought his honest front,  
 Averse to slay his brother:--at the word,  
 (Awful yet sacred to his patient ear)  
 He lifts indeed the steel, while down the cheek  
 The big drop flows, nor more he dreads the wound  
 That bores his vitals, than the stroke he gives."<sup>6</sup>

If even soldiers feel thus, is it not the duty of king and nation to desist from such unnatural attempts at coercion? An appeal to the feelings was by no means new in literature: Sterne and MacKenzie had made it fashionable, but theirs had been an appeal to feeling for feeling's sake and not primarily as an inducement to positive action. Penrose, on the other hand, was using feeling in the same sense in which the romantic poets were to use it, as a direct means of influencing human ideas and conduct.

The qualities of intensity of feeling, imaginative vision and urgency of utterance called forth by the American Revolution were by no means confined to those who favoured the colonies. The American Revolution called forth romantic poetry in a few instances from Tory minds. The finest example of this process occurs in Julius Mickle's Amada Hill, an Epistle from Lisbon (1779). At first sight, this poem seems a typical historico-didactic epistle, an inferior replica of Dyer's The Ruins of Rome. Its author is moved by a consideration

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6 PENROSE, T., Address to the Genius of Britain.

of the ruins at Lisbon to muse upon the historical pageantry of the Iberian Peninsula. This enables the translator of Camoens' Lusiad to display his historical learning. The rise and fall of Rome, the Moorish Crusades, the rise and decline of the great Portuguese and Spanish empires are all dealt with according to the familiar conventional and derivative pattern. But when Mickle comes to draw the obvious moral, the transience of human power and endeavour, he cannot do so with the same cool rationality which had characterized Dyer's work little more than a decade before. His own fears for his country are too vivid in his mind. When he gazes at the ruin of Iberian empires, there rushes into his mind to torment him the imminent possibility of a similar fate befalling Britain now set about with enemies as a result of the American Revolution. Again and again the idea haunts him and keeps recurring throughout the poem with little variation. Of the three extracts quoted here, the first is taken from the opening paragraphs, the second from the middle portion, while the last are the closing lines. All strike the same note of uneasiness and personal apprehension:

"As upland path, oft winding, bids me rove  
Where orange flowers invite, or olive grove,  
No sullen phantoms brooding o'er my breast,  
The genial influence of the clime I taste:  
Yet still regardful of my native shore,  
In every scene my roving eyes explore,  
Whate'er its aspect, still by mem'ry brought,  
My fading country rushes on my thought...

"Not from the hands that wield Iberia's spear,  
 Nor from the hands that Gaul's proud thunders bear,  
 Nor those that turn on Albion's breast the sword  
 Beat down of late by Albion when it gor'd  
 Their own, who impious doom their parent's fall  
 Beneath the world's great foe th'insidious Gaul;  
 Yes, not from these the immedicable wound  
 Of Albion--Other is the bane profound  
 Destin'd alone to touch her mortal part;  
Herself is sick and poisoned at the heart."<sup>7</sup>

"Alas, my friend, how vain the fairest boast  
 Of human pride! How soon is empire lost!  
 The pile by ages rear'd to awe the world,  
 By one degenerate race to ruin hurl'd!  
 And shall the Briton view that downward race  
 With eye unmoved, and no sad likeness trace!  
 Ah Heaven! in every scene by memory brought  
My fading country rushes on my thought."<sup>8</sup>

"...But ah, my friend,  
 How dire the pangs to mark our own descend!  
 With ample powers from ruin still to save,  
 Yet as a vessel on the furious wave,  
 Through sunken rocks and rav'nous whirlpools tost,  
 Each power to save in counter-action lost  
 Where, while combining storms the decks overwhelm,  
 Timidity slow falters at the helm,  
 The crew in mutinay, from every mast  
 Tearing its strength, and yielding to the blast;  
 By factions stern and gloomy lust of change,  
 And selfish rage inspir'd, and dark revenge--  
 Nor ween, my friend, that favouring fate forebodes  
 That Albion's state, the toil of demigods,  
 From ancient manners pure, for ages long,  
 And from unnumber'd friendly aspects sprung;  
When poison'd at the heart its soul expires,  
 Shall e'er again resume its generous fires:  
 No future day may such fair fame restore:  
 When Albion falls, she falls to rise no more."<sup>9</sup>

Even William Cowper, preoccupied with the salvation  
 of his immortal soul and with the charming trivia which

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<sup>7</sup> MICKLE, J., Amada Hill, an Epistle from Lisbon.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

surrounded him at Olney, was moved by the course of the American Revolution to strike in his letters the same notes of fear and forboding:

"Well, Cowper, what do you think of the American war?

I. To say the truth I am not very fond of thinking about it; when I do, I think of it unpleasantly enough. I think it bids fair to be the ruin of the country.

You. That's very unpleasant indeed! If that should be the consequence, it will be the fault of those who might put a stop to it if they would.

I. But do you really think that practicable?

You. Why not? If people leave off fighting, peace follows, of course. I wish they would withdraw the forces and put an end to the squabble.

I.....I cannot look upon the circumstances of this country without being persuaded that I discern in them an entanglement and perplexity that I have never met with in the history of any other, which I think prodigious in its kind, and such as human sagacity can never remedy...If we pursue the war, it is because we are desperate; it is plunging and sinking year after year into still greater depths of calamity. If we relinquish it, the remedy is equally desperate, and would prove I believe in the end no remedy at all. Either way we are undone. Perseverance will only enfeeble us more; we cannot recover the colonies by arms. If we discontinue the attempt, in that case we fling away voluntarily what in the other we strive ineffectually to regain; and whether we adopt the one measure or the other, we are equally undone; for I consider the loss of America as the ruin of England."<sup>10</sup>

and three weeks later he writes:

"I consider England and America as once one country. They were so in respect of interest, intercourse and affinity. A great earthquake has made a partition, and now the Atlantic ocean flows between them.

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<sup>10</sup> COWPER, W., The Letters of William Cowper, pp.96-97., Cowper to Hill, 9 Dec. 1781.

"He that can drain that ocean, and shove the two shores together so as to make them aptly coincide, and meet together in every part, can unite them again. But this is a work for Omnipotence, and nothing less than Omnipotence can heal the breach between us. This dispensation is evidently a scourge to England;--but is it a blessing to America?"<sup>11</sup>

Cowper's religious fatalism is here evident, but he cannot altogether avoid the conclusion that the men who guide the affairs of Britain are at fault:

"I am not quite such a superannuated simpleton, as to suppose that mankind were wiser or much better when I was young, than they are now. But I may venture to assert, without exposing myself to the charge of dotage, that the men whose integrity, courage and wisdom, broke the bands of tyranny, established our constitutions upon its true basis, and gave a people overwhelmed with the scorn of all countries, an opportunity to emerge into a state of the highest respect and estimation, make a better figure in history than any of the present day are likely to do, when their petty harangues are forgotten, and nothing shall survive but the remembrance of the views and motives with which they made them."<sup>12</sup>

It is distressing to see this nervous recluse who shrank from the dust and heat of life worry over his country's affairs, knowing them to be amiss yet unable to make up his mind definitely as to where the blame lay, concluding finally that the war was God's judgment upon England for its wickedness, and that for his own part there was nothing but patience and trust in Divine Providence:

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., Cowper to Hill, 31 Dec., 1781, p.98.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p.106.

"There was a time when these contradictions would have distressed me, but I have learnt by experience that it is best for little people like myself to be patient, and to wait till time affords the intelligence which no speculation of theirs can ever furnish."<sup>13</sup>

At the close of the war, Cowper's patience and trust in God seemed to him to be justified. In his letter of 26 January, 1783, when the prospects of peace had become definite his relief is most manifest. He apportions praise and blame. England:

"More, perhaps, through the fault of her generals than her councils, has in some instances acted with a spirit of cruel animosity she was never chargeable with till now."<sup>14</sup>

The Americans who, had they only struggled for lawful liberty, would have had Cowper's warmest approval, had been guilty in seeking independence and in leaguering themselves with Britain's enemies. The direst villains were the European powers who had conspired solely for greed and Britain's ruin. God, however, had spared his people:

"I think, therefore, that whatever scourge may be prepared for England, on some future day, her ruin is not yet to be expected."<sup>15</sup>

Cowper's attitude was typical of the views of the greater number of Britons at the conclusion of the American Revolution. Thankfulness at the conclusion of a long and

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., Cowper to Hill, 7 December, 1782, p.130.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., Cowper to Newton, p.132.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p.133.

costly war was tempered by a sense of grievance directed partly towards the political leaders who had followed what ultimately had proved a mistaken course, partly towards the colonists for their intransigence, but mainly towards the European powers for their interference. Coupled with this sense of mingled relief and grievance was a realization for the first time what the American colonies had meant to English life. While it had been the home of more or less docile colonists, White America had been taken for granted: now that it was the property of what seemed destined to be a rival nation, the British imagination expanded to see its possibilities. William Whitehead's laureate ode at the conclusion of hostilities envisages the relationship which might yet come to exist between Britain and America should both nations be willing to forget past enmities and consult true interest and affinity:

"Two Britains through th'admiring world  
Shall wing their way with flags unfurl'd;  
Each from the other's kindred state  
Avert by turns the bolts of fate:  
And acts of mutual amity endear  
The Tyre and Carthage of another sphere.

When Rome's divided eagles flew,  
And different thrones her empires knew,  
The varying language soon disjoin'd  
The boasted masters of mankind:  
But here, no ills like those we fear,  
No varying language threatens here;

"Congenial worth, congenial flame,  
 Their manners and their arts the same,  
 To the same tongue shall glowing themes afford,  
 And British heroes act, and British bards record.  
 Fly swift ye years! ye minutes haste!  
 And in the future lose the past;  
 O'er many a thought-afflicting tale,  
 Oblivion, cast thy friendly veil!  
 Let not memory breathe a sigh,  
 Or backward turn th'indignant eye;  
 Nor the insidious arts of foes  
 Enlarge the breach that longs to close,  
 But acts of amity alone inspire  
 Firm faith, and cordial love, and wake the willing lyre."<sup>16</sup>

Beyond question, the problems and conflicts aroused by the American Revolution stimulated the generation of Britons who endured them to unwonted exercises of feeling and imagination. It did this at a time when many other influences, all favouring romantic development were becoming popular: Influences that agreed with classicism in desiring a greater degree of simplicity in thought and behavior but which differed in stressing feeling above reason and individual freedom over the norms of social behavior. Their most conspicuous religious manifestations were Methodism and a Pantheistic Deism in which the cult of natural landscape had become invested with some mysterious power over the human character. In social ideals they adopted various Utopias, most of which were enlargements or variations upon the classical concept of the noble savage. All of these romantic manifestations presented aspects which could be used by British writers

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<sup>16</sup> WHITEHEAD, W., Ode XLVIII, For the New Year, 1785.

to portray White America and its inhabitants in a light attractive to Britains. The great attraction of the noble savage had lain in the freedom of his life, in the natural independence combined with simplicity of wants of his character. The American colonists had proved that they valued freedom as highly by their fight for independence. Life in America was known to be primitive and simple compared with that in Great Britain, and Britons were not long in drawing a contrast between their own leaders and American colonists like George Washington and Benjamin Franklin, who came to represent even in the eyes of their enemies the combined virtues of the noble savage and the austere statesmen of the Roman republic. It is not strange, therefore, that during the American Revolution, the robe of the noble savage began to be worn by the White American. In fact, on the eve of the American Revolution, Richard Cumberland had presented in The West Indian (1771), a highly popular comedy, the character of a colonist whose free and easy manners and naive innocence presented an attractive foil to the more polished, but more selfish, Europeans who initiated him in the mysteries of English society.

Robert Bage's novel, Mount Henneth (1779) has as its most attractive heroine, Camilla Melton, the first of a long series of American girls in fiction who delight and astound Europeans by their combination of naive innocence and free and easy manners. This novel is undisguisedly

pro-American. All its American characters are frank, brave, and honest in their behavior and remarkably free from vanity and ostentation. As Miss Melton explains, this is due to their being Americans:

"I come from a country where the demand for this commodity (vanity and conceit) is at present small; and am so prejudiced in favour of its antagonist qualities, that I wish it may never increase."

'Your people,' says Mr. Henry Cheslyn, are employed in making a small town a great city; ours in making a great city a small town. These different occupations may require different talents."<sup>17</sup>

The American War is condemned as a crowning piece of folly on the part of the British government:

"...this plague and pestilence of Britain; this jest of the surrounding nations--this American war!"<sup>18</sup>

and everywhere, the behavior of Britons in conducting the war is contrasted with that of the American colonists. Frank Morgan, a British sailor, is made in a long recital of incidents to contrast the inhumanity of the British and their Indian allies with the kind treatment accorded prisoners by the Americans:

"...a Virginia cruiser stumbled upon ours, and very politely conducted us to Williamsburg. They treated me very well here; we had plenty of fresh provisions, and some money when we chose to earn it. I liked the country so well that I began to care but little about old England, and towards the spring actually hired myself in a tobacco plantation;..."<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> BAGE, R., Mount Henneth, p.152.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p.133.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p.191.

As one of the main incidents in the plot of Mount Henneth hinges upon the villanous treatment by the British Captain Stubbs of the American girl, Miss Melton, whom he has taken prisoner, Morgan's admission is all the more effective by contrast.

In this novel, even a Hessian officer, the paid tool of despotism, laments the part he had taken against the brave Americans:

"To be serious, says he, although I have been engaged in it, and am, besides, the subject of a despotic prince, I like neither the principle nor the general conduct: above all, I detest the sordid part we have taken in it--for daily bread."<sup>20</sup>

Bage's Barham Downs (1784) and James Wallace (1788) have no American characters, but he is as uncompromising as ever in his denunciation of the intelligence and characters of those who supported the war against America. In cases such as the following, denunciation of his countrymen is not unmixed with praises of America:

"When authority is supported by corruption, and corruption by sophistry; when a war of desolation, where even success is ruin, is begun on principles of revenge, avarice, ambition, or any principles but those of justice; when fleets are sent out to look--and fly; armies wafted across the Atlantic to see a better world--and perish in it; when infallible beggary is entailed upon a nation, that a favoured few may be enriched, and ministers still plunder--and be safe; Folly is there..."<sup>21</sup>

But far more popular than the novels of Bage--and even more flattering to the Americans--were the celebrated

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p.236

<sup>21</sup> BAGE, R., Barham Downs, p.311.

Letters from an American Farmer (1782) by Hector St. Jean de Crevecoeur. Crevecoeur, originally a French nobleman, who had fought with Montcalm in America, had after the fall of Quebec gone south to the British colonies and become a British subject. In the American Revolution he threw in his lot with the colonies. An enthusiastic disciple of Rousseau, Crevecoeur united with a love of picturesque landscape and of the rural life, the ability of acute visual observation and the happy faculty of an ebullient nature which could ignore the uncongenial aspect of the American scene and concentrate upon those features which harmonized with the ideals in which he believed. His highly-coloured picture of American landscape, of the joys of rural life in America, of the noble savage, and of the perfection of American political and social freedom found popularity not only among those elements of English society favourable to the cause of America but also with the growing number of English intellectuals and dilettantes who had adopted Rousseau's ideas of the beauties of wild landscape and the value of the rural life. Letters from an American Farmer not only ran through four editions within twelve months of its publication in the British Isles, but was influential upon forming the concepts of America held by later romantics.

Moses Coit Tylor, an American historian, has stated of Crèvecoeur that:

"his idealized treatment of rural life in America wrought quite traceable effects upon the imaginations of Campbell, Byron, Southey, Coleridge, and furnished not a few materials for such captivating and airy schemes of literary colonization in America as that of 'Pantisocracy.'<sup>22</sup>

In this book Crèvecoeur defines the White American, a definition as flattering to its recipient as it is unflattering to the Europe from which his ancestors had sprung. The free institutions, open spaces, and picturesque scenery of America had wrought a change indeed:

"Can a wretch who wanders about, who works and starves, whose life is a continual scene of sore affliction or pinching penury; can that man call England or any other kingdom his country? A country that had no bread for him, whose fields procured him no harvest, who met with nothing but the frowns of the rich, the severity of the laws, with jails and punishments; who owned not a single foot of the extensive surface of this planet? No! urged by a variety of motives here they came. Every thing has tended to regenerate them; new laws, a new mode of living, a new social system; here they are become men; in Europe they were as so many useless plants, wanting vegetative mould, and refreshing showers; they withered, and were mown down by want, hunger, and war; but now by the power of transportation, like all other plants they have taken root and flourished....Here individuals of all nations are melted into a new race of men, whose labours and posterities will one day cause great changes in the world. Americans are the Western pilgrims, who are carrying along with them that great mass of arts, sciences, vigour, and industry, which began long since in the east; they will finish the great

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<sup>22</sup> BLAKE, W.B., "Introduction" to Letters from an American Farmer, p.11. Crèvecoeur's book was also a favourite with Lamb and Hazlitt.

"cycle...The American is a new man, who acts upon new principles; he must therefore entertain new ideas, and form new opinions. From involuntary idleness, servile dependence, penury and useless labour, he has passed to toils of a very different nature, rewarded by ample subsistence.--This is an American."<sup>23</sup>

Both Crèvecoeur and Bage wholeheartedly supported the Americans. The popularity of the former in contrast to the latter is in itself significant of the change in the climate of feeling which had taken place during, and partly as a result of, the American Revolution. For Bage, although like Crèvecoeur he had accepted much of Rousseau's philosophy, was in temperament and technique more akin to the rationalist Voltaire. He is more concerned, one feels with criticizing than with building, with destroying the bases of contemporary social ideals, and his technique, his dry, hard, clear-cut style, his methods of rational satire and ridicule are well adapted to that purpose. Crèvecoeur, on the other hand, disregards conventional beliefs in his eagerness to put before his readers the new world of his romantic vision. His appeal is not founded like Bage's primarily upon leading his readers to make rational comparisons, but upon rousing them to feel, sympathize and imagine. That readers in the early 1780's preferred appeals to their sympathy and emotion to rational satire is in itself an indication of the advance towards romanticism which had taken place

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<sup>23</sup> CREVECOEUR, H.St.J., Letters from an American Farmer, pp.42-44.

in British literary circles singe the American Revolution.

Had the American Revolution continued for another five years, it is more than likely that Britain would have seen a full-blown birth of romanticism in the 1780's, but with the close of the struggle there was not sufficient pressure to sustain the emotional fervour. With the close of the struggle the keen interest in America as evidenced by the demand for Letters from an American Farmer swiftly subsided. Both Tories and Whigs were for different reasons quite willing to forget America and the parts which they had played in relation to it; while in an age of peace and moderate reform, the Radical element in England could not hope to become an influential force. Between the years 1783 and 1789 the British attitude to America might be characterized for literary as well as political purposes as strictly neutral. The French Revolution and its aftermath were to break that neutrality and lead to a marked revival in political and social interest in America which was to be a continuing factor throughout the Romantic period. But even before the French Revolution powerful economic forces were changing the face of England in such a way that many of its most literate inhabitants were called upon to protest, and by the nature of that protest as well as by the French Revolution, the concept of White America came to be presented to Britons as a challenge and a hope.

#### CHAPTER IV--THE FRENCH REVOLUTION AND WHITE AMERICA

In Britain, the years immediately following the American Revolution presented an illusion of a return to the conditions which had existed before its outbreak. Strenuous and successful attempts were made to trade with America, but little interest, literary or otherwise, was evinced openly in the new republic. The memory of the family quarrel within the nation was fresh, and no one wished to open old wounds or encourage fresh animosities by referring in any way to the distant relative who had precipitated it. Crèvecoeur's Letters from an American Farmer was no longer in demand, and the newspapers and periodicals reflected a marked diminution of interest in America.

In politics, the Whigs, by betraying the cause of reform which had made them popular, had set George III and the Tories firmly back into authority. Moreover, with the cessation of hostilities and the return to prosperity, much of the urgency behind the demands for reform had disappeared, and politics seemed again the rivalry of ambitious factions for the emoluments of office. Classicism appeared again to have regained its ascendancy in literature, and artificiality in diction and form in poetry was more elaborate than ever.

A great change, however, had taken place. What before

the American Revolution in politics and literature had been a genuine expression of the spirit of the nation was now a facade. The undercurrent of reform set in motion by the American Revolution was slowly moving within both political parties. Moreover, the political differences were no longer merely temporary and personal in their nature but permanent and destined to become rooted in different ideological convictions. Only the pressure of another acute and prolonged crisis was needed to transform politics into a new force in British life. The return to normality was as illusory in literature as in politics. Men and women during the years of crisis occasioned by the American Revolution had found rationality with its social norms and doctrines of conformity an insufficient answer to their problems, and, although much of the emotional pressure had disappeared with the cessation of hostilities, a taste for emotion remained, to be satisfied in the lack of more genuine fare by tales of sentimental love and supernatural horror. Only the pressure of another acute and prolonged crisis to deepen the feelings and stimulate the imaginations of men and to compel them to find new and adequate forms of expression was needed for a new and genuine expression of the cultural life of the British people to emerge from the husk of a classicism which had fulfilled its purpose.

The French Revolution and the wars which developed from it acted as powerful forcing agents to bring to fruition the dialectic process in both literature and politics which the American Revolution had set into action but two decades before. The question now arises, what was their immediate effect upon the development of the concept of America in British literature?

The most immediate answer is that in the minds and imaginations of Englishmen, France took over the place previously given to America and with greater effect. The English Channel was much narrower than the Atlantic Ocean, and the two kingdoms had had a long history of inter-relationship. By its thorough-going republicanism, by its greater extension of the franchise, and, above all, by its abolition of privileges traditionally associated with the clergy and aristocracy, the French Revolution presented a sweeping departure and a strong challenge to the social and political order in Europe. This challenge assumed a peculiar complexity in Britain. Although France was a hereditary enemy, the French ideology of liberty, equality and fraternity which provided the apology for these changes was admittedly founded upon the doctrines of natural rights upon which supposedly both the English and the American constitutional settlements rested. At the outbreak of the French Revolution this avowed

imitation led the great majority of Englishmen of all stations in society to welcome it, but as the Revolution became more sweeping in its constitutional changes, more violent and bloody in its internal politics and more aggressive in its external relations, the majority of Englishmen recoiled from it in dismay. The British privileged classes were thoroughly alarmed and ill-disposed to grant those reforms which before the outbreak of the Revolution had appeared imminent. Moreover, Edmund Burke, by disposing of the abstract argument of natural rights and putting forward a theory of cultural continuity, a deeply ingrained social fabric of custom which was dangerous to be broken, had provided them not only with a plausible explanation of French excesses but also with a philosophic argument for the maintenance of privilege in the face of demands for reform, an argument the more plausible because it accorded with the reality of the contemporary English social pattern. The few Whig aristocrats and die-hard radicals in Britain who still favoured reform were hard put to find examples and arguments in the face of such powerful opposition. They were compelled to shift their ground, and the shift redirected their attention to America. The French Revolution was failing, all but a few conceded, but not through the causes advanced

by Burke and the Tories. It had failed partly because of the interference of the other European powers and partly because the French had been so oppressed in the past that the new wine of liberty had gone to their heads. The abolition of privilege did not in itself mean instability and violence, as witness the United States of America, a republic which preserved no privileges of state religion, no hereditary aristocracy, and which admitted a greater degree of political and social equality than any of the nations of Europe without being in any way torn by internal violence or external aggression. Burke had once supported the Americans in their struggle against privilege as acting in accordance with the political traditions of the British people, would he now deny to the British people the right to continue the same struggle at home? As a result of this or similar arguments, the focuss of interest and hope was transferred by British reformers during the period of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars gradually from France to America.

This renewed interest in America for political reasons can be easily seen in the work of the radical novelist, Robert Bage. His Mount Henneth, written during the American Revolution, had had as heroine an American girl

and had devoted so much attention to the American Revolution that it is not unlikely that the pressure of feeling generated by that event had driven Bage to novel writing. In the subsequent novels written by Bage between the years 1784 and 1788 mention of America is much more incidental and infrequent. However, in the two novels written after the outbreak of the French Revolution, Man as He is (1792) and Hermsprong; or Man as He is not (1796), it is significant that although Bage favours the adoption in Britain of the ideas of the French Revolution, the examples he cites of freedom and democracy are drawn from America. In Man as He is, the example of the United States is put forward as an argument for the abolition of religious and hereditary privilege, while in Hermsprong, the superior virtue, manners and abilities of his hero, a democratic American, are almost tiresomely opposed to the brutal Lord Grondale who represents the product of British privilege. There can be no question that these last two novels of Bage were by far his most celebrated and popular productions.

Bage's attitude was typical of that of others who opposed the Tory administration in the 1790's. It was not to France that the Whig satirist, Peter Pindar, turned when he shot his shafts against the Court, but to:

"Poor lost America, high honours missing,  
 Knows nought of smile or nod or sweet handkissing;  
 Knows not of golden promises of kings;  
 Knows not of coronets, and stars and strings."<sup>1</sup>

while in an Epistle to William Pitt he compares England to a "poor lean cow" which has been milked too hard and warns the government to:

"Think on AMERICA, our cow of yore,  
 Which oft the hand with Job-like patience bore;  
 Who, pinch'd, and yet denied a lock of hay,  
 Kick'd the hard MILKMAN off, and march'd away.  
 In vain he try'd by ev'ry art to catch her;  
 To wound, to hamstring, nay, knock down, dispatch her;  
 Far off she kept, where LOVE, where FREEDOM rules:  
 Mocking the fruitless rage of rogues and fools."<sup>2</sup>

Even those radicals who followed the anarchistic philosophy of William Godwin and despaired of human happiness under any organized government in the world turned to America as the least of many evils. Thus, Thomas Holcroft in his novel, Anna St. Ives, has his hero, Frank Henley, write:

"I have studied to divine in what land or among what people, whether savage or such as we call polished, the energies of mind might be most productive of good. But this is a discovery I have yet to make. The reasons are so numerous on either side that I have formed a plan for a kind of double effort. I think of sailing for America, where I may aid the struggles of liberty, may freely publish all which the efforts of reason can teach me, and at the same time may form a society of savages, who seem in consequence of their very ignorance to have a less quantity of error and therefore to be less liable to repel truth than those whose information is more multifarious."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> WOLCOT, J., The Works of Peter Findar.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> HOLCROFT, T., Anna St. Ives: a Novel, Vol V., pp.78-79.

In this passage the romantic mind is seen to be divided as to whether to continue the struggle in civilization or to withdraw from it completely. The significant thing, however, is that, continuation or withdrawal, White America or the savage wilderness, the theatre of man's future happiness, if it is to be found at all, is placed not in France but in America. Holcroft's statement is given added authority by the fact that by far the greater number of those radicals who were compelled or thought it advisable to leave Britain in the 1790's elected to go not to nearby and long-settled France but to remote and relatively primitive America, while the favourite hero of the radical poets, the most conspicuous of whom were Landor and Mrs. Barbauld, was not some great hero drawn from the French Revolution, a Mirabeau or a Danton, but George Washington, "the Cincinnatus of the West."

The most unique recognition of the role of America in connection with both the French Revolution and the romantic awakening made by any contemporary Englishman was that of William Blake. Of all his contemporaries, Blake was the most individualistic and thoroughgoing in his revolt against the tenets of neoclassical rationalism in almost all of its aspects. A painter and engraver by

trade, he looked forward to the time when the creative imagination in mankind would be free to transform and to work in the universe with the same joy as he himself experienced at his craft. All life in his ideal existence would be art, an existence in which space, time, and the sense of self would disappear and the only reality would be the moods or soul-states in which the artist-humans were completely absorbed in creative energy. Such a development, Blake was convinced, lay within the powers of humanity, but to achieve it, the sense of self, of individual separation which made men see and multiply distinctions in what was in reality a unified universe must be destroyed. Blake condemned the philosophy which would eliminate individuality by an increased conformity to norms of universal belief and behavior established by Reason. Far from eliminating differences and the consciousness of self in human beings, adherence to such a philosophy had in fact called them into being. A thorough-going revolt against the forces of Reason and its handmaids, Custom and Authority, was to Blake the first essential step in the process needed to bring about the universal reign of the uncontrolled creative energy of the imagination which he wished to see established in the universe. There is no indication in his work that Blake saw the beginnings of such a process in the American Revolution at the time of

its development. More than one related event must occur before a series can be detected. It was not until the French Revolution had been well under way, not in fact until 1793, that Blake became convinced that the process of rebellion against Custom and Authority which he longed for had become a reality and that the American Revolution had initiated the process. His poem, America, a Prophecy (1793), is his proclamation of that discovery.

It is extremely difficult to understand America and to outline its content. To begin with, every event on earth to Blake was but a sensual manifestation of an inter-related supersensual process which was cosmic in its range. Four life principles, the Four Zoas, roughly analogous to the four chief components of Man's nature, Instinct, Reason, Passion and Imagination, had in the beginning comprised the universe and existed in harmony. The entire universe, and Man as a component part, had then existed in what theologians would term "a state of Grace." This balance had become disturbed with a resultant "fall from Grace" in both the universe and Mankind. Each of the no-longer-united life principles had subdivided into its male and female elements, and these imperfect entities, striving to restore unity, had mated with similar imperfect entities of the other life principles multiplying division,

and confusion in the universe. Existence was only rendered tolerable by the arrogation of supreme control to itself by one of the life entities, Urizen, whose manifestation upon earth was the reign of Reason through organized religion, law and science. Such a dominion, though preferable to the chaos which had immediately preceded it, was immensely inferior to the original harmony of the universe. Not only were the other life elements sadly divided and thwarted in their development, but Urizen, through loneliness and isolation, had become a travesty of its original nature. The universe was lop-sided in its development and drastic measures were required to restore it to perfection. In his Preludium to America, Blake imagines and expresses symbolically in pictorial images the nature of the first step in this process of regeneration.

Prior to the events narrated in the Preludium, a new spirit has been born of the masculine and feminine elements of Imagination. This new life principle is Ore and manifests itself by a complete disregard of the rule of Urizen. When the Preludium begins, Ore is chained by Los (at once Imagination and Time) from escaping into the universe. Nor is it powerful enough in itself to escape. Rebellion against the established

order in the universe is not in itself sufficient to refashion a better universe. Ore by itself was potentially evil and advisedly kept in chains. But Ore is fed and ministered to by "the shadowy daughter of Urthona", who is Desire born of the Imagination, a life principle who has been imprisoned by Urizen and kept from expression in the universe, hence "shadowy." The day comes when the food brought by Imaginative Desire to Rebellion makes the latter strong enough to break the chains in which it has been confined and to unite with her. The results of this union are tremendous: for when Ore (Rebellion) is linked with Imaginative Desire ("the shadowy daughter of Urthona"), Passion is reincarnated in its pure and perfect form. Moreover, the new passion, being purely imaginative and not sensual in origin, has the power to preserve Mankind from the selfishness which the original union with Vala or Urizen had given and to send him forward along new paths in which a higher, more harmonious synthesis of qualities might work out a larger life.

Consciously or unconsciously, Blake had worked out in the Preludium to America the very process which governed the changing spirit of his time. In the shadow of the prevailing rationality, desires for a different life for mankind, desires unsanctioned by orthodox religious belief and custom, were being formed in men's

imaginations. These desires, expressed in the writings of philosophers and in the thoughts of many men but not translated into action, seemed like the daughter of Urthona doomed to remain "shadowy" and "dumb." At the same time, men of rebellious temperament were continually opposing the rule of Urizen upon earth, but these, having no positive program, were powerless, and were kept in check by force, like chained Orcs, for the good of their fellows. But these rebellious spirits, when "fed" by the imaginations of writers, produced movements which grew in strength. Eventually the time came when the holders of new theories were forced to unite with the men of rebellious temperament. Such a moment ensured that the ensuing struggle would have constructive as well as destructive aspects. This process was not natural but brought about by the brutal force of events and is well symbolized by Blake in the Preludium through the imagery of rape. Men like Washington, Franklin and Jefferson, who had masked their imaginative desires and conformed to rational pursuits in conformity to Urizen were in the position of "the shadowy daughter of Urizen" and only accepted Rebellion when it had forced itself upon them. Having accepted it, however, they felt like Urizen's shadowy daughter a new sense of freedom from the bondage of self, a freedom mingled with pain, for

with that union with men whom they had hitherto disliked, rebels like Sam Adams and Thomas Paine, they felt they were killing the prudent, orthodox part of themselves which for so long had been the major consideration in their existence:

"O what limb rending pains I feel; thy fire & my frost  
Mingle in howling pains, in furrows by thy lightnings rent,  
This is eternal death, and this the torment long foretold."<sup>4</sup>

Thus they felt the death of the Reason whose bounds are human selfishness, but at the same time they experienced the birth of a new faculty of imaginative sympathy whose bounds encompassed the whole universe:

"I know thee, I have found thee, & I will not let thee go.  
Thou art the image of God who dwells in darkness of Africa.  
And thou art fall'n to give me life in regions of dark  
death.  
On my American plains I feel the struggling afflictions  
Endured by roots that writhe their arms into the nether  
deep;  
I see a serpent in Canada who courts me with his love,  
In Mexico an Eagle, and a Lion in Peru;  
I see a Whale in the South-sea, drinking my soul away."<sup>5</sup>

to the newly emancipated imagination all things had become possible.

In his Preludium to America Blake thus conveyed graphically and symbolically the development and union of forces of which the American Revolution was an immediate earthly manifestation. The balance of America deals with the first effects upon the world of the liberated Orc, the revolt of the American colonies, but fails to display the

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<sup>4</sup> BLAKE, W., America; a Prophecy, Preludium.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

same unity. Beings like Orc, the Guardian Prince of Albion, Albion's Angel, the thirteen Angels of America, London's and Bristol's Spirits, and Albion's Bard occupy the centre of the stage, and the struggle revolves around them. The physical protagonists, the king of England, Washington, Franklin, Paine, Warren, Gates, Hancock, Green, the governors and the troops, are no more than agents of a destiny beyond their comprehension which is being worked out by eternal in accordance with Blake's concept of the eternal primacy of ideas over matter. Moreover, although Blake adheres to historical events, his technique of presentation, rather like that of a lens which wavers between the foreground and infinity, between historical and symbolic or pictorial interpretation, makes a straightforward analysis of the poem impossible without exceeding the limits allowed in this thesis. It is evident, however, that to Blake the American Revolution was an epoch-making event in the history of the universe:

"Then had America been lost, o'erwhelmed by the Atlantic,  
 ...Earth had lost another portion of the infinite."<sup>6</sup>

epoch-making because it marked the initial stage in the process of human regeneration, for the flames kindled by Orc beyond the Atlantic spread and infected England, and, although Urizen was able for the space of twelve years, the

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<sup>6</sup> BLAKE, W., America, a Prophecy.

interval between the signing of the Declaration of Independence and the Fall of the Bastille, to smother them, they broke out again with all their old violence in the vineyards of France. It is equally evident that had it not been for the French Revolution which followed it, Blake would not have seen in the American Revolution the symbol of the awakening of the human race to assert itself against the bondage of custom and authority. The concluding lines of the poem are the only ones which may in point of fact be justly called a prophecy, and here Blake predicts that the flames kindled by Ore will continue to spread and grow:

"Stiff shudderings shook the heav'nly thrones! France,  
 Spain & Italy  
 In terror view'd the bands of Albion and the ancient  
 Guardians  
 Fainting upon the elements, smitten with their own  
 plagues.  
 They slow advance to shut the five gates of their law-  
 built heaven  
 Filled with blasting fancies, and with mildews of  
 despair,  
 With fierce disease and lust, unable to stem the fires  
 of Ore.  
 But the five gates were consum'd & their bolts and  
 hinges melted  
 And the fierce flames burnt round the heavens & round  
 the abodes of men."<sup>7</sup>

Blake was a great poet: his greatness as a prophet is still open to question. Over a century and a half has passed since his writing of America, and "the five gates of the law-built heavens" still remain unconsumed

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

and their bolts and hinges are for the most part still unmelted although souls as ardent as the American and French Revolutionaries continue to batter at them, and although "the fierce flames" of Orc's revolt from Urizen still burn "round the heavens and round the abodes of men." The poem, *America, a Prophecy*, in particular its Preludium, reveals a comparatively little appreciated facet of Blake's genius, the profundity and the accuracy of his psychological insight into the causes and currents of the social and political movements of his century. If in his enthusiasm, he erred on the side of optimism and the possibility of human perfection, he was by no means the first great romantic to do so.

The French Revolution had the effect upon opinion in Britain of refocussing attention upon the question of privilege versus democracy in society and government, and, when France after the rise to power of Napoleon ceased to be a case in point, of redirecting attention to the experiment in "freedom" being carried out in America. As in the days of the American Revolution, British opinion became divided, and this time, by the pressure of events, the division was destined to last over more than a quarter of a century to irritate and wound the feelings of men with hopes, fears, loves, hates,

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faiths and doubts, until like wounded oysters their minds  
secreted the pearls of romantic literature.

CHAPTER V--POLITICAL INFLUENCES AND PERSONAL CONTACTS  
AFFECTING THE CONCEPT OF AMERICA IN BRITISH ROMANTIC  
LITERATURE AFTER THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

As the last chapter has shown, the French Revolution revived in Britain an interest in the United State which was mainly political. This interest in itself was not destined to be the potent force in popularizing the concept of America in English romantic literature of the early nineteenth century that its beginnings in the 1790's might have led one to expect. The complicated nature of politics in Britain and the United States during this period prevented any such straightforward and clear-cut a development.

The effect of the French Revolution was to divide Britain into three political groups: Tories, Whigs and Radicals. Both Tories and Whigs were in no way democratic in the present-day sense. Both parties believed that those with the largest stake in society should conduct the nation's affairs, and both resisted the demands of the Radicals who advocated universal manhood suffrages and frequent elections. Tories and Whigs, however, were sharply divided in their attitude to the French Revolution. The Tories, who won support to their views from the great majority of the nation, saw in the French Revolution the growth of a dangerous ideology which, if unchecked by the sternest measures, would spread and destroy all order and respect for privilege and property everywhere. They

opposed it by warlike action abroad and by the suppression of opinion at home. The Whigs, on the other hand, believed that the French Revolution was primarily a domestic concern of France. It had begun by initiating many much-needed reforms, and it was in reality the Tory government in Britain and the reactionary governments of Europe that had by their aggressive attitude driven France to extremes. Moreover, Napoleon and the Directorate had restored order and the rights of property and religion. The vendetta against France carried out in Europe by Tory governments seemed to the Whigs unwarranted by the situation; equally unwarranted in their opinion was the campaign of repression of speech and assembly carried out in England. They felt that the British Tories were using the French Revolution to consolidate their power and ensure its continuance. On the one hand, it gave the Tories an opportunity to pose as representatives of the patriotic nationalism engendered by the war with France, while on the other hand, it gave them a convenient pretext to put down speech and action directed against the government in any way. Not through love of the principles of the French Revolution but to oppose a political process aimed at permanently excluding them from office the British Whigs opposed the war with France, minimized the importance

of the French Revolution and defended the right of the Radicals to express their opinions. This procedure had the effect of putting them into an uneasy alliance with the British Radicals, the true heirs of the ideas of the American and French Revolutions, against the Tories.

Because of the political situation in the United States brought to a head by the French Revolution, no party in Britain could look across the Atlantic and find matter for either unreserved approval or condemnation. The American Revolution had been effected through a combination of elements of the property-owning and professional classes of the Eastern cities with the artisans of the cities and towns and the frontier farmers against the American Tories who for the most part belonged to the official or property-holding class. The divergence of interest between the elements united in rebellion reasserted itself once that rebellion had been successful. The men of education and property who had led the Revolution, having eliminated the previous governing class, were disposed to step into their shoes. Like their counterparts in Britain, they believed that those who had the greatest financial interests in a nation should govern that nation. It suited neither Western farmers nor city workmen for merchants and employers of labour to monopolize government.

Their cause was led by aristocratic radicals like Jefferson who from a study of the classics and the French rationalist philosophers had arrived at a theoretical concept of an agrarian democratic republic as the state of society best suited for mankind, and who had incorporated such a system of government into the American Constitution at the time of its framing. Under the outward appearance of unity presented by the two presidencies of George Washington, the political division within the nation was gradually becoming more apparent. The French Revolution and the European wars that followed brought it into the open and widened it eventually to the verge of civil war.

In America, as in England, the conservative elements there called Federalists saw in the French Revolution a threat to the rights of property and to the privilege which property confers. They feared the spread of "mob rule" to their own country and, when in power, passed repressive measures designed to stifle all criticism of governmental activity. These measures failed in their effect for, because of the range of the American franchise, at the next presidential election political power passed to their opponents, the Republicans, afterwards called Democrats, who either supported the French cause openly or maintained a neutrality which in the struggles between England and France essentially favoured the latter country. The frustrated Federalists out of office felt that America indeed

was undergoing mob rule. England, they felt, was the one state which combined freedom with a due respect for the rights of property, and the only bulwark in Europe against the ultimate success of the levelling progress of French ideas. They became enthusiastically pro-British,<sup>1</sup> and proud of the fact that they were of the same race as the men engaged in fighting the French. They subscribed to leading British periodicals; they greeted and made much of distinguished British visitors to America and made pilgrimages to Britain to see the former homes of their ancestors and to make the acquaintance of British men of letters. From these men, British writers formed many of their personal impressions of America, and, whether at home or abroad, these gentlemen were unsparing in their condemnation of the character and activities of their own government and unhesitating in prophecying the direst of futures for the republic.<sup>2</sup>

The American Republicans, or Democrats as they came shortly to be called, were not only pro-Gallican but perpetuated the legend of British tyranny. Their leaders and officials treated British visitors and officials with

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1 The numbers of the Federalists were enlarged and their feelings further influenced by a large influx of American Tories who in the years following the peace returned in great numbers from the Canadian colonies in the north.

2 Not even the morals of the Democrats were spared. Mrs. Trollope relates in The Domestic Manners of the Americans of being told that Jefferson regularly had children by his female slaves whom he sold to add to his income!

a formal neutrality which in the opinion of the latter bordered upon rudeness. Their followers, for the most part farmers, artisans and workmen who knew little of the world outside America were even more exasperating to British visitors. Naively enthusiastic and firmly convinced that the achievements of the sons of liberty in the New World must invariably surpass in every respect the accomplishments of Old World tyranny, they did not hesitate to proclaim the superiority of things American and were affronted if their statements were in any way challenged. Most obnoxious of all to the British visitor were the renegades, the lower class British radical emigrants, who, driven from their own country by poverty or oppression, joined the Democrats in America and outdid them in boasting and in heaping scorn upon their own motherland.

Along with the political, certain personal peculiarities born of a frontier existence proved exasperating to the Briton. The greater number of Americans did not appear to have any conception of the respect due to a gentleman. They would accost the British visitor with easy familiarity and ask him incredible questions; they ventured to oppose, often successfully their ignorance and untutored intelligence against his education in argument; they even did not scruple to spit in his presence. The hard life on the frontier had removed most

Americans from the more refined sources of recreation which were the property of their British counterparts, and they had adopted in their place simpler, harsher pleasures: the consumption of enormous quantities of spirits and the chewing of tobacco.<sup>3</sup>

The various political and personal factors bearing upon the formation of a concept of America by British Tories, Whigs and Radicals have been enumerated. Their practical application must now be considered.

In the face of the obvious internal political discord in the United States--discord which provoked statements like the following from men universally acclaimed as men of breeding and distinguished patriots:

"In an evil hour for my country did the French and Spaniards abandon Louisiana to the United States. We were not sufficiently a country before: and should we ever be mad enough to drive the English from Canada and her other North American provinces, we shall soon cease to be a country at all. Without local attachment, without national honour, we shall resemble a swarm of insects that settle on the fruits of the earth to corrupt and consume them rather than men who love and cleave to the land of their forefathers. After a shapeless anarchy and a series of civil wars, we shall at last be formed into many countries; unless, the vices engendered in the process should demand further punishment, and we should previously fall beneath the despotism of some military adventurer, like a lion consumed by an inward disease, prostrate and helpless beneath the beak and talons of a vulture, or yet meaner bird of prey."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> British travellers, had it occurred to them, could have compared American frontier pleasures with the even cruder pleasures of the factory workers in the industrial "frontier" in Britain.

<sup>4</sup> Letter from Commodore Stephen Decatur to Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Dec. 13, 1804, published in The Friend, Essay IX, Vol. II, pp.283-284.

the Whigs could scarcely put forward the United States as an example of the ideal working of a reformed constitution, nor were they inclined to do so as a result of their own experience in America. Whatever their political theories, the Whigs were conditioned by environment and training to regard themselves as both Britons and gentlemen and to react accordingly. Personal contact with the Francophile, vulgar, and aggressively class-conscious American Democrats almost invariably alienated them against America. Even radicals like Thorburn, who had been hustled out of Scotland at the time of the trial of Thomas Muir, and Cobbett, whose family background of sympathy towards the United States had stood the test of years of Tory pressure in New Brunswick, had shortly after their arrival in the United States in the early 1790's been converted into Tories.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, the poet, Thomas Moore, who because of his Irish background and his own political self-interest was a Whig sympathizer with America, had been completely disillusioned after his arrival there in 1803. That Moore had gone to America entertaining extravagant hopes of a better order of society is quite obvious from the verses written to his sister from Norfolk shortly after his arrival:

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<sup>5</sup> In both cases largely through the anti-British, pro-French bias of the Republican party in the United States. See THORBURN, G., *op. cit.*, Chapter II, and COLE, G.D.H. *op. cit.*, Chapter V.

"At length I touch the happy sphere  
 To liberty and virtue dear,  
 Where man looks up, and proud to claim  
 His rank within the social frame,  
 Sees a grand system round him roll,  
 Himself its centre, sun and soul!  
 Far from the shocks of Europe; far  
 From every wild, elliptic star  
 That, shooting with a devious fire,  
 Kindled by Heaven's avenging ire,  
 So oft hath into chaos hurl'd  
 The systems of the ancient world.  
 The warrior here, in arms no more,  
 Thinks of the toil, the conflict o'er,  
 And glorying in the rights they won  
 For hearth and altar, sire and son,  
 Smiles on the dusky webs that hide  
 His sleeping sword's remembered pride!  
 While peace, with sunny cheeks of toil,  
 Walks o'er the free, unlorded soil,  
 Effacing with her splendid share  
 The drops that war had sprinkled there!  
 Thrice happy land! where he that flies  
 From the dark ills of other skies,  
 From scorn, from want's unnerving woes,  
 May shelter him in proud repose!  
 Hope sings along the yellow sand  
 His welcome to a patriot land;  
 The mighty wood with pomp receives  
 The stranger in its world of leaves,  
 Which soon their barren glory yield  
 To the warm shed and cultured field;  
 And he, who came, of all bereft,  
 To whom malignant fate had left  
 Nor home nor friends nor country dear,  
 Finds home and friends and country here!

Such is the picture, warmly such,  
 That long the spell of fancy's touch  
 Hath painted to my sanguine eye  
 Of man's new world of liberty!"<sup>6</sup>

Like Dickens who wrote "I am disappointed; this is not the republic of my imagination"<sup>7</sup> at a much later date, in a very short time Moore became completely

<sup>6</sup> MOORE, T., To Miss Moore, from Norfolk, Virginia.

<sup>7</sup> Quoted in MARZIALS, T., The Life of Charles Dickens, p.76.

disillusioned and gave vent to his disappointment and bitterness in a series of stinging satires. From these and from his Memoirs it is apparent that Moore's attitude was determined by the opinions of the British officials and the Federalists who made much of him in the cities of the United States, and by his antipathy to the democrats whom he encountered in coaches and inns. In To Lord Viscount Forbes, from the City of Washington Moore, in a manner which the Federalists must have envied, drew a striking parallel between the peerless Federalist, Washington, and his followers, and his mean successors who now occupy the White House:

"...The motley dregs of every distant clime,  
 Each blast of anarchy and taint of crime,  
 Which Europe shakes from her perturbed sphere  
 In full malignancy to rankle here?...  
 If thou canst hate, as, oh! that soul must hate,  
 Which loves the virtuous and reveres the great,  
 If thou canst loathe and execrate with me  
 That Gallic garbage of philosophy,  
 That nauseous slaver of these frantic times,  
 With which false liberty dilutes her crimes!  
 If thou hast got, within thy free-born breast,  
 One pulse that beats more proudly than the rest,  
 With honest scorn for that inglorious soul,  
 Which creeps and winds beneath the mob's control,  
 Which courts the rabble's smile, the rabble's nod,  
 And makes, like Egypt, every beast its god!  
 There, in these walls--but burning tongue forbear!  
 Rank must be revered, even the rank that's there."<sup>8</sup>

To make the allusion to Jefferson and the Republicans doubly pointed, Moore adds a footnote that he is not impugning the

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<sup>8</sup> MOORE, T., To Lord Viscount Forbes, from the City of Washington.

justice of the American Revolution or justifying the tyranny of the British government:

"...my only object is to expose the selfish motives of some of the leading American demagogues."

Moore's satires on America display the bitterness of a disappointed dreamer. His contrast between the America he pictured in the 1790's and the America he encountered in 1803 differs from the Tory, ex-Radical Wordsworth's similar contrast in The Excursion (1816) only by being more intense. Wordsworth never went to America, hence his disappointment was slow-growing and academic. It was not the less real for that. Never has the bright, Utopian resolve of the emigrant to be a new man in a new world been better rendered than in the following passage:

"Long-wished-for sight, the Western World appeared;  
And, when the ship was moored, I leaped ashore  
Indignantly,--resolved to be a man,  
Who, having o'er the past no power, would live  
No longer in subjection to the past,  
With abject mind--from a tyrannic lord  
Inviting penance, fruitlessly endured:  
So, like a fugitive, whose feet have cleared  
Some boundary, which his followers may not cross  
In prosecution of their deadly chase,  
Respiring I looked round.--How bright the sun,  
The breeze how soft! Can anything produced  
In the old World compare, thought I, for power  
And majesty with this gigantic stream  
Sprung from the desert? And behold a city  
Fresh, youthful and aspiring!"<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> WORDSWORTH, W., The Excursion, Book III, "Despondency".

to be followed, like Moore, by disillusionment whose basis appears to have been political and personal:

"And, sooth to say,  
On nearer view, a motley spectacle  
Appear'd, of high pretensions--unreproved  
But by the obstreperous voice of higher still;  
Big passions strutting on a petty stage;  
Which a detach'd spectator may regard  
Not unamused. But ridicule demands  
Quick change of objects;...

Let us, then, I said,  
Leave this unknit Republic to the scourge  
Of its own passions; and to regions haste  
Whose shades have never felt th'encroaching axe,  
Or soil endured a transfer in the mart  
Of dire rapacity."<sup>10</sup>

Less imaginative than their poets, the newspapermen and politicians among the Whigs, although they put forth no extravagant claims with regard to America, were much slower in condemning it. To have done so, would have been to admit openly that the Tories were right, an admission the Whigs were reluctant to make. In addition, such an opinion would have been premature. Although the political system in the United States looked suspiciously like mob-rule, there was no guarantee such a system was either permanent or doomed to degenerate into chaos. America was very young as a nation, and her present political and social ills might be ascribed to the faults of youth and inexperience. British Whigs could aid the Americans in this respect by judiciously pointing out in such authoritarian journals as The Edinburgh Review what they considered faults in American literature and manners.

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid. The Solitary who describes these experiences is supposed to have been drawn from one, Fawcett, an acquaintance of Wordsworth in his radical, Godwinian days.

unlike the Tories, ascribing these faults not to the political system but to inexperience and a frontier environment. As years passed, and the dire prophecies of the Federalists remained unfulfilled the Whigs gradually became more confident in citing the United States government as an example to be followed by Britain in certain respects. By 1812, according to Samuel Rogers' nephew and biographer, America was:

"...the land of hope with the friends of civilization, while England had been frightened away from the very name of reform by the violence of the French Revolution."<sup>11</sup>

and this in the very year when the two nations were again at war with each other.

The War of 1812 and the close of the Napoleonic Wars marked a new appreciation of the role of America in the world on the part of British Whigs. In 1813, Francis Jeffrey, editor of The Edinburgh Review, and one of the most influential and clear-headed Whigs in Britain, visited the United States in wartime to marry an American lady. On this visit Jeffrey not only listened to the opinions of his Federalist in-laws but travelled extensively through the country, interviewing in Washington the President, Madison, and his Secretary of State, Munro. What he discovered convinced him that the American system offered no

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<sup>11</sup> SHARPE, S., Some Particulars of the Life of Samuel Rogers, p.xlvi.

threat to individual liberty or the stability of government and property and that the United States was destined to become a great nation. Upon his return to Britain he writes to reassure his brother-in-law:

"You are too desponding as to the future prospects of America. She will breed an aristocracy by and by, and then you will be rid of your vulgar miseries. Only take care that you do not cast off your love of liberty along with them. As we are still at war, however, I abstain from all such speculations."<sup>12</sup>

Jeffrey saw in the Holy Alliance the future great threat to human liberty. He envisaged a world-wide struggle between the forces of tyranny and democracy, "between legitimacy and representative judgment," a struggle in which America will play a key role:

"Now I cannot help thinking that the example of America and the influence and power which she will every year be more and more able to exert, will have a most potent and incalculable effect, both in shortening this conflict, in rendering it less sanguinary, and in insuring and accelerating its happy termination. I take it for granted that America, either as one or many states, will always remain free, and consequently prosperous and powerful. She will naturally take the side of liberty therefore in the great European contest--and while her growing power and means of compulsion will intimidate its opponents, the example not only of the practicability, but of the eminent advantages of a system of perfect freedom, and a disdain and oburation of all prejudices--cannot fail to incline the great body of all intelligent communities to its voluntary adoption."<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> COCKBURN, Lord, Life of Lord Jeffrey with a Selection of His Correspondence. Vol. II, To Charles Wilkes, Esq., 25 Feb., 1815.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 5 Aug., 1818.

Jeffrey's return from America marks a decided change in the attitude of The Edinburgh Review to America. In 1818, he writes to Sidney Smith, asking him to modify a review dealing with America,<sup>14</sup> while in May, 1820, he himself deals in a review of great length with the whole subject of the criticism of America in British books and papers. In this review, Jeffrey explains the attacks upon America as part of the Tory campaign to discredit liberal ideas at home, and states that far from having the desired effect, they had in fact resulted in the lovers of true liberty becoming more deeply interested in America. He sees America as a potential ally of a liberal England in the struggle shaping up in the world between the forces of reaction and those of liberalism. The spirit of English history has been more in accord with American ideals than that of any other country; England has always been a bulwark against the expansion of the brutal tyrannies of continental Europe:

"It is in aid of this generous, though perhaps decaying influence--it is as an associate or successor in the noble office of patronizing and protecting General Liberty, that we now call upon America to throw from her the memory of all petty differences and nice offences, and to unite herself cordially with the liberal and enlightened part of the English nation, at a season when their joint efforts may be all too little enough to crown the good cause with success,

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<sup>14</sup> See Lady HOLLAND, Memoir and Letters of the Rev. Sydney Smith, Vol. II, Smith to Jeffrey, 23 Nov., 1818.

"and when their disunion will give dreadful advantages to the enemies of improvement and reform. The example of America has already done much for that cause; and the very existence of such a country, under such a government, is a tower of strength, and a standard of encouragement, for all who may hereafter have to struggle for the restoration or the extension of their rights. It shows within what wide limits popular institutions are safe and practicable; and what a large infusion of democracy is consistent with the authorship of government and the good order of society. But her influence, as well as her example will be wanted in the crisis which seems to be approaching."<sup>15</sup>

That Jeffrey in 1820 was able to refer to the democratic example and influence of America in terms of the highest praise indicates the change which had taken place in Whig policy since 1815. Alarmed by the formation of the Holy Alliance and seeing in the economic unrest of the period an opportunity of winning public favour, the Whigs "had stolen the clothes of the Radicals" and committed themselves to electoral and ecclesiastic reform. They now openly praised certain American attitudes to politics and religion as examples for Britain to follow,<sup>16</sup> and were able to do so the more easily because political unity in the United States had again been restored.

Throughout the period between the French Revolution and the passing of the Reform Bill the Tories had acted as though they endorsed wholeheartedly the words of Jeffrey:

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<sup>15</sup> JEFFREY, F., "An Appel from the Judgments of Great Britain Respecting the United States of America," The Edinburgh Review, May, 1820.

<sup>16</sup> See SMITH, S., "America", The Edinburgh Review, July, 1824.

"the very existence of such a country under such a government, is a tower of strength and a standard of encouragement for all who may hereafter have to struggle for the restoration or the extension of their rights."

and behaved accordingly. The popular ideal of America as a land of freedom and plenty was a threat to their political supremacy, and in journals like The Quarterly Review they made every effort to destroy it. Their technique was one of clever ridicule. In reviews of books written by travellers to America they were careful to seize upon and magnify the ludicrous incidents in American life with irresistible wit and humour, treating these incidents which were but typical of certain aspects of America as typical of the whole. Should a book deliver a favourable judgment of America, as did Fearon's Sketches of America or Inchiquin's, the Jesuit's Letters, during a Late Residence in the United States of America, they were careful to attack the judgment and impugn the patriotism of its author. On the other hand, Tory writers, such as Captain Basil Hall and Mrs. Trollope, who wrote on America with the Reform Bill agitation at home ever in the back of their minds, came in for unqualified endorsement and praise. One fact, however, which emerges from their efforts to destroy the illusion as to the freedom of America, was the strength of that illusion by their own admission:

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"A society of sober trades and peaceful husbandmen, occupied in turning to advantage the blessings of an abundant soil, and of opportune harbours, a society decent in morals, serious in piety, in manners neither rudely clownish, nor meretriciously refined--studious of personal liberty and of national independence, but observant of the laws at home and breathing peace and good will to their neighbours abroad; a society so framed, and actuated by such principles, could not but attract the respect of all mankind, and command their sympathy if insulted by foreign power.

Such was the impression respecting the United States hastily taken up and fondly cherished in this country, and generally throughout Europe; an impression which the merely keeping quiet on their part might have left unexamined, and undissolved to the present hour. Exempted by their position from any direct participation in the contests and calamities of the old world, they might have availed themselves of the dreadful interval of the last twenty years to grow and flourish in noiseless prosperity; and if, etc."<sup>17</sup>

In addition to the internal political challenge which the ideal of America gave to the Tories, they were further exasperated before 1815 by the refusal of the United States to co-operate with them in what they regarded as their holy war against Napoleon. After 1815, there was an appreciable change in the Tory attitude to America.

For one thing, for all their sneers at America and things American in The Quarterly Review, literary men among the Tories, as the journals, correspondence and reported conversation of men like Coleridge, Wordsworth, Southey and Scott indicate, were beginning to feel a healthy respect for many Americans and had lost in great

<sup>17</sup> The Quarterly Review, "Review of Inchiquin, the Jesuit's Letters, during a late Residence in the United States of America, etc.", Jan., 1814.

measure the emotional vindictiveness against the United States which had characterized Tories of the American Revolution. To see the better class of Americans turning once more to England and to English literature for inspiration and sympathy as a truant child returns to its mother seemed to them to prove that the ties of blood were after all stronger than any separation which politics might bring about and went far to atone for the fact of the original rebellion. The Tory government had engaged in the War of 1812 with extreme reluctance, and had at the first opportunity made peace favourable to America. Like Jeffrey and the Whigs, many intelligent Tories were beginning to see the need for future understanding and co-operation between the two countries and on that account deplored the bitterness of the past. Coleridge, looking back upon the War of 1812 in retrospect, said:

"The last American war was to us only something to talk or read about; but to the Americans it was the cause of misery in their own homes."<sup>18</sup>

and of the tone of the reviews of the time:

"I deeply regret the anti-American articles of some of the leading reviews. The Americans regard what is said of them in England a thousand times more than they do anything said of them in any other country. The Americans are excessively pleased with any kind or favourable expressions, and never forgive or forget any slight or abuse."<sup>19</sup>

while Southey, in a letter to George Ticknor, disclaims

<sup>18</sup> COLERIDGE, H.N., The Table Talk of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, May 28, 1830, p.84.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

any personal responsibility for The Quarterly Review articles with respect to the United States:

"I have more than once remonstrated both with him (Gifford) and Murray upon the folly and mischief of their articles respecting America; and should the journal pass into the hands of any person whom I can influence, its temper will most assuredly be changed. Such papers, the silence of the journal upon certain topics on which it ought manfully to have spoken, and the abominable style of its criticism upon some notorious subjects, have made me more than once think seriously of withdrawing from it; and I have only been withheld by the hope of its amendment, and the certainty that through this channel I could act with more immediate effect than through any other."<sup>20</sup>

The War of 1812 convinced Tories of the solidarity and strength of the United States, and that in England, anti-Americanism as an effective political force was dying. In the European political repression which followed the downfall of Napoleon, the Tories came to realize the extent of the gulf that in reality existed in political principles and outlook between themselves and the feudalism of their European allies. When in the early 1820's the Tory Foreign Secretary, Canning, and the American President, Munro, combined to guarantee the independence of the revolted Spanish colonies in America against the Holy Alliance, the Tories like the Whigs had turned their backs upon the reactionary past and put themselves in line with the democratic forces of the future, and like the Whigs, in doing so they had turned

<sup>20</sup> SOUTHEY, R., Letters of Robert Southey, To George Ticknor, July 16, 1823.

for support to America.

After the War of 1812 social and cultural relations between British Tories and the Americans slowly improved. It is true that slighting references still occurred in the British press and travel books, notably Captain Basil Hall's Travels in North America in 1827-8 and Mrs. Frances Trollope's Domestic Manners of the Americans (1832), ridiculing American customs and institutions still found wide circles of readers, but the effect of these was continually diminishing. Much of the credit for the improved cultural relations must be given to the emergence of an American literature which had the power to interest and attract English readers, and to the personal presence of travelling American authors like Irving, Ticknor, Cooper and Cogswell, who won the respect and admiration of their English counterparts, regardless of their political affiliation.

The American political developments outlined in this chapter produced very much the same effects upon British literary radicals as upon Whigs and Tories.<sup>21</sup> These radicals, men like Byron, Landor and Shelley, were gentlemen by birth who through their reading of

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<sup>21</sup> British radicals of the lower classes found in America their greatest hope in the times under consideration. As many of them as could, emigrated. For their distrust of literature as an instrument of propaganda for the use of the upper class see COBBETT, W., Advice to Young Men, "To a Father", paras. 312-314.

Greek and Roman history and their study of philosophic theory had come to associate with democracy and republicanism the virtues of rural Rome, simplicity of manners, purity of life and freedom from greed. Of the theory of American government, and of the victorious struggle of the Americans for independence, they wholeheartedly approved. But when personally confronted with representatives of the republic, their illusions were destroyed. A description of a visit paid by Shelley and Trelawney to an American clipper ship illustrates perfectly the conflict between illusion and reality which inhibited British radical poets from making America and not ancient Greece or Rome the embodiment of their political aspirations:

"It is but a step," I said, "from these ruins of worn-out Greece to the New World; let's board the American clipper."

"I had rather not have any more of my hopes and illusions mocked by sad realities," said Shelley.

"You must allow," I answered, "that graceful craft was designed by a man who had a poet's feeling for things beautiful; let's get a model and build a boat like her."

The idea so pleased the Poet that he followed me on board her. The Americans are a social, free-and-easy people, accustomed to take their own way, and to readily yield the same privilege to all others, so that our coming on board, and examination of the vessel, fore and aft, were not considered as intrusions. The captain was on shore, so I talked to the mate, a smart specimen of a Yankee. When I commended her beauty, he said:

"I do expect, now we have our new copper on, she has a look of the brass serpent, she has as slick a run, and her bearings are just where they should be. We hoist up to heaven, and shoot home to hell, and cover the ocean with our canvas."

I said we wished to build a boat after her model.

"Then I calculate you must go to Baltimore or Boston to get one; there is no one on this side of the water

"'can do the job. We have our freight all ready, and are homeward-bound; we have elegant accommodation, and you will be across before your young friend's beard is ripe for a razor. Come down, and take an observation of the state cabin.' It was about ten and a-half feet by five or six; 'plenty of room to live and die comfortably in,' he observed; and then pressed us to have a chaw or real old Virginian cake, i.e. tobacco, and a cool drink of peach brandy. I made some observation to him about the Greek vessel we had visited. 'Crank as an eggshell' he said; 'too many sticks and top hamper; she looks like a bundle of chips going to hell to be burnt.' I seduced Shelley into drinking a wine-glass of weak grog, the first and last he ever drank. The Yankee would not let us go until we had drunk, under the star-spangled banner, to the memory of Washington, and the prosperity of the American commonwealth. 'As a warrior and statesman,' said Shelley, 'he was righteous in all he did, unlike all who lived before or since; he never used his power but for the benefit of his fellow creatures:

He fought  
 For truth and wisdom, foremost of the brave;  
 Him glory's idle glance dazzled not;  
 'Twas his ambition, generous and great,  
 A life to life's great end to consecrate.'

'Stranger,' said the Yankee, 'truer words were never spoken; there is dry rot in all the main timbers of the Old World, and none of you will do any good till you are docked, refitted, and annexed to the New. You must log that song you sang; there ain't many Britishers that will say as much of the man that whipped them; so just set these lines down in the log, or it won't go for nothing.' Shelley wrote some verses in the book but not those he had quoted; and so we parted."<sup>22</sup>

One facet of American life which Tories, Whigs and Radicals in Britain found occasion to condemn was the failure of the United States to follow Britain's example and abolish the slave trade. To the Tories such failure smacked of hypocrisy; to Whigs and Radicals of imperfection, and in books of travel, the most influential journals

<sup>22</sup> TRELAWNEY, E.J., Records of Shelley, Byron and the Author, pp.72-74.

and poems like The Stars and Stripes by Thomas Campbell and Satan by Robert Montgomery, the American attitude to slavery was categorically condemned. But although condemning the Americans for their adherence to slavery, British opinion did not regard that institution as likely to be of long duration in the United States,<sup>23x</sup> and before 1832 the issue was not an important one in influencing British opinion with regard to the United States.

This chapter has shown that the political and personal factors involved in the United States tended in all articulate and literary sections of the British people to cancel each other out, preventing the development of either extravagant praise or blame, admiration or repulsion from being sustained in connection with America. This explains to a great extent why America never was a major theme on the part of any great British romantic writer. The essence of romanticism is the ability to cherish an illusion in the face of an uncongenial reality. In their great works, therefore, romantic writers tended to weave their theories into the fabrics of the past, like Shelley's Prometheus Unbound, presenting illusions whose reality must forever remain unchallenged and of universal acceptance.

But while romantic writers delighted in clothing their thoughts in symbols that were inviolable, they

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<sup>23x</sup> See LANDOR, W.S., To Andrew Jackson.

they were human beings quite as much as literary artists and could not ignore the realities of the world in which they lived. In attacking institutions and tyrannies which they hated, the measure of their indignation made them praise contemporary institutions nearer to their hearts' desires in extravagant terms, even though in moments of sober prose they admitted the latter were far from perfect. Byron, for instance, who often speaks cynically of America in his diary, despairing of the cause of freedom in Europe in Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, does not hesitate to praise America:

"Can tyrants but by tyrants conquer'd be,  
 And Freedom find no champion and no child  
 Such as Columbia saw arise when she  
 Sprung forth a Pallas, arm'd and undefil'd?  
 Or must such minds be nourished in the wild,  
 Deep in the unpruned forest, 'midst the roar  
 Of cataracts, where nursing Nature smiled  
 On infant Washington? Has Earth no more  
 Such seeds within her breast, or Europe no such shore?"<sup>23</sup>

or in The Age of Bronze (1823) dealing with the revolt of the Spanish colonies in America, gives even more extravagant praise:

"The infant world redeems her name of "New".  
 'Tis the old aspiration breathed afresh  
 To kindle souls within degraded flesh..."<sup>24</sup>

Likewise, Shelley, in his Laon and Cythna or The Revolt of Islam, after his hero's hope in the old world to regenerate society has failed, cannot bear to see the

23 BYRON, Lord, Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, Canto IV, St.96.  
 24 BYRON, Lord, The Age of Bronze.

failure of his dreams, even in faction, and transfers them to America:

"There is a People mighty in its youth,  
A land beyond the Oceans of the West,  
Where, though with rudest rites, Freedom and Truth  
Are worshipped; from a glorious Mother's breast,  
Who, since high Athens fell, among the rest  
Sate like a Queen of Nations, but in woe,  
By inbred monsters outraged and oppressed,  
Turns to her chainless child for succour now,  
It draws the milk of Power in Wisdom's fullest flow.

That land is like an Eagle, whose young gaze  
Feeds on the noontide beam, whose golden plume  
Floats moveless on the storm, and in the blaze  
Of sunrise gleams when Earth is wrapped in gloom;  
An epitaph of glory for the tomb  
Of murdered Europe may thy fame be made,  
Great people! as the sands shalt thou become;  
Thy growth is swift as morn, when night must fade;  
The multitudinous Earth shall sleep beneath thy shade.

Yes, in the desert there is built a home  
For Freedom. Genius is made strong to rear  
The monuments of man beneath the dome  
Of a new heaven; myriads assemble there,  
Whom the proud lords of man, in rage or fear,  
Drive from their wasted homes; the boon I pray  
Is this--that Cythna be conveyed there--  
Nay, start not at the name--America!  
And then to you this night Laon will I betray."<sup>25</sup>

In the face of the known asperities of American life, of social and political crudities, of the attacks of influential periodicals like The Quarterly Review and poets like Wordsworth; in spite of lukewarm literary support in Britain on the part of those whose political interests were most similar to those of America, in spite of personal disenchantment, the illusion of America persisted

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25 SHELLEY, P.B., The Revolt of Islam, Canto XI, St. 22-24.

and recurred throughout the romantic period. It did so because, as the next chapters will show, it offered to men and women what they most desired and what had been consistently denied them for more than a generation-- peace, hope and the opportunity to lead a secure and settled existence.

CHAPTER VI--ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CHANGES AND WHITE AMERICA

The changes which occurred in Britain during the generations following the American Revolution were by no means confined to politics. During the earlier part of the eighteenth century life had presented relatively few problems to the greater number of the British people. Britain's trade, expanding over the world, was sufficient to furnish the materials of settled prosperity without greatly disturbing the manner of life of the people. In the farms, villages and towns of England, men and women continued to be "born" into trades and occupations which, although they offered no extravagant hopes, provided a source of limited livelihood to the majority of those who followed them. Good conduct, industry and a measure of sobriety were a sufficient passport to a stable and normal life for the rank and file of the British people.

When, however, the surplus wealth accumulated out of overseas trade and the perquisites of government by the great merchants and the governing families of Britain became too great to be used up on employment-providing luxuries and was reinvested in agriculture and manufacturing in Britain to gain still more wealth, not only was the physical face of the country changed, but the balance of the social pattern was disturbed. The old relationship between the country town whose various craftsmen supplied the neighbouring countryside with manufactured commodities

and clothing, and who took in return the latter's agricultural produce was gradually broken down. Not only did the new techniques applied to agriculture enormously increase output without making necessary a corresponding increase in the numbers employed, but at the same time the revolution in industry and power enormously increased the production of those commodities in proportion to the numbers of workers employed. Under these circumstances, many agricultural labourers found themselves redundant, while the weavers and other craftsmen in the smaller towns found that their work could no longer compete with the production of the new factories. Industry, honesty and sobriety were no longer sufficient passports to see men and women through life successfully in the districts and stations in which they had been born. As this process developed, men and women were increasingly faced with the alternative of slow starvation at the trade or employment to which they had been bred in their native place, or the abandonment of the life they knew by migration to the great cities and factory towns. They were neither intellectually or emotionally equipped for life in this new environment. There, the traditions which had governed their lives no longer applied, and the result was a disintegration of character. In bleak city tenements, the clean breath of the country air or a bird's song must

have affected them, like Wordsworth's Poor Susan, with an intolerable nostalgia. Nor did the economic conditions in the cities foster a life of happiness and stability. The period from the American Revolution to the close of the Napoleonic Wars was one in which Britain's food supply and foreign trade were subject to continual fluctuations due to external circumstances: fluctuations which, translated into food prices, wages and employment, meant continual uncertainty and fear--periods of depression enlivened by transitory intervals of prosperity.

Most of these people could do no more than to wait upon time and chance to alleviate their condition. Of those who endeavoured to escape from it, a hardy few blamed their employers, drank deep of the draught of revolutionary theory and founded the radical movement in British politics.<sup>1</sup> A second group sought to escape by emigration to lands beyond the seas where there was yet plenty of free land and few organized manufactures. Because of its relative nearness and its nucleus of settlement, America attracted by far the greater number of these would-be emigrants. They did not go to America to create a new Utopia, but to rediscover an old--the

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<sup>1</sup> In times of acute famine or unemployment they found ready listeners and aroused acute anxiety among both Tories and Whigs in the ruling classes.

Utopia of the England of peace, stability and security which was passing away before their eyes. In other cases, emigration was a means to the same end in a different way. They hoped to gain sufficient fortunes overseas by which to return to Britain and enjoy the stability and security which could be obtained there in no other manner. That economic motives were basic to most emigration is borne out by John Galt, himself an agent for emigration:

"Money, the want of it, or to get it, is the actuating spring, whatever may be the pretexts of intending emigrants of the middle classes. No doubt with a few, there may be other causes, taste or caprice, but I have never met with men actuated only by them. All who consulted me were individuals in impaired or desperate circumstances, unable to preserve their caste in the social system of this country, wrecked and catching at emigration as the last plank. The lower classes are governed by motives sufficiently manifest; agricultural changes, and the introduction of new machinery, is constantly throwing off swarms of operatives who have no other resource; as their vocation is labour; a shifting of the scene is of comparatively little consequence to them."

As this paragraph indicates, the thought and practise of emigrations was confined by no means to the lower classes. The upper and middle classes were alive to the changing conditions which they had brought into being and were by no means agreed either as to their value or the best means of dealing with them. Under these circumstances, beliefs and theories which hitherto had seemed of merely academic of intellectual interest became invested with new emotional

urgency and importance. What a man believed in politics, economics and religion became of paramount importance not only to himself but to the powers who sought to control church and state. Many individuals who a generation before could have enjoyed settled careers in the Church or at the Bar now found ideas which once had been treated as harmless eccentricities to be serious barriers to employment and advancement. Many of these rather than compound with their conscience sought peace and prosperity by emigration. Economic motives also forced much middle-class emigration, for, although the agricultural and industrial revolutions contributed to their wealth as a class, the uncertainties of the process in its earlier stages ruined almost as many fortunes as it created.<sup>3</sup>

The same forces which impelled so many emigrants, caused the more sensitive spirits among the men and women who remained in Britain to turn to America in their minds. In the face of warfare and economic uncertainty, of distress and brutality everywhere visible among the poorer classes,

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<sup>3</sup> Some indication of the scale of emigration to America on the part of the middle and upper classes in Britain during the romantic period may be gained by listing the writers and their relatives who for fortune or conscience at one time or other emigrated. Wolcott, Hazlitt, Priestley, Alexander Wilson, Paine, Cobbett, Moore, Michael Scott, Hamilton and Galt actually crossed the seas to the new world; other emigrants included the parents of Hazlitt, Montgomery, Darley and Trollope and the brothers of Campbell, Scott, Crabbe and Keats. In addition, Burns, Southey, Coleridge and Byron at one time or other contemplated emigration to America and were only deterred by circumstance from going.

of intolerance and strife in religion and politics, their position was analogous in many ways to that of Montaigne in sixteenth century France, and like Montaigne they turned to America as a hope of freedom from those evils against which they rebelled. Not only was it easier to cherish illusion at a distance, but America was known to be free from many of the ills which Europe was suffering. It still offered mankind amid beautiful surroundings a virgin wilderness to cultivate, vast in extent, where men and women could escape the wars and the strife of class, politics and religion which were vexing Europe and lead a life of simple happiness and freedom at peace with their neighbours. There the European could enjoy the best of two worlds, combining the amenities of old world civilization with the freedom of the noble savage. Thus in conditions analogous to those which originally had propagated the concept of the noble savage in Europe, British romantics came to see in the life of the White settler in America a similar ideal existence. This ideal, at once an escape and a revolt from contemporary conditions and a positive affirmation of human value, was a constant thread running through the development of the romantic movement.

The note of escape was sounded by William Blake in 1793:

"Why should I care for the men of Thames  
 Or the cheating waves of charter'd streams?  
 Or shrink at the little blasts of fear  
 That the hireling blows into my ear?

Tho' born on the cheating banks of Thames,  
 Tho' his waters bathed my infant limbs  
 The Ohio shall wash his stains from me.<sup>4</sup>  
 I was born a slave, but I go to be free."

and by Coleridge and Southey in their celebrated scheme of Pantisocracy.

Pantisocracy was an extremely practical matter to Coleridge and Southey. Both men, desirous of the joys of family life and a settled career, were debarred from the successful practise of the only profession for which they were fitted by education and inclination, the ministry, by heterodox religious opinions, the product of the troubled intellectual atmosphere of the time. In addition, their minds were distracted by the course of international events. To their dismay at the rise of forces of reaction in Britain following the French Revolution was added even greater dismay at the course which that revolution had taken. Despairing of Europe and seeing no prospects for a peaceful future in England, the two friends determined to seek a fresh start in America. They were not long in enlisting others similarly situated to join them, and a communal scheme was formed.

The theory of Pantisocracy was an attempt to make William Godwin's dream of social justice a practical

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4 BLAKE, W., Poems from the "Rossetti Mss."

reality. A picked band of men and women whose characters had not been corrupted by custom were to abandon deliberately the perverted ways of civilization, and to create a new perfect society in the American wilderness which would in the future be both an example and a regenerating force to the rest of mankind.

Seeing like Godwin, the roots of luxury, vice and tyranny in the ownership and unequal distribution of property, the Pantisocrats were to hold their land, goods and chattels in common. Under this system in which luxury would become obsolete, as each would work for all, only a few hours a day spent at manual labour in forest, forge and field would suffice to support the entire colony. The remaining time was to be devoted to reading the best books, discussion, argument, writing, and the education of children. To ensure social harmony, it was decided that each young man should take with him a suitable young woman as a wife; her share in the project being to cook and to tend the children.

Because of lack of funds, the Pantisocrats were continually forced to postpone the putting of their project into execution; finally, with the desertion of Southey and the death of Lovell the scheme was abandoned altogether.

Although Coleridge looked back upon Pantisocracy in retrospect as the crisis in his career and the source of his future greatness,<sup>5</sup> this opinion is not borne out by the

<sup>5</sup> See COLERIDGE, S.T., The Friend, Vol. I, Ch. VI, pp. 246-248.

quality of the verse which it inspired at the time of the experience. Coleridge's Pantisocratic poems are merely polite invitations to various persons and animals, living or dead, to come with him to "Freedom's undivided dale." Now it is the dead poet Chatterton whom he would have with him in America:

"O Chatterton! that thou wert yet alive!  
 Sure thou would'st spread the canvass to the gale,  
 And love with us the tinkling team to drive  
 O'er peaceful Freedom's undivided dale;"<sup>6</sup>

and now, feeling sorry for a tethered ass, he invites it too to share in the blessings of Pantisocracy:

"I hail thee brother--spite of the fool's scorn!  
 And fain would take thee with me, in the dell  
 Of peace and mild equality to dwell,  
 Where Toil shall call the charmer Health his bride,  
 And laughter tickle Plenty's ribless side!  
 How thou wouldst toss thy heels in gamesome play,  
 And frisk about, as lamb or kitten gay!  
 Yes! and more musically sweet to me  
 Thy dissonant harsh bray of joy would be,  
 Than warbled melodies that soothe to rest  
 The aching of pale fashion's vacant breast!"<sup>7</sup>

finally, in a poem to the Reverend W.J. Hort, Coleridge fancies that the Reverend Hort might suddenly appear in America, "And I will thank thee with a raptured tear:"

"In Freedom's undivided dell,  
 Where Toil and Health with mellowed Love shall dwell,  
 Far from folly, far from men,  
 In the rude romantic glen,  
 Up the cliff, and thro' the glade,  
 Wandering with the dear-loved maid,"<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> COLERIDGE, S.T., Monody on the Death of Chatterton.

<sup>7</sup> COLERIDGE, S.T., To a Young Ass, its Mother Being Tethered Near it.

<sup>8</sup> COLERIDGE, S.T., To the Rev. W.J.H. Hort, While Teaching a Young Lady some Song-tunes on his Flute.

Such effusions lend themselves easily to ridicule, and it is not surprising that John Hamilton Reynolds should have burlesqued Pantisocracy in King Tims the First with such delightful passages as the following:

- "A.T. Why, what are these?--are bludgeons wanted here  
In Freedom's undivided vale, my dear?  
J.J. These are the harmless branches of the trees,  
Broken by chance and gathered by degrees,  
To make our peaceful fires."<sup>9</sup>

and the conclusion in which after the members of the settlement have killed one another, the sole survivor asks:

"Is this the settlement where liberty  
And Virtue dwell--Yes--thus 'tis to be free!  
Vice has its revel--woman has her antic--  
Man plays his cunning--in the Transatlantic!  
Intrigue and woe, and shame, haunt ev'ry place;  
And Emigration does not mend the case."<sup>10</sup>

But all romantic writers at some time in their life were inclined to dispute the truth of Reynold's last line and voiced the hope of escape from Europe's turmoil and of freedom to be found in America.

The freedom which the romantics hoped to find in America was a freedom not only to escape from the conditions of the present but to recreate there in an ideal form the conditions of the past:

"'Tis the old aspiration breathed afresh  
To kindle souls within degraded flesh..."

The essentially conservative note of romanticism here

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<sup>9</sup> REYNOLDS, J.H., King Tims the First, Scene I.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., Scene II.

expressed in nowhere more apparent than in a survey of the romantic concept of White America. Much of the attraction of America to Crèvecoeur was the opportunity it gave to go back to the primitive freedom and simplicity which he imagined his ancestors had once possessed:

"...Here we might contemplate the very beginning of human society, which can be traced nowhere now but in this part of the world. The rest of the earth, I am told, is in some places too full, in others half depopulated. Misguided religion, tyranny and absurd laws everywhere depress and afflict mankind. Here we have in some measure regained the ancient dignity of our species; our laws are simple and just, we are a race of cultivators, our cultivation is unrestrained, and therefore, everything is prosperous and flourishing."<sup>11</sup>

What the greater number of romantics desired in their heart of hearts was a return to "the ancient dignity of the race," which to them was the old, leisurely upper-class life of pastoral beauty which their ancestors had enjoyed, and they transferred this vision to America. They felt that such a life was still possible there, and Coleridge and Southey had actually tried to put it into effect. Despite their revolutionary social theories, the end desired by the Pantisocrats was conservative. All the imagery in their poems is rural imagery, and the virtues they associated with America were those which every clergyman in Britain enjoyed in the palmy days before the American Revolution--a calm, ordered existence

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<sup>11</sup> CREVECOEUR, H.St.J., op. cit., p.12.

untroubled by political turmoil with full enjoyment of the domestic virtues and leisure for the pursuit of intellectual studies in surroundings of great natural beauty.<sup>12</sup>

Thomas Campbell's Gertrude of Wyoming posited an idyllic America whose qualities were distinctly rural and English in the tradition of England two generations before. Campbell describes frontier justice:

"Here was not mingled in the city's pomp  
Of life's extremes the grandeur and the gloom;  
Judgment awoke not here her dismal tromp  
Nor seal'd in blood a fellow-creature's doom,  
Nor mourn'd the captive in a living tomb.  
One venerable man, beloved of all  
Sufficed, when innocence was yet in bloom,  
To sway the strife, that seldom might befall,  
And Albert was their judge, in patriarchal hall."<sup>13</sup>

which resembles more closely the paternal sway of the better type of country squire in the heyday of rural eighteenth century England than any American reality. For the rest, like Crèvecoeur, Campbell puts forward America as the

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<sup>12</sup> In this respect, both Southey and Coleridge never abandoned their Pantisocratic vision, but transferred the struggle to realize it to their own land. Both came to identify the new England of manufacturing and commerce with the Whig party and their ideal picture of a rural England which was passing away with the Tories, and both fought for the preservation of human values, leisure and a greater attention to learning which promotes character against the new proponents of progress and their weapon of universal suffrage.

<sup>13</sup> CAMPBELL, T., Gertrude of Wyoming, Part I, St. VII.

home of a peace, freedom and a rural environment which the Old World has forfeited:

"And scarce had Wyoming of war or crime  
 Heard, but in transatlantic story rung,  
 For here the exile met from every clime,  
 And spoke in friendship every distant tongue;  
 Men from the blood of warring Europe sprung  
 Were but divided by the running brook;  
 And happy where no Rhenish trumpet sung,  
 On plains no sieging mine's volcano shook,  
 The blue-eyed German changed his sword to pruning hook."<sup>14</sup>

James Montgomery's The Wanderer of Switzerland (1798) combines the same notes of peace and freedom with a chance to recreate in America the same way of life which contemporary events are destroying in Europe. The Wanderer, driven from his home, hopes to go to America:

"Where a tyrant never trod,  
 Where a slave was never known,  
 But where Nature worships GOD  
 In the wilderness alone."<sup>15</sup>

and he goes, not with the hope of becoming a part of a society indigenous to the New World, but of recreating with his companions a new Switzerland like "a Phoenix:"

"Though our parent perished here,  
 Like the Phoenix on his nest,  
 Lo! new-fledged her wings appear,  
 Hovering in the golden West.

Thither shall her sons repair,  
 And beyond the roaring main,  
 Find their native country there,  
 Find their Switzerland again."<sup>16</sup>

but, although writing Switzerland, Montgomery is in

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., St. IV.

<sup>15</sup> MONTGOMERY, J., The Wanderer of Switzerland, Part VI.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

reality thinking England, as the unconscious transition to island imagery in the following passage shows:

"So, in regions wild and wide,  
We will pierce the savage woods,  
Clothe the rocks in purple pride,  
Plough the valleys, tame the floods;

Till a beauteous inland isle  
By a forest-sea embraced,  
Shall make Desolation smile  
In the depths of his own waste.

There, unenvied and unknown,  
We shall dwell secure and free,  
In a country all our own,  
In a land of liberty."<sup>17</sup>

One of the many manifestations of the revolt on the part of British romantics from contemporary conditions was their growing interest in their own past--particularly in those periods when ideas of a religious nature strongly affected the affairs of men. In several ambitious poems, the romantic interest in the past was combined with the romantic concept of America as a land of freedom, hope and opportunity. As might be expected, the imaginations of the poets working within a historical framework transferred the problems and feelings of their own time into the past. Madoc, for instance, must have echoed the feelings and thoughts of many a man condemned by circumstance to leave Britain for America in the early nineteenth century:

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

"I love my native land; with as true love  
 As ever yet did warm a British heart,  
 Love I the green fields of the beautiful isle,  
 My father's heritage! But far away,  
 Where nature's booner hand has blest the earth,  
 My lot hath been assign'd; beyond the seas  
 Madoc hath found his home; beyond the seas  
 A country for his children hath he chosen,  
 A land wherein their portion may be peace."<sup>18</sup>

Peace indeed from oppression, turmoil and bloodshed is the note sounded with respect to America by Southey in Madoc, A Tale of Paraguay and Oliver Newman; by Felicia Hemans in The Forest Sanctuary and The Landing of the Pilgrim Fathers; and by Samuel Rogers in The Voyage of Columbus. But if escape from the wrongs of Europe is the key note of each of these poems, opportunity is invariably associated with them--opportunity to live again in America some former state of European virtue which has been lost by change. Thus Madoc goes to the new world to perpetuate a chivalry which internal dissension in his own land was fast destroying; the Jesuits establish a society of Christian innocence in Paraguay which the corruption of the civilized world has made but a memory in the Europe of their own time; Mrs. Hemans' Pilgrim Fathers and Southey's Oliver Newman abandon an England which has turned its back upon the Saints in an effort to perform successfully the Puritan experiment in the New World. Rogers in The Voyage of Columbus sees

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18 SOUTHEY, R., Madoc, Book I.

America as the land in which a Christianity which had failed in Europe will ultimately attain its perfection:

"...from these shores shall spring  
 Peace without end; from these, with blood defiled,  
 Spread the pure spirit of thy Master mild!  
 Here, in His train, shall arts and arms attend,  
 Arts to adorn, and arms but to defend.  
 Assembling here, all nations shall be blest;  
 The sad be comforted; the weary rest;  
 Untouched shall drop the fetters from the slave;  
 And He shall rule the world He died to save!

Hence and rejoice. The glorious work is done.  
 A spark is thrown that shall eclipse the sun!"<sup>19</sup>

The concept of White America was to the romantic movement what the concept of the noble savage had been to classicism. In both instances, the idea owed its appeal as a strong reaction against contemporary circumstances, a reaction which at the same time harked back to a golden age which had a sure place in tradition. Combining elements of conservatism and rebellion, such an idea had powerful attractions in periods of social and intellectual ferment when the longing for peace, order and freedom from interference was particularly strong among individuals. It was the psychological force behind the literary interest in America during the romantic period.

The modern United States of America and what are now Canada, Australia, South Africa and New Zealand are in large measure the product of the struggles of thousands of obscure ignorant people to escape from the change and

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19 ROGERS, S., The Voyage of Columbus.

uncertainty which beset them in the British Isles. These great modern nations are like the splendid tropical islands which owe their existence to the lives, struggles and deaths of millions of obscure animalculae;--and resemble their founders about as much. For the very conditions of life on the frontier tended to exaggerate and make more important the aspects of human nature from which the emigrants were fleeing. Far from imposing upon nature in the New World the ideal pattern of English, Scottish and Irish life in the past, the emigrants were compelled by circumstances beyond their control to develop along lines of competition and aggression which eventually made their descendants the extreme advocates of that industrial capitalism from whose effects they themselves had tried to escape. As the next chapter will show, there is a literature of disillusion as well as of illusion in connection with emigration to America.

CHAPTER VII.--THE LITERATURE OF AMERICAN EMIGRATION

British romantic writers were concerned with emigration to America as it related to political and economic interests at home and from the point of view of human interest in the emigrants.

Generally speaking, the Tories more than the Whigs approved of emigration as a means of calming political unrest and of restoring Britain's prosperity. Both Whig and Tory wished to void the horrors of the French Revolution with its concomitants of "mob-rule", violence and godlessness; both wished England to be ruled by the upper classes; both saw in the poverty of the lower classes and the uncertainty of trade a source of discontent which might precipitate a revolution. They differed, however, as to the best remedy for the situation.

The Whigs supported doctrines which would restrain the functions of government to the purely political. Their emphasis was upon political reform, which would, by giving a greater share in the franchise go far towards placating the lower classes. Surplus population was a matter which economic laws would remedy in time. Theirs were essentially the views of merchants interested primarily in obtaining a cheap commodity, labour. Even such a humane and kindly Whig as Francis Jeffrey is unable because of his addiction to the principles of laissez faire to see any solution to the economic problems of Britain's poor

through emigration.<sup>1</sup> The Whigs were not in general inclined to support theories of emigration to America.

The attitude of the more sincere and enlightened Tories to the lower classes was rather like that of the Roman pater familias to the members of his family. They would not yield up one inch of their power and privilege: men, untrained and uneducated, their moral character debauched by vicious surroundings, were in their eyes unfit to have a voice in the government of the nation, and the Whigs in their opinion were merely pandering to the crowd for popularity and office in advocating electoral reform. But the Tories were willing to make efforts through education, restrictions on hours and ages of work in the factories, and emigration to improve the lot of the poor. Men like Southey, Wordsworth, Coleridge and Scott held the condition of the British labouring classes at heart quite as much as did radicals like Orator Hunt and William Cobbett.<sup>2</sup>

Like Jeffrey, Southey saw the misery of the poor in Britain as springing from the new industrial order, but, unlike Jeffrey, he was not willing to let this condition be left to the workings of rigid laws of economic theory.

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<sup>1</sup> COCKBURN, Lord, op. cit., Vol. II, Jeffrey to Charles Wilkes, August 24, 1819.

<sup>2</sup> A conspicuous example of the Tory attitude lay in the action of Lord Selkirk who, with sublime disregard of the laws of economics, bought the Hudson's Bay Company and spent his fortune in settling his dispossessed clansmen in the Canadian West.

It was the government's duty to remedy the situation:

"O! what a country might this England become, did its government but wisely direct the strength, the wealth, and activity of the people! Every profession, every trade is overstocked; there are more adventurers in each than can possibly find employment; hence poverty and crime. Do not misunderstand me as asserting this to be the sole cause, but it is the most frequent one. A system of colonization, that should offer an outlet for the superfluous activity of the country would convert this into a cause of general good; and blessings of civilization might be extended over the deserts, that, to the disgrace of man, occupy so great a part of the world! Assuredly, poverty and the dread of poverty are the great sources of guilt. That country cannot be well regulated where marriage is imprudence, where children are a burden and a misfortune. A very, very small portion of this evil, our plan, if established will remove; but of great magnitude if separately considered. I am not very sanguine of my expectations of success, but I will do my best, in examining the evil and proposing a remedy."<sup>3</sup>

But to Southey, emigration was more than a means of draining off Britain's surplus population. He had caught a vision of a British family of nations which even today has not yet gained universal recognition. Anticipating by more than a hundred years the idea behind the Statutes of Westminster, Southey wrote:

"My notions of colonial policy may be summarily stated. It is as necessary for a flourishing country to send out colonies, as it is for a hive to send out swarms, but no modern government has ever proceeded wisely in this business. With the Cape and New Holland, for instance, I would proceed thus: 'Govern yourselves, and we will protect you as long as you need protection; when that is no longer necessary, remember that though we be different countries, each independent, we are one people. Every Briton who

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<sup>3</sup> SOUTHEY, R., The Letters of Robert Southey, To John May, Feb. 18, 1800.

"sets foot among you shall instantly be entitled to all the privileges of a nation: every person born among you becomes as an Englishman when he lands in Great Britain. Every country in which English is the mother-tongue shall be open to every member of the great English race.' In fifty years, America would petition to be received back into the family."<sup>4</sup>

and as soon as he became poet-laureate, Southey gave literary expression to these ideas with particular reference to America:

"Queen of the Seas! enlarge thself;  
 Redundant as thou art of life and power,  
     Be thou the hive of nations  
 And send thy swarms abroad!  
 Send them like Greece of old,  
 With arts and science to enrich  
     The cultivated earth;  
 But with more precious gifts than Greece or Tyre  
     Or elder Egypt, to the world bequeath'd;  
     Just laws and rightful polity,  
 And, crowning all, the dearest boon of Heaven,  
     Its word and will reveal'd.  
     Queen of the Seas! enlarge  
 The place of thy pavilion. Let them stretch  
     The curtains of thy habitations forth;  
     Spare not; but lengthen thou  
     Thy cords; make strong thy stakes.

Queen of the Seas! enlarge thyself;  
 Send thou thy swarms abroad!  
     For in the years to come,  
 Though centuries or millenniums intervene,  
     Where'er thy progeny,  
 Thy language and thy spirit shall be found...

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., To Walter Savage Landor, April 16, 1812.

Southey was applying to modern times the classical relationship between the city state and its colony. For objections to this theory when applied to modern colonies see HUMBOLDT, A., Personal Narrative, Vol. II, pp.287-294. Southey's views on colonization are shared by Coleridge: "Colonization is not only a manifest expedient for, but an imperative duty on, Great Britain. God seems to hold out his finger to us over the sea. But it must be a national colonization, such as was that of the Scotch to America; a colonization of hope, and not such as we have alone encouraged and effected for the past fifty years, a colonization of despair." Table Talk, May 4, 1833.

"If on Ontario's shores,  
 Or late explored Missouri's pastures wide,  
 Or in that Austral world long sought,  
 The many-isled Pacific, . . . yea, where waves,  
 Now breaking over coral reefs, affright  
 The venturous mariner,  
 When islands shall have grown, and cities risen,  
 In cocoa groves embowered . . .  
 Wheresoe'er thy language lives,  
 By whatsoever name the land be called;  
 That land is English still, and there  
 Thy influential spirit dwells and reigns.  
 Thrones fall, and Dynasties are changed;  
 Empires decay and sink  
 Beneath their own unwieldy weight;  
 Dominion passeth like a cloud away;  
 The imperishable mind  
 Survives all meaner things."<sup>5</sup>

In Southey's conception, America, created by England, will always bear the stamp of its origin, and far from detracting from England's greatness, emigration will only spread and increase the possibility of its duration.

Southey's letters were directly responsible for kindling the same idea in his friend, Walter Savage Landor, who possessed two great qualities, the ability to embrace wholeheartedly a large and noble idea and the ability to express that idea in prose better than any man before him had done. Landor's Imaginary Conversations contain one between William Penn and Lord Peterborough which, while purporting to be in the American Wilderness in the seventeenth century, contains in fact viewpoints applicable to

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<sup>5</sup> SOUTHEY, R., Ode Written during the War with America, 1814.  
 The same idea is stated with respect to Scotland in his  
Ode Written after the King's Visit to Scotland.

the United States of Landor's own time, and was much influenced by contemporary ideas of America. Landor makes Penn in full agreement with Southey's concept of the relationship between a colonist and his mother country as outlined in the letter of 1812 previously quoted:

"By my removal from England to America, I do not think I any more change my country, than my father did when he left Bristol for London. We relinquish her when we relinquish her purer habits, her juster laws, her wiser conversations; not when we abandon the dissidence and dishonesty of her parties, her political craft, her theological intolerance. That is properly the land of our fathers in which we may venerate the image of their virtues; in which we may follow their steps, and leave our own not unworthy to be followed."<sup>6</sup>

Southey's opinions of the merit of the English poor as emigrants and of their future in the New World are both echoed and surpassed by Landor:

Peterborough: Want indeed may compel a few to emigrate from England; but what gain you by such colonists as those?

Penn: A pledge; a security. Whoever emigrates from want presents a token that he would rather work than steal, rather help his neighbour than beg. In England a family may often be a curse; in America it will always be a blessing. In England it can bring with it poverty in most instances; in America wealth.

Peterborough: In England there are swamps and bushes, in America ploughs and oxen; ay, Penn?

Penn: Without them, and in greater proportion than the luxuries of England can afford, our ploughs would rot, our oxen run wild. Wherever I see a child before me in America, I fancy I see a fresh opening in the wilderness, and in this opening a servant of God appointed to comfort and guide me, ready to sit by me when my eyes grow dim, and able to sustain me when my feet are weary. Look forward, and behold the children of that child. Few generations are requisite

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<sup>6</sup> LANDOR, W.S., Imaginary Conversations of Soldiers and Statesmen, "William Penn and Lord Peterborough."

"to throw upon their hinges the heavily-guarded portals of the vast continent behind me...Who knows but, a century or two hence, we may look down together on those who are journeying in this newly-traced road, towards the cities and marts of California, and who are delayed upon it by meeting the Spaniards driven in troops from Mexico."<sup>7</sup>

As the foregoing quotations show, emigration to America had assumed with Southey, Coleridge and Landor the importance of a national destiny in which the best of nationalism, because devoid of chauvinism, had become enshrined. A similar concept was held at the same time by the Scottish romantic, John Galt, and the form which it took with him is significant of the difference in temperament between romantics of the two nations. With the English romantics, to believe in an idea meant first to preach it to others and then to practise it one's self; with the more practical-minded Scots belief was first of all to be translated into action; preaching to be embarked upon after action had failed.

When an opportunity came to Galt in 1825 to play the laird to a large number of Scottish and English emigrants to Canada, he did not hesitate to abandon a promising literary career and to devote himself to the affairs of the Canada Company. Not until 1827, after he had been ousted from the Company because his views on emigration were larger and more generous than its shareholders', did Galt feel called upon to preach emigration, and preach

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

it he did<sup>8</sup> although he returned to England burdened with debt and in a poor position to deliver a sermon.<sup>9</sup>

In the preface to Lawrie Todd; or the Settlers in the Wood (1829), his first complete novel following his return from America, Galt writes:

"The subject is more important than novels commonly treat of.--A description, which may be considered authentic, of the rise and progress of a successful American settlement cannot but be useful to the emigrant who is driven to seek a home in the unknown wilderness of the woods. The privations are not exaggerated, nor is the rapidity with which they are overcome. The book, therefore, though written to amuse, was not altogether without a higher purpose."<sup>10</sup>

Bogle Corbet; or the Emigrants (1831) is still more than Lawrie Todd a novel with a purpose. Here again Galt is quite frank about his intentions:

"The object of this work has been to give expression to the probable feelings of a character upon whom the commercial circumstances of the age have had their natural effect, and to show what a person of ordinary genteel habits has really to expect in emigrating to Canada.

Information given as incidents of personal experience is more instructive than opinion. The author's opportunities to acquire knowledge of the kind which he has here prepared, have been, at least, not common, and it was studiously gathered to be useful to others.

The author had proposed to offer the results of his observations in a regularly didactic form, but upon

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<sup>8</sup> Galt regarded accomplishments as a colonizer in America as the great work of his life and his novels as of secondary importance, engaged in "when I had nothing else to do."

<sup>9</sup> Lawrie Todd was actually written in the Fleet Prison.

<sup>10</sup> GALT, J., Lawrie Todd; or the Settlers in the Wood. Preface.

"reflection, a theoretical biography seemed better calculated to ensure the effect desired. We disguise medicine, and he but mixes truth with fiction.

Whatever, therefore, shall be thought of his attempt the book will, perhaps, be considered as possessing in some degree a redeeming quality, inasmuch as it contains instruction that may help to lighten the anxieties of those whom taste or fortune prompt to quit their native land, and to seek in the wilderness new objects of industry, enterprise, and care."<sup>11</sup>

The short sketch, The Metropolitan Emigrant, which appeared in Fraser's Magazine in 1835 is no less didactic in intent, although the emphasis in this case is laid upon failure and the reasons for failure rather than upon success.

Lawrie Todd is one of John Galt's finest novels.

It is based in part and follows closely the incidents of the life of Grant Thorburn, a Scottish radical exile in America after whom the character of Lawrie Todd is frankly modelled. But the section of Lawrie Todd derived from Thorburn's life only provided Galt with an interesting character upon which to hang a story, and a series of unique and fascinating episodes by which to introduce it. The real story is based upon Galt's own American experiences and occurs after Lawrie Todd, his wife and family, and his wife's Yankee uncle, Zerobabel L. Hoskins, decide to migrate to the New York frontier. From this story, prospective emigrants in Britain might learn what they had never known before and what poetic dreamers like Southey, Coleridge and Landor had no inkling of, that pioneer settlement in the

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<sup>11</sup> GALT, J., Bogle Corbet; or The Emigrants, Preface.

United States was a business operated by shrewd men with specialized knowledge. Lawrie Todd and Zerubabel L. Hoskins formed an unbeatable team of Scots and Yankee energy and shrewdness. They explored the forest for new sites of townships which possessed the requisite qualities in water power, good soil and convenience of access. Having discovered them, they would take an option on the land and devote all their energies to making the new locations attractive to settlers. No detail which might draw men and women to Judiville or Babelmundle was omitted. Even clergymen and teachers were engaged because their progress might attract a better type of settler and enhance the value of the land. The best sites were reserved unsold until the efforts of the settlers had increased their value. They kept a strangle-hold upon the economic life of the new communities, controlling alike their banks and their merchandising. Through their efforts they built a prosperous settlement that meant for the settlers in general a modest expectancy of a comfortable existence wrung from hard work; for themselves great wealth. But if they reaped the greater reward for the success of the settlements they founded, they too had to pay a considerable price. Not only did they constantly risk their lives in search of information, but Lawrie Todd's daughter and his wife, Judy, Hoskins' niece, were victims of the primitive conditions of frontier life.

To Galt, America was no earthly paradise, nor to be compared with the best that was in Britain, but it was obvious to him that although many emigrants might find both physical hardship, danger and mental anguish in America, nevertheless America offered them employment and hope for the future of their own lives and the lives of their children--employment and hope that were denied them at home. He would work to foster emigration, but he would raise no false hopes. His books on America are realistic and are based upon the theory that every effort should be made to acquaint the prospective emigrant in advance with the true conditions governing life on the frontiers of the New World.

The United States had attracted emigrants from the lower and lower middle classes, mainly because the chances of obtaining work in the cities and towns there were far greater than in relatively undeveloped Canada; moreover, they were not anchored to Britain by ties of patriotism as strongly as were the members of the middle and upper classes who had partaken more fully of the British cultural heritage. Lawrie Todd dealt with emigration to America, and, Galt not only made the hero of this novel a Scot drawn from a class of manual workers but gave at least half of the book to describing the conditions and opportunities which existed in the large towns in the United States. Galt's second novel of emigration, Bogle Corbet, relates

the experience of the kind of emigrant more likely to settle in a British possession in America, a man accustomed to a better status in society, more conservative in his thinking, more bound by sentiment to his own land, and who only goes abroad because of the absolute poverty of opportunity at home, and who goes, determined to go to a "British" territory in order that he might live as "British" a life as possible.

Bogle Corbet, as a novel, is far inferior to Lawrie Todd. The fundamental fault lies partly in the rather colourless nature of the character and experiences of Corbet prior to the departure of himself and his family for Canada, and partly in the fact that although those experiences were admittedly but the prelude to the actual description of life in Canada, they occupy two thirds of the book. Nevertheless, there is much fine writing in the latter section where the feelings of the characters cut off from the amenities to which they had been accustomed are movingly portrayed. The gradual obliteration of class barriers and the respect due to social rank incidental to frontier life are given full weight. Galt is at great pains to point out both the laxity of the English authorities at home and the colonial officials in Canada in providing information and assistance to the emigrants. Although a depressing book, Bogle Corbet is written with the true

interests of the emigrant at heart. It relates tribulations and pitfalls, many of them avoidable, with the express intention of showing the would-be emigrant what situations to expect and how to deal with them.

As Galt's novels show, by no means all those who emigrated to America succeeded in their quest for fortune and happiness, and this fact produced in British romantic literature of emigration many poems which reflect nostalgia. The

"...sad heart of Ruth when, sick for home  
She stood in tears amid the alien corn"

became a conventional theme in an American setting. Most of these poems, depending as they do upon second-hand sources for their inspiration, are of little value, and a list of them will suffice. Typical examples are Felicia Hemans' The Cambrian in America and The Song of the Emigrant--the latter poem distinguished by its very real appreciation of the tragic situation of women emigrants on the frontiers of the New World; Robert Burns' mawkish On a Scotch Bard Gone to the West Indies and Verses to an Old Sweetheart; Joanna Baillie's The Banished Man; and James Hogg's The Highlander's Farewell and Lenahan's Farewell.<sup>12</sup> To a higher level of literature belong the stanzas in Wordsworth's The Female Vagrant describing

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<sup>12</sup> Hogg was the author of a far superior prose tale derived from personal experience entitled Emigration.

the experience of a soldier's wife in America at the time of the American Revolution with all their intolerable heartbreak:

"The pains and plagues that on our heads came down,  
Disease and famine, agony and fear,  
In wood or wilderness, in camp or town,  
It would thy brain unsettle, even to hear.  
All perish'd--all, in one remorseless year,  
Husband and children! one by one, by sword  
And ravenous plague, all perished: every tear  
Dried up, despairing, desolate, on board  
A British ship I waked, as from a trance restored..."<sup>13</sup>

and the celebrated, though anonymous, Canadian Boat Song with its memorable second stanza, the distilled essence of homesickness:

"From the lone shieling on the misty island  
Mountains divide us and the waste of seas;  
Yet still the blood is strong, the heart is highland,  
And we in dreams behold the Hebrides.  
Fair these broad meads, these flowery woods are grand,  
But we are exiles from our fathers' land."<sup>14</sup>

The examples of emigration to America dealt with in this and the preceding chapter show that although romantic literature is often distilled from the flowers of hope, it can also be extracted from the flowers of pain and heart-break. America has borne its share in both processes.

EPILOGUE

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This work has now surveyed the leading motives and manifestations of interest in America on the part of British romantic writers. It has shown that the European interest in America has from the very beginning been derived largely through the reaction of individuals against the growing complexities of their environment; a reaction which made them grasp eagerly at any land which offered a hope for a larger and freer life. America from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century offered to many Europeans the fulfilment of that hope, partly because distance and lack of knowledge fostered an illusion which its possessors desired to keep, and partly because America did offer to Europeans what was becoming increasingly difficult for them to possess in their own lands, room to move, to expand and to assert themselves as individuals. Hence America has been connected from its discovery with the romantic, individualistic side of man's nature. In their various forms, the romantic desires of Englishmen with respect to America throughout four centuries cover nearly all the wishes of mankind: now America is the land which will hold the prospect of wealth in pearls and gold; now it is a God-given opportunity for the exercise of missionary endeavour; now it holds some unknown race of men whose society is communal and perfect; now it is a symbol of science and the empirical hopes of

mankind; now it is a city of refuge for the oppressed children of the true religion; now in its savages, it offers a life that is simple, innocent and perfect; now in an age of warfare and social change it is the home of peace which in its unsettled spaces offers a chance for mankind to recreate the golden age; now it is the politician's, now the emigrant's hope: indeed there is no end to its romantic uses:--in the hands of a visionary like Blake, America even became the symbol of the regeneration of passion and the birth of free love.

If none of these visions and hopes were fully justified by America, the belief that they existed or were possible was at various times in British development a constant encouragement to the spirit of romanticism and individualism in both their creative and their rebellious aspects. America in British development was one of those intangible factors which, although their weight and pressure can never be accurately determined, play an important part in deciding the course of history, a part out of all proportion to their conscious products.

Despite the extent of British literature relative to America, little of it is first-class, and most of it is the product of minor writers. Because of this circumstance the influence of America upon British thought has been constantly under-estimated by literary historians.

Writers who are "not for an age but for all time" have ever tended to impress later generations who, still interested in the matter they have to offer, forget that that matter in their own time was often of less contemporary interest and importance than the work of many a writer who is now little heeded because he devoted himself to matters which in his own age were important, but which have since passed beyond the sphere of interest.

Two factors go far to explain why America failed to inspire a major work from any major British author: the greatest literature is that which incorporates the direct experience of its author, and few British writers on America wrote from direct experience; secondly, the greatest writers almost invariably sought and used symbols of expression whose meaning and significance were universally agreed upon. This led them to turn to the myths of the classicism and the symbols of the Christianity in which their civilization was rooted rather than to comparatively recent America to illustrate their thought.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In this connection it is interesting that the two poets who most used America as a symbol in their work, Donne and Blake, were those in rebellion against the literary tendencies of their respective periods.

Although the romantic admiration for America failed to produce great literature, its presence goes far to explain the official political attitude of Great Britain towards the United States, which throughout the latter part of the eighteenth and the entire nineteenth century proved so incomprehensible to Canadians who were free from it. To the American Loyalists, the terms of the Treaty of Versailles (1783) favoured the American colonies far beyond what the military facts of the situation warranted; likewise, the settlement at the close of the War of 1812 seemed to the Canadian merchants generous bordering on the absurd. Throughout the nineteenth century in the various boundary disputes in North America, in the friction at the time of the American Civil War, and in the Venezuela incident at the close of the century, the British government in its dealings with the United States showed a forbearance and a willingness to make concessions such as it showed to no other country. This relationship can only be explained on the assumption that the concept of America circulated during the romantic period had impressed the majority of educated Englishmen: that they had come to think

with Coleridge and Landor that America had a great future; with Jeffrey that the destinies of Great Britain and the United States were inexorably interwoven on the side of freedom against the forces of tyranny that from various points at various times threatened to engulf the world; with Southey that it was not one government but a community of language and culture that established a people's kinship.

The psychological sources which prompted the romantic concepts of the noble savage and of White America are perennial. An interesting illustration of this truth has been the revival within the last decade in Great Britain of the concept of America, enlarged to include the British dominions. Under circumstances of great economic difficulty, compelled by necessity to endure restrictions against which they unconsciously rebel, many people in Britain today have come to look once more upon the land beyond the seas as the home of a freedom and an opportunity which they no longer possess. They have founded their illusions upon as much, or as little truth, as did their ancestors one hundred and fifty years ago. Should they test the truth

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of the illusion, they will experience much the same results.

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