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THE NOVELS OF JOYCE CARY
AS DOCUMENTS OF SOCIAL CHANGE

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INTRODUCTION

Joyce Cary (1888-1957) documents the changes in English society between the 1860's and the 1940's. The major movements and events with which Cary deals are: Victorian life and standards; the challenge to those standards in the fin de Siècle; the coming of the new century; the First World War; the social, economic, and ideological conflicts of the post-war which culminated in the Second World War. History, as Joyce Cary sees it, is a process of change in which one order thrives only to decline -- Victorianism gave way to the changing customs and outlooks of the twentieth century.

Cary believes that the source of change is the creativity of man. Man, he says, has a "creative imagination" that continually produces new inventions and enriches civilization. Therefore, Cary sees Man as being able, creative, and strong. Cary also believes that the course of change in history is towards more development and possibly towards the achievement of a better life for everyone. This outlook is optimistic because it shows faith in man.

I shall deal in my first chapter with Cary's documentation of social change, showing how one fashion, one idea, one style died in the span of eighty years to give place to new ones. In the second chapter, I shall deal with Cary's idea of Man, the maker of civilizations, the creator, and the cause of change in history. An attempt will be made to show how Cary implied that each generation brings with

it new ideas to replace the old ones. It is these new ideas that redeem civilization from stagnation and retrogression.

In tracing the historical periods in the novels, chronology rather than the order in which the novels were written will be followed. I shall, for example, start with Except the Lord, which describes life in England in the 1860's and 1870's. Although the book was written in a later period of Cary's career, it deals with the earliest years of the period that he documents. For the purposes of this thesis, nine of Cary's sixteen novels will be considered: Castle Corner (1938), Herself Surprised (1941), To Be A Pilgrim (1942), The Horse's Mouth (1944), The Moonlight (1946), A Fearful Joy (1949), Prisoner of Grace (1952), Except the Lord (1953), and Not Honour More (1955).

THE NOVELS OF JOYCE CARY
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CHAPTER I

SOCIAL BACKGROUND - DOCUMENTATION AND CHANGE

1860's - 1940's

A number of Joyce Cary's critics agree that his documentation of social history illustrates a vision of history -- that of social change. Andrew Wright states that Cary sees history as an "eternal revolution" in which destruction makes way for new creation and new creation carries within it the seeds of decay. He continues to say that this view finds expression in three novels: Castle Corner, The Moonlight, and A Fearful Joy.¹ Robert Bloom talks about Cary's "sensitivity to historical change." He explains that that sensitivity makes itself apparent in three of Cary's novels: Castle Corner, To Be A Pilgrim, and A Fearful Joy. In these novels, Bloom says, Cary shows how the past is continually violated by a "continuing, irresistible present."²

I shall try to show in a selective manner how Cary documents in the different novels Victorian ideals, such as: religious piety, family veneration, female domesticity, emphasis on morality in art, as well as the gradual passing of these principles.

¹ Andrew Wright, Joyce Cary: A Preface to his Novels (London: Chatto & Windus, 1958), pp. 66-70.

² Robert Bloom, The Indeterminate World: A Study of the Novels of Joyce Cary (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1962), p. 23.

Chester Nimmo, the narrator of Except the Lord, described his early upbringing between the late 1860's and the early 1870's. Through this description, he revealed the Victorian ideals of piety and family veneration, as well as the economic and social troubles of these years. Esmé Wingfield-Stratford states in The Victorian Sunset that

the Victorians believed quite literally in the sanctity of the family union, and were prepared to maintain that sanctity at any cost to individuals. Women, in their eyes, were the special guardians of the family; their place was consequently in the home³

The Nimmos were an illustration of this veneration for the family. The children were attached to each other. They also showed great regard for their parents. Upon the mother's death, father and children, in spite of their dire need, did all they could to give the mother an expensive funeral in order to express their love for the departed one. The Nimmos were miserably poor. Each one of the children who was able to work, worked in order to help support the family. Georgina, the eldest child, worked in a grocery and on a farm to help keep the family provided for. Though she did not love Fred Coyte, (the son of Mrs. Coyte, the owner of the farm on which the Nimmos worked), she agreed to become engaged to him, hoping that the marriage would be good for the family. Fred, however,

³ Esmé Wingfield-Stratford, The Victorian Sunset (London: George Routledge and Sons, Ltd., 1932), p. 224.

became ill and died shortly after the engagement. Georgina fell in love with another young man called Wilson who proposed marriage. She could never join him, for she felt she could not leave her old and sick father alone. Georgina chose to stay at her father's bedside, to nurse and comfort him. Eventually, she fell ill and died without ever having joined her Lover. Her obligations towards her family always stood in the way of her personal happiness.

Chester Nimmo also revealed the religious atmosphere of his age. In his description of his father, who was an evangelical preacher, he said: "My father was such a believer that you do not meet in these days, perhaps not in all the land. For he had lived in the idea and the very knowledge of God's presence all his life."⁴ Chester's father believed in the early Second Coming of Christ. The date of the Second Coming had been calculated in London for April 15th, 1868. Chester, a boy of fourteen, accompanied his father to a place called Black Man Tor, and waited there for the great event. The group waited for a long time, but in vain. Chester's father had calculated another date and a different place for the Second Coming. Two weeks later, the children again went with their father to Shaghead Down this time. They prayed and waited, but with no better results. The father's faith was so strong that it was not affected by the disappointment; however, the children's faith

⁴ Joyce Cary, Except the Lord (London: Michael Joseph, 1953), p. 34.

received a "mortal wound."

It seems that many people in the 1860's expected a Second Coming. Edmund Gosse, in his autobiography, Father and Son (1907), says that his father had also calculated dates for the Second Coming, and urged his son to be prepared for that Coming. The son, at one deep religious moment, cried:

"Come now, Lord Jesus, . . . come now and take me to be for ever with Thee in Thy Paradise. I am ready to come. My heart is purged from sin, there is nothing that keeps me rooted to this wicked world. Oh, come now, now, and take me before I have known the temptations of life, before I have to go to London and all the dreadful things that happen there!"⁵

The son waited fruitlessly for Christ to appear. Disappointed like Chester, he said: "'The Lord has not come, the Lord will never come,' . . . in my heart the artificial edifice of extravagant faith began to totter and crumble."⁶ The son, after this incident, went to London where, contrary to his father's wish, he gave up reading the Bible and Biblical literature. He concentrated, instead, on the works of Ruskin and Carlyle. Chester, too, after his disappointment, sought another faith. He read a lot of atheistic and socialistic pamphlets. He became a labour agitator and took part in the Trade Union movement of the 1870's. He formed

⁵ Edmund Gosse, Father and Son: A Study of Two Temperaments (Booklover's edition; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1935), pp. 286-287.

⁶ Ibid., p. 287.

a farm labourers' union in his village, Shagbrook, but it failed to achieve anything. Next, he took part in the dockers' stike in Lilmouth, which again failed to achieve very much. The leaders of the strike-committee shocked him by their cruelty. He came to realize that many of those who claim to promote the cause of the poor have no aims beyond their own welfare. After this experience, he went back to religion, hoping that it would heal his new wound. He came to believe that unless one aims at the life of the soul, all that he achieves would be a "gaol or a mad-house."⁷ Chester Nimmo, thereupon, for almost ten years, became a preacher. He then started a political career which lasted for almost thirty years. That career, he claimed, was inspired by the deep religious faith that he had acquired. Cary, in order to emphasize Victorian piety, makes all his Victorian characters religious. Thus, Mary Corner, Thomas Wilcher, and Rose Venn, like Nommo, prove to be God-fearing and attached to religion.

Talking about the women of his time, Chester said:

There were many places where no woman could go unprotected, and almost every woman, except among the most sheltered class, was accustomed to incidents which would now be thought fit for a police court. It was not for nothing that ladies did not venture even down the street except with a maid or a footman, and that their menfolk so fiercely maintained what is called Victorian morality.

⁷ Except the Lord, p. 284.

That moral system which has been compared with that of Eastern potentates, whose women are guarded for their whole lives in the fortress of a seraglio, had the same end and arose largely from the same necessity to protect and maintain their refinement and their chastity in a world inconceivably brutal.⁸

In The Moonlight, Cary reveals how Victorian girls were brought up. Rose, the eldest Venn daughter, took the place of her mother in looking after her sisters. Like Georgina, she sacrificed her own happiness for the sake of the family. Her love affair with the scientist James Groom (which developed in spite of ideological disagreement) came to nothing, because of her duties towards the family. Rose brought up her sisters in accordance with the Victorian standards of the day. Like most of the girls, then, the Venn girls stayed at home, studied under governesses, and concentrated on religion and music. On the other hand, they made themselves attractive and wore low dresses in order to catch husbands. The following conversation between Ella Venn and her daughter, Amanda Cranage, reveals the last point:

"You think I worry too much about a girl's being attractive."

"I suppose Aunt Rose made you wear low frocks when young men were about, and they were very low in the eighties."

"Yes, dreadfully low, and I was dreadfully ashamed the first time -- Rose had to come and persuade me -- she was very amused. She herself had a most beautiful neck, she was very proud of her figure. But, oh dear, how can I make you see -- it was the right thing to

⁸ Ibid., pp. 55-56.

wear low dresses -- it was only polite."

"Almost religious."

"Yes, yes. No, you're laughing. But Rose would have thought it very rude and -- ungenerous of any woman not to make herself as attractive as possible. But you don't believe me. How could you. Good night. Oh, I shouldn't have told you."⁹

However, in the 1890's many of the Victorian ideals were weakening. As early as the 1860's religion was challenged by scientific theories such as that of Darwin. In The Moonlight, we meet a young scientist, James Groom, who rejected the book of Genesis for Darwin's theory of evolution. He terrified the religious Rose Venn with his scientific ideas. At one point, she asked him:

"Professor Groom, do you truly believe that Mr. Darwin is a benefactor of humanity?"

"Most certainly," said Groom, amused. . . . "You don't agree with me, Miss Rose."

"Oh no, I couldn't -- Mr. Darwin is an atheist."

"I beg your pardon -- he is most regular in his attendance at church."

"I'm glad to hear that -- but -- may I ask you something?"

"Anything you like."

"You won't think me impertinent?"

"No, no. That would be impossible for Miss Venn," with a little smirk which would have offended Rose if she had not been so much in earnest.

"Are you an atheist, Mr. Groom?"

"I should not like to say that -- call me rather an agnostic. I agree with Mr. Spencer that the ultimate source of activity is unknowable."

"Oh dear," cried Rose. "Oh, what a pity. Oh, what a pity."¹⁰

⁹ Joyce Cary, The Moonlight (Carfax edition; London: Michael Joseph, 1952), pp. 148-149.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 39.

Thus the teachings of Darwin had their impact on many, while others recoiled from them. Rose Venn and James Groom show the late-Victorian struggle between faith and science.

In the 1890's some women had enough courage to try to break with the conventions of the day. Among those was Helen Pynsant of Castle Corner. She was heard making fun of Queen Victoria, the preserver of the Victorian order, in one of the mixed parties that she had given. Helen Pynsant felt free to talk about any subject without any reserve and to welcome the compliments of men. Other women, however, such as Mary Corner, remained typical Victorians. Mary believed in large families and wanted very much to be a mother of such a family. Nature, however, was against her. It was only after several abortive pregnancies that she gave birth to one son, Shon, to whom she was passionately devoted. Shon was not destined to live long. He died at an early age, thus breaking the heart of his parents, and leaving his earnest mother childless. In comparing the two women, Mary and Helen, Cary says:

Mary Corner was early Victorian; Helen Pynsant belonged to a society which would set the tone to a new age, and each had complete confidence in a position which was very strong. Mary Corner would have said from her own experience of life, 'There is no secure happiness anywhere, except in love, in giving.' Helen Pynsant would have asked, 'Why should anyone be asked to make sacrifices? You say, for civilization, for the next generation. But why should I trouble about something that doesn't even exist?'¹¹

¹¹ Joyce Cary, Castle Corner (Carfax edition; London: Michael Joseph, 1960), p. 308.

In the 1890's, a group of writers tended to emphasize the aesthetic and the beautiful in form rather than in content. This trend came to be known as the school of "art for art's sake." It was a reaction against Ruskin's moral teachings. Walter Pater and Oscar Wilde were among the advocates of this school. Cary refers to this movement in Castle Corner, The Moonlight, and A Fearful Joy.

Cobden Chorley of Castle Corner was in love with the fashionable Helen Pynsant. Cary maintains that Cobden had fallen in love with Helen "beautifully." Chorley further explained his style of love to a friend by saying:

'Speaking strictly, I cannot say that I admire Helen Pynsant. She is, after all, merely a smart woman who happens to have a little more intelligence and taste than some of the others. Nor do I admire her beauty, which is already rather full blown. But I adore beauty in Helen Pynsant. I could contemplate her little finger for hours or the marvel of her nose.¹²

Cary's tone is rather unjustifiably ironical. Chorley's sentence, "I could contemplate her little finger for hours or the marvel of her nose," is an exaggeration. The school of "art for art's sake" preached a worthwhile cause. The works of Pater and Wilde cannot be underestimated nor treated with the levity with which Cary treats Cobden Chorley.

In The Moonlight, we meet the rising poet, Geoffrey Tew, who believed in "art for art's sake." During a visit to the Venn

¹² Ibid., p. 194.

family, he attacked Ruskin and said: "Art, . . . could have no object but itself or it ceased to be art. It became utilitarian, commercial, grossier."¹³ He exasperated some old gentlemen who were present by such ideas. He especially annoyed Rose Venn who was Ruskin's disciple. Her sister, Ella Venn, however, fell in love with the poet. Rose rebuked her and eventually forbade her to marry Tew. She maintained that he was a bad person and that his ideas were immoral.

In A Fearful Joy, we come across another group of aesthetes who were full of scorn for everything established: the Church, the Academy, Ruskin, and Tennyson. Those aesthetes wanted a paper to express their ideas. Tabitha Baskett, their leader, urged her rich friend, Fred Sturge, to found a paper for them. Sturge, afraid lest their attack would be too severe, was reluctant to do so. Tabitha, because of this, cried: "'But why, Fred, why?'. . . 'Why can't you see that it's a duty to protest against all this rotn enness.'"¹⁴ As a result of her pleas, Fred Sturge founded a paper called The Bankside. The first issue appeared in the spring of 1898. Like many magazines of the day, Cary says, it showed "aesthetic adventure" and "pagan licence." Other issues appeared; the most important of which was the number of June, 1901. It was especially prepared as

¹³ The Moonlight, p. 70.

¹⁴ Joyce Cary, A Fearful Joy (Carfax edition; London: Michael Joseph, 1962), p. 69.

the voice of the new age of revolution, a reaction against everything Victorian.

Though there was a reaction against Victorianism, the nineties included people who still attached themselves to Victorian standards. Side by side with emancipated women like Helen Pynsant, rebellious women like Tabitha Baskett, there were old-fashioned Victorians like Rose Venn and Mary Corner. Change, according to Cary, is inevitable in history. It comes, however, not abruptly, but gradually.

In Castle Corner, Cary tells about the attempts of the Irish to overthrow the supremacy of the Anglo-Saxon people and gain Home Rule for Ireland. We hear of the "Gaelic League" which was trying to preserve the old Celtic language, Irish songs, and the Irish heritage.

While the Irish were trying to rid themselves of the British yoke, England was spreading its supremacy over other territories. As early as the 1870's, European countries started to be interested in Africa and sought to obtain spheres of influence on that continent. This reached a climax in the 1890's. Harry Jarvis, the Irish soldier of Castle Corner, helped in adding new territories to the British Empire. Africa opened new opportunities for young men who, after working in Africa, went back home with full pockets. Among those was Benskin of Castle Corner who represented the new moneyed aristocracy. By 1897 England became the heart of an empire "over which the sun never set." Its society could no longer remain closed, but was opened to new classes and wealthy newcomers.

The Diamond Jubilee of 1897 was celebrated with a great deal of imperial pomp and circumstance. Cary talks about the demonstrations of loyalty and the celebrations that took place on that day in honour of Queen Victoria. John Chass, the Anglo-Saxon landlord of Castle Corner, took extraordinary care in hanging the picture of the Queen for that occasion. There were cheers, music, drinking, and fireworks on that day. John Chass made a special speech:

'Five hundred million people join this evening in gratitude and affection to one who for sixty years as queen, wife and mother, has given us all an example of duty and devotion --'

.....
'Our hearts go out to her, . . . and hers, we know, is with us.'¹⁵

In Britain, however, all did not go so well, for the public's attention was turned to the Boer War in South Africa. Public opinion was divided over that war. There were some who supported the cause of the empire, and others who stood for the cause of the Boers. Harry Jarvis was heard praising the soldiers who were fighting the Boers. However, a group of radical Liberals led by Lloyd George, the then rising Welsh politician, opposed the war inside and outside Parliament. Lloyd George risked many violent assaults and even death in speaking to hostile audiences against the war. The best known incident occurred at the Town Hall in Birmingham, on December 18, 1901. A vast mob surrounded the hall; Lloyd George, in an old cap and overcoat, escaped notice as he calmly made his way through

¹⁵ Castle Corner, p. 208.

the crowds into the hall. But when he began his speech, the mob surged in, and the meeting had to be abandoned. Lloyd George and his party were kept in the dark in a committee room for two hours, and were protected by the police. Then, disguised in a policeman's cap and helmet, he was safely smuggled out of the building.¹⁶

Cary's political figure, Chester Nimmo, was a follower of Lloyd George. He underwent a rather similar experience in Prisoner of Grace. Nina, the narrator of the novel, said that her husband, Chester, was to speak at a pro-Boer meeting at Lilmouth, which she attended. Nimmo supported the Boer's cause, attacked the government, and called the soldiers "butchers." Some of the audience were exasperated and tried to throw Nimmo into the pit. Nina was recognized and attacked. Chester had not known that she had come to the meeting, but he saw her while being attacked. He then sent some of his men to protect her. They wrapped her in an overcoat and put her in an ambulance that was driven into a dark street. The ambulance was stopped after a while; the door opened, and into the back two policemen lifted a stretcher on which was a figure covered with a blanket. The ambulance was driven away at full speed. Nina was terrified by the idea that she was locked in with a corpse. To her horror, the corpse began to move. Before she could scream, she saw that the corpse was nobody but Chester.

¹⁶ Charles Loch Mowat, Lloyd George (The Clarendon Biographies; London: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 13.

Though Cary does not tell about the actual historical incident of Lloyd George, he must have been influenced by it while writing about Nimmo's escapade.

The death of the Queen in 1901 coincided with the dawn of the new century. The first decade of the twentieth century in English history is called the "Edwardian Period" after King Edward (1901-1910). Edward was an object of a great deal of gossip. Cary mentions that the King liked playing baccarat, and that he enjoyed pleasant company, especially that of beautiful women. According to Cary, the fashionable Helen Pynsant was one of his friends.

During the Edwardian period, many of the Victorian conventions were still observed, though in a less rigid form. These traditions were to be swept away by the post-war period.

It was in the Edwardian period that interest in the Machine started to take a serious form. In V. Sackville-West's book, The Edwardians, which deals with social life in England, between the years 1905-1910, we meet Wickenden, head carpenter of the vast Chevron estate, complaining to the young master, Sebastian, about his son who was planning to leave the estate. The son wanted to leave because his heart was set on things other than carpentry, namely, the motor-trade, the fashion of the day. Thus, we hear old Wickenden saying:

'Now your Grace knows, . . . that my father and his father before him were in the shops, and I looked to my boy to take my place after I was gone. Same as your Grace's son, if I may make the comparison. I never thought to see a son of mine leave Chevron so long as he was fit to stay there. And Frank is fit -- a neater-handed boy I seldom saw. That's what draws him to engines. Now what is engines, I ask your Grace?'¹⁷

From this it can be seen that early in the twentieth century the machine began to dominate the life of man. Everybody was interested in the new engines and motors. The motor-car was a wonderful phenomenon, but soon an even greater one was to plunge the skies -- the aeroplane. James Gollan of A Fearful Joy was greatly interested in engines and motors. He opened factories and hired engineers in order to design aeroplanes. All were immensely interested in flying planes, in the same way, perhaps, that we are interested in launching rockets today. Cary describes the situation as such:

Everyone is full of enthusiasm for flying, which is described, even in The Times, as a revolutionary development. The Wrights' experiments in America, Santos-Dumont's in France, have caught the imagination of the world, and every small boy is designing planes. Schoolrooms flutter with ingenious cut-outs, and every second professional engineer is designing a model.¹⁸

People in those days rushed to see a plane roaring in the sky, having left behind it crowds of fascinated people who were amazed at the greatness of man's imagination, and the ability of this

¹⁷ V. Sackville-West, The Edwardians (Arrow edition; London: Arrow Books Ltd., 1960), p. 40.

¹⁸ A Fearful Joy, p. 165.

imagination to produce such fantastic things. They, perhaps, did not dream that Man would soon be attempting to reach the moon and to swim in space!

While people were busy with the new inventions, the threat of war was looming large, causing a great deal of agitation and discussion. They wondered whether a universal war was a possibility, a probability, or a certainty. It proved to be a certainty and dragged many, specially the young, to the battlefield. Thomas Wilcher of To Be A Pilgrim was too old for the infantry. He went to France as a stretcher-bearer in 1916, but before long, he was invalided out in 1917. His nephews, William Wilcher Jr. and John Wilcher, also enlisted. John was barely seventeen when he joined the air force. He managed to get in by giving a false age, for he longed to fight. "His explanation was that all his friends were fighting, or dead."¹⁹ No doubt many young Englishmen felt the same way. However, there were others who remained civilians. Among those was John Bonser (Tabitha Baskett and Dick Bonser's son). John had an accident and was in hospital when the First War broke out. Because of this accident and of the influence of James Gollan, his step-father, he was able to remain a civilian. John was an Oxford student who played the role of the detached intellectual in those difficult times. He read Bergson and knew little

¹⁹ Joyce Cary, To Be A Pilgrim (Carfax edition; London: Michael Joseph, 1959), p. 249.

about the news of the war. Girls teased him by calling him "Professor" at one time and "Cuthbert" at another.

Gollan, the manufacturer, played a large role during the First War. His factories supplied the army with lorries and ammunition. He grew richer, like Shaw's Undershaft, by selling ordnance. The working classes attacked Gollan and other capitalists, and placed the entire responsibility for the war on their shoulders. Tabitha Baskett, Gollan's wife during this period, read a letter, addressed to her husband, which expressed the above mentioned view:

"I've lost two Sons, all I had in the World, because of your war you're so proud of, and the Capitalists like you is [sic] making Millions out of the Poor."

.....
"The communists for me. I'm a bit sick of being pushed about and so is everybody in this country. Englishmen don't stand for it. What we want is a United Soviet Socialist Republic of the World with Universal Peace and Freedom, and no more of your [sic] bloody snoopers round the factories. Capitalism is finished. Free India. Take the exploiters off the backs of the workers. Down with the Jews. No income tax for the workers. Double rations and proper beer, send the girls home and stop them cutting their hair and taking men's jobs. Send the Irish home where they belong."

"It is men like you who are responsible for this fearful war and the deaths of a million young men. It is your muddleheaded greed and sabre rattling which brought this destruction on us. The Germans only wished for peace. But our naval policy directly supported by you, by the steel and armament manufacturers, made it impossible for them to trust us. The obvious and sensible policy, which alone can secure peace, that is, the Total and Instant abolition of armies and navies and air forces, was definitely rejected

by you on three occasions. You are therefore condemned by God and men and shall be destroyed at last with hell fire."²⁰

Hence, the capitalists were made responsible for the war. Many of the working classes sided with the camp that withdrew from war and promised a "dictatorship of the proletariat." The "Internationale" was sung by many. Communism, indeed, attracted the attention of many thinkers and workers as we shall shortly see.

Cary describes in several of his novels the influence of the war on social and moral standards. England was changed after the universal disaster. The breach with the Victorian world was made complete. Sassoon, the war poet, says the following in a poem called "'They'":

The Bishop tells us: 'When the boys come back
'They will not be the same; for they'll have fought
'In a just cause: they lead the last attack
'On Anti-Christ; their comrades' blood has bought
'New right to breed an honourable race,
'They have challenged Death and dared him face to face.'

'We're none of us the same!' the boys reply.
'For George lost both his legs; and Bill's stone blind;
'Poor Jim's shot through the lungs and like to die;
'And Bert's gone syphilitic: you'll not find
'A chap who's served that hasn't found some change.'
And the Bishop said: 'The ways of God are strange!'²¹

All were changed. They were physically, spiritually, and morally maimed. Many lost faith in God, in religion, in everything. The

²⁰ A Fearful Joy, pp. 215-216.

²¹ Siegfried Sassoon, "'They,'" Collected Poems (New York: Viking Press, 1949), pp. 23-24.

Bishop says that the young fought for a noble cause. He overlooks, or is not aware, of the suffering that the young underwent. When he is faced with it, he has nothing to say but, "The ways of God are strange!" They are strange, indeed, thought the disillusioned young, for why should unnecessary evil be imposed on man? This loss of faith and despair at that time made the young recoil from religion.

Tom Wilcher said:

In church, . . . I found suddenly a small and apathetic congregation; smaller than I could remember. The young did not come any more. The young wives whose husbands had been at the front, the boys and girls whose fathers and brothers had been in some Navy ship, now stayed at home or amused themselves. Many of the old faithful, who, before the war, had never missed a Sunday, were dead, and no one came to fill their places.²²

Many of the post-war generation cared for nothing but a good time before it was too late. Gladys, John Wilcher's girl friend, said to Tom Wilcher, who disapproved of her painted face and loose manners: "'You're just right, old dear. We're a bad naughty lot -- but we do get some fun. And if we didn't, someone else would'"²³ During those troubled twenties, cynicism and disillusion took the upper hand. Everyone felt himself to be a "wounded soldier."

New fashions, new ideas, and new styles arose after the war. "Skirts [were] growing shorter and shorter and women

²² To Be A Pilgrim, p. 257.

²³ Ibid., p. 271.

[strove] to make themselves look like little boys with cropped hair and thin flat bodies."²⁴ Women also started to use heavy make-up. Some Victorian women, however, found it difficult to follow the new fashions. Among those was Sara Monday who said:

I never could get used to paint, and, thank God, I never needed powder except in the time with Gulley, to hide a black eye or a swollen nose. But they were in fashion, even for ladies, and I saw that Miss Clary's free talk was all in the fashion too.²⁵

The more fashionable Mina Latter was heard saying:

And even if it was not so corrupt as Chester thought for me to paint and rouge (for I did use just a little rouge, too; Tom insisted on it) and show my legs in short skirts (I should have liked to cut my hair, too, if Jim had not absolutely forbidden it), because I was simply following the fashion and had to do so unless I had wanted to look peculiar²⁶

The old Victorian ideals of family life and religious piety were largely abandoned. In 1920, Bessie Venn fell ill and was about to die. She wished to see her children, who happened to be away, before her death. Rose, her sister, telephoned the children and asked them to come back to see their dying mother. All of them took the matter lightly and tried to find excuses not to come.

²⁴ A Fearful Joy, p. 231.

²⁵ Joyce Cary, Herself Surprised (Carfax edition; London: Michael Joseph, 1960), p. 152.

²⁶ Joyce Cary, Prisoner of Grace (Carfax edition; London: Michael Joseph, 1960), p. 338.

Dorothy had the following conversation with her aunt:

"I'm sorry to give you bad news, my dear, but your mother is ill, very ill."

"Oh, she'll see us all dead yet. Mum is fearfully tough, really."

"The doctor says she may die at any moment. I was wondering how soon you could come."

"I can't come to-morrow. I might manage the day after unless it's Thursday. Thursday is impossible."

"Dorothy, she may not live till morning, you oughtn't to waste a moment."

.....
"Dorothy, I'm sorry, but your mother has been good to you all. She gives you nothing but love."

"That's what she's for, isn't it?" Dorothy banged down the receiver.²⁷

The other children, Alice and Bertie, responded with almost the same coolness. The mother died before any of the children could arrive. Bertie arrived some time later, and Cary describes his feelings as follows:

Bertie's regrets for his mother were mixed with a kind of satisfaction in the thought that the family were now disintegrating, that he would no longer be called upon to write birthday letters, to buy Christmas presents, or to go to meet young sisters at the station.²⁸

The old warm Victorian ties illustrated by the Nimmos gave way to coolness and selfish individualism. Family ties not only weakened, but the young generation of the 1920's did not want families at all. Young wives were fascinated by the idea of birth-control that was current then. In The Long Week End, we are told that a certain

²⁷ The Moonlight, pp. 291-292.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 303.

Dr. Marie Stopes did a lot to popularize the idea:

In 1922 she hired the Queen's Hall for a meeting to advocate the use of birth-control as a cure for racial disease. Her platform was honoured by the presence of the Medical Officer of Health for Leicester, and the hall crowded by a queer, attentive, and rather fanatical audience. She wore a picture hat. There were no interruptions. But she soon encountered great opposition throughout the country. To the Catholics, the use of contraceptives, which discouraged souls from birth, was only one degree less heinous than abortion, which forcibly restrained them and was a lesser form of infanticide. Dr. Stopes's reply to this view was that by the use of birth-control one got fewer but healthier souls.²⁹

Though the idea was attacked by many, there were some who supported it. John Bonser and Kit Lang, his wife, believed in the validity of the idea of birth-control. Kit alarmed Tabitha, her mother-in-law, by telling her that she and John had decided not to have children. Kit explained that she had other duties regarding the newly-won vote (1918), and therefore could not waste her time on domestic chores.

Man plans but not always can he carry them out. Kit, despite her decision not to have any children, gave birth to a baby girl called Nancy. Kit lavished attention on her at the beginning and tried to apply all the current psychological ideas. Kit wanted to keep Nan away from her grandmother, because the latter did not understand psychology. Rather ironically, Cary tells us that strict rules were given to Tabitha not to kiss the baby, for that, as John explained, would give the child a complex! Moreover, Kit said that

²⁹ Robert Graves and Alan Hodge, The Long Week End: A Social History of Great Britain 1918-1939 (New York: Macmillan Co., 1941), p. 94.

Nan was not to be exposed to religion. The following conversation between Tabitha and Kit, concerning the spiritual upbringing of Nan, reflects the clashing ideas of two different generations:

"Will you say your hymn for me?"
Kit intervenes. "I'm afraid Nan doesn't know any hymns."
Tabitha looks defiantly at the young woman and says, "Not even 'Gentle Jesus'?"

"I'm afraid not."

"But with her prayers?"

"I'm afraid she doesn't say any prayers. We aren't teaching Nan anything like that." And with a little rush of speech, appealing for comprehension, "It seems so wrong, don't you think, to teach people things you don't believe yourself?"

.
Tabitha indeed is quite amazed. "But what can she mean?" she asks herself. "To teach a child no religion at all, it's horrible; she must be mad."³⁰

Modern woman travelled in the 1920's far from Victorian traditions. While the Victorian girl stayed at home and studied under governesses, the modern girl enjoys the privilege of going to universities to seek higher levels of education. Amanda Cranage, Ann Wilcher, and Kit Lang are all university graduates.

Another difference between the two is their attitude towards sex. Ella Venn, who loved Ernest Cranage, and wanted very much to marry him, eloped with him in 1900 and eventually gave birth to an illegitimate baby. Rose, who was a strict Victorian, considered the action very shameful. She tried to

³⁰ A Fearful Joy, p. 264.

cover up the story by keeping Ella away for a while, and by making Bessie, their married sister, adopt the baby. Amanda, Ella's illegitimate daughter, was seduced by Harry Dawbarn, and she herself expected in 1939 an illegitimate baby. She, however, did not consider her act shameful. Ella was surprised that Amanda should allow herself to undergo such an experience when she, unlike Ella herself, did not love her seducer and had no wish to marry him. Amanda, however, had a different point of view. She said:

"It isn't necessary any more to take the conventional view. It's not such a disgrace, at least, for an unmarried girl. It's not as though I'd been deceiving a husband. Of course, I can understand that Aunt Rose would have some reason to be upset about me."

.....
"And why -- why," Ella cried in amazement, "when Harry wants to marry you?"

"I suppose -- I don't love him. But really -- I don't think I ever loved him."

"And yet you -- went with him?"

.....
"Yes, I suppose." Amanda examined her own motives.
"I thought it would be an experience that I ought to have."³¹

London
Europe was dancing again in the 1920's. New hotels, restaurants, and night-clubs were being opened every day. Among the famous night-clubs of the period was the "43" founded by the well-known Mrs. Kate Meyrick. Her place was frequented by people like Joseph Conrad and J.B. Priestley. Many people, specially those with a Victorian mentality, objected to the idea of cabarets. The

³¹ The Moonlight, pp. 296-297.

Home Secretary, Sir William Joynson-Hicks, had many of these clubs raided, and their proprietors fined or imprisoned. Mrs. Meyrick was imprisoned several times. She, then, followed a practical method. "She . . . adopted the practice of running several clubs at the same time, so that if one were raided and closed down, the others could carry on -- even when she was in prison."³² Nina Latter discussed the raiding of night-clubs in Prisoner of Grace. Her son, Tom, owned a night-club called "Respy's Dive" that was raided. Nina said:

But the night clubs at this time had become too successful and too daring. All at once the police (under the new Home Secretary, who was very evangelical) began to raid them; and one of the first raided was Respy's Dive.³³

After the raid, Tom was arrested. Upon intervention, he was set free, but he had to leave the country. He went to Germany, where he also worked in night-clubs, and continued the work he started in England, namely, mimicking British Liberal figures. The Germans, however, did not appreciate his artistic endeavours. He worked with bad companies and took small parts in disgusting performances. All this made him unhappy; in a moment of despair, he shot himself.

Tom, who had been looking for a job after the war, had refused to start a career in politics and become a great politician like his

³² The Long Week End, p. 111.

³³ Prisoner of Grace, p. 348.

father, Nimmo. He disliked politics. He had also refused to go back to the army in which he had served for a while during the war for he had become tired of army discipline. He chose to become a cabaret artiste, for he felt that that was his particular field -- the field in which he could succeed. After enjoying a short period of success, he experienced bitter failure, especially in Germany as was mentioned earlier. Tom, who was ill-prepared for any other job, and who had failed in what he considered his line, felt very depressed and chose to die rather than to remain a failure. Tom was a victim of the times. His tragedy took place largely because he pursued a profession that was frowned on by the public, by a London that was as yet not completely free, in spite of the many changes that occurred, of the Victorian and evangelical influence.

The Liberal Party was declining in the post-war period. The heyday of the Gladstonian era was over. Its supremacy before and during the war, in the figures of Asquith and Lloyd George, was also fading. Asquith had been head of the coalition government until December 6, 1916. He was then replaced by Lloyd George who remained in office until 1922, the year which marked the defeat of the Liberal Party.

It is Chester Nimmo who represents the ups and downs of the Liberal Party. He had shared in the party's program of social reform in the years 1906-1914, and in its victory in the war years. Chester had a seat in the War Cabinet. He was also in the elections of 1918,

the elections during which Lloyd George promised to "hang the Kaiser," and to solve the economic problems that followed the war. Cary refers to these promises in Prisoner of Grace, and also mentions the fact that, in the 1920's, Lloyd George was hated by many for not fulfilling his promises. The Liberal Party failed in the 1922 elections as well as in 1924. Chester Nimmo shared the party's fate. Liberalism as a philosophy seems to have belonged more to the nineteenth century than to the twentieth. It had to give way to a new party, the Labour Party, so that it might be able to meet the problems of the century.

The 1920's were years of economic troubles, unemployment, and high prices. The General Strike of 1926, which is the background of Cary's Not Honour More, is an example of those troubled times. The General Strike had been announced by the T.U.C. in defiance of the mine-owners who had threatened, due to the continual low price of coal, to reduce wages and enforce longer hours. On April 26, 1926, the miners ceased to work. By the third of May, a general strike was announced. All public transportation stopped: taxis, trains, and buses. All drivers ceased to work. A few amateur drivers took over and caused a lot of damage. Jim Latter who served as a special constable to keep peace and order during the strike described the situation as follows: "Tuesday, May 4th, first day of strike, was complete freeze transport. Nothing moving."³⁴ He added:

³⁴ Joyce Cary, Not Honour More (London: Michael Joseph, 1955), p. 104.

But on Wednesday already, the worst of the freeze was over. People were going about in own carts [sic] picking up friends, cars taking passengers, and first volunteers out with buses. All very quiet and no opposition except some abuse and threats in Lilmouth.

Thursday morning, more volunteers, a few trains and some stone-throwing in Tarbiton, two windows broken in the Lilmouth bus.³⁵

It was not until the thirteenth of May that the strike was over. Some remained on strike a few more days. However, the miners remained on strike for six months and endured much suffering.

Some people, dissatisfied with unemployment and high prices in those years, turned to Communism. Among those who developed Leftist ideas in Cary were Vicar Shermer and Digwee, the grocer. Shermer found a religious basis for the sympathies with the Left. He said: "We have to remember that Communism has a strong moral appeal. Indeed, the early Christians practised community of goods. Christ even laid it down for the apostles!"³⁶ Digweed made his point of view clear by saying:

The Communist atrocities in Russia had been greatly exaggerated. Besides, Communism in a civilized country like England would be quite a different thing. It might put the taxes up a bit but it would not be necessarily anti-bourgeois, and it would at any rate put the workers in their place.³⁷

All of this shows the dilemma of the young men of the twenties and

³⁵ Ibid., p. 105.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 148.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 149.

thirties. Communism, not only had a "strong moral appeal," but also a poetic appeal. Idealist poets of the twenties and thirties expressed a Left-wing faith. Among those who turned to the Left were W.H. Auden and C. Day Lewis.

By the end of the thirties, the possibility of a second war made itself apparent. Cary tells about the threat in To Be A Pilgrim, The Horse's Mouth, and A Fearful Joy. People were afraid of this war because, they thought, one had been enough to destroy everything. They asked themselves, "what would a second do?" Tom Wilcher avoided reading the papers. He did not wish to know anything about the coming war nor about the rising Hitler. Dick Bonser, on the other hand, showed great interest in Hitler. He listened, Cary tells us, to all his speeches, even though he could not understand them.

War did break out, shattering with it many hopes, dreams, and ideals. Cary does not deal at length with this war nor with its aftermath. He was, perhaps, too near it to say much about it. In A Fearful Joy, he mentions, in a hurried fashion, some features of the war, such as: the bombing of London, the death of Hitler, and he describes Victory day:

On Victory day bonfires are lit in Urrsley, students and factory girls dance round them hand in hand, but afterwards the young people are as preoccupied as the old. They are asking, "What next? What is going to happen to us?" This demobilisation is not like the last, simply because the last, by fathers and mothers, by everyone over forty, is remembered. In the factories men say, "There may be a shortage, but so there was last time, and still they had a slump, unemployment." Those in

war jobs want different jobs, and everyone is looking both in hope and fear for something unexpected, unpredictable.³⁸

Thus the historical background in Cary's novels gives an adequate picture of what was going on in England during the last forty years of the previous century and during the first forty years of the present century. The historical background also serves to show Cary's historical vision which is that of change. One order in history dies to give place to a new one. Cary has shown how Victorianism gave way to twentieth century modernism.

³⁸ A Fearful Joy, pp. 338-339.

CHAPTER II

MAN AS MAKER OF HISTORY

In a conversation Lord David Cecil said to Cary:

You were one of those writers who was [sic] very good at showing the change in time and how the Victorian age is different from now and how women's life altered in the Edwardian age, and so on. Well, this is not a criticism of that praise, I do think you do that jolly well, but I did feel, Joyce, that this, that isn't what the books are like to me. I don't feel they're, as it were, in the Galsworthy tradition at all. That is to say, books who [sic] are chiefly concerned to giving a chronicle picture of the world. I feel that you're really concentrating on something much more essential and elemental in human nature and that in a sense the background is secondary to that and isn't merely what the book is about though it's very well done.¹

Cary replied:

I take out of history what I want for my theme but then my theme is already related, it's related to a general view of things, of what things have happened, you see. That's to say, history as I see real history, and my themes grow on the same tree.²

It is worthwhile to investigate some of Cary's themes, and to see how these themes are related to his vision of history. As a boy at Clifton College, Cary started showing an interest in

¹ A conversation between Joyce Cary and Lord David Cecil, "The Novelist at Work," Adam International Review, XVIII, Nos. 212-213 (November-December, 1950), 16.

² Ibid., pp. 16-17.

writing. In The Cliftonian of 1906 appeared his first publication, a poem dealing with Adam and Eve. At the age of seventeen, intending to become a painter, he went to Paris, and then to the Art School at the University of Edinburgh. After staying there for three years, he went to Trinity College, Oxford, where he studied law. After a brief visit to Paris, he came back to Oxford and started writing a novel. He took part in the Balkan War of 1912-1913. In 1913 he joined the Nigerian Political Service. During his stay in Africa, he wrote ten short stories and sold them to The Saturday Evening Post. They were published under the pseudonym of Thomas Joyce.

From this it appears that wherever Cary went and whatever he did, he had, at the back of his mind, the idea of becoming a writer. In 1920 he was invalided out of the Service. He settled in a small Oxford house, seriously deciding this time to become what he always wanted to become -- a writer. For twelve years, however, he could not publish anything. Talking about this period, he says:

"As soon as I had finished a book, . . .
or even if half finished it, I could not bear it. The truth was, as I see now, that I was still an imitative writer. I had a genuine desire to create, in writing, but had not yet found an idea of life satisfying to myself. I was in short still educating myself, and this process in Oxford went on much more vigorously than in Africa."³

³ Quoted in Wright, Joyce Cary, p. 26.

He also says:

[A novelist starts] with his general idea; and this is of special interest to me, because I was stuck for years (I was stuck for more years than I'd realized myself; it was nearly ten years! I wrote a lot of stuff, but it's all in the attic) -- and the thing that held me up all that time, really, was the want of a satisfactory general idea.⁴

Cary thus read and speculated a lot during those twelve years in order to find a vision of life, a general idea around which to center his works. After much contemplation, Cary saw man as being free, able, endowed with a "creative imagination" that is behind all creation and change in history. He states his ideas quite explicitly in his non-fictional works, of which the most important, in throwing light on Cary's themes, and understanding the novels, are Power in Men (1939) and the posthumously published Art and Reality (1958). Thus he clearly says in Power in Men that "man is born free."⁵ The freedom of man according to Cary is positive. It shows itself in action. He does not believe in the nineteenth century idea of freedom as an absence of restraint. He says, instead:

A dead man feels the weight of no law. By the old notion of liberty, he is the freest man in the world. In fact he has no liberty at all. Liberty is not an absence but a power. It is the power in man to do what he likes so far as his power can reach.

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⁴ "The Novelist At Work," Adam International Review, XVIII, No. 212-213, 23.

⁵ Joyce Cary, Power In Man (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1963), p. 16.

Liberty is creation in the act. It is therefore eternal and indestructible. Whether man recognizes it for what it is or calls it what it is not, it is always at work.⁶

Cary is also preoccupied with man's creative ability. He declares:

The weakest child has power and will. Its acts are its own. It can be commanded, but it need not obey. It originates each least movement. It is an independent source of energy which grows with its life and ends only with its death.

This power is creative. In man it has created all the machines, all the states, the wealth, arts, and civilization in the world.⁷

He also adds: "Since man is creative, he produces continually a new situation, not only in the arts and sciences but in politics and industry."⁸ Statements concerning the freedom of man and his creative faculty are also found in some of his novels. Gulley

Jimson discussed man's freedom with Nosy Barbon:

"The fallen man -- nobody's going to look after him. The poor bastard is free -- a free and responsible citizen. The Fall into freedom. Yes, I might call it the Fall into Freedom."

"F-f-free," said Nosy, with his eyes starting out of his head. For he didn't know what I was talking about.

"Yes," I said. "Free to cut his bloody throat, if he likes, or understand the bloody world, if he likes, and cook his breakfast with hell-fire, if he likes, and construct for himself a little heaven of his own, if he likes, all complete with a pig-faced angel and every spiritual pleasure including the joys of love; or also, of course, he can build himself a little hell full of pig-faced devils and all material

⁶ Ibid., p. 7.

⁷ Ibid., p. 1.

⁸ Ibid., p. 36.

miseries including the joys of love and enjoy in it such tortures of the damned that he will want to burn himself alive a hundred times a day, but won't be able to do it because he knows it will give such extreme pleasure to all his friends."⁹

Jimson, talking about the imagination of man, stated that "'ships, motors, wars, bankers, factories, swindles, taxes and ramps are all due to the imagination,'"¹⁰

Most of Cary's critics interpret his fiction in the light of these two major themes: man's freedom and man's "creative imagination." Walter Allen in his brief study, Joyce Cary (1953), deals with the theme of the "creative imagination," and discusses Cary's characters in relation to that theme. He says:

The creative imagination: Cary is its novelist and its celebrant. His characters are impelled by fantasies personal in the deepest sense, unique to each one of them, which must be translated into action. Life about them is, as it were, so much raw material that must be shaped according to their fantasies, which are never seen as fantasies because they are so fundamental to the characters who are moved by them. And the shaping fantasy, creative imagination, is something belonging to man by virtue of his being man.¹¹

Andrew Wright deals with the concept of freedom in Cary's fiction. In a chapter called "Theme: The Politics of Freedom," he comments on Cary's notion of freedom by saying:

⁹ Joyce Cary, The Horse's Mouth (Carfax edition; London: Michael Joseph, 1961), p. 174.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 226.

¹¹ Walter Allen, Joyce Cary (Writers and Their Work; London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1953), p. 9.

Cary's idea of freedom as a positive force, as something "real in the strictest and profoundest sense," does battle . . . with the deterministic notions of such otherwise disparate writers as Zola, Stephen Crane, Dreiser and even A.E. Housman. "Let us endure a while," [Sic] writes Housman, "and see injustice done." But this invocation is impossible in Cary's thinking; nowhere in his work is there the presentation of man victimized by a mechanical and indifferent fate -- the sort of presentation which is at the centre of Crane's "The Open Boat." For man is really free.¹²

I feel that it is possible to see a relationship between Cary's use of historical background and the two major themes that I mentioned earlier. The free, creative man is the maker of history. In this connection Cary declares that

history is not an automatic progress hindered or helped by men. It is a true advance into novelty. Not merely the action of a great genius, but of everyone of us, has effect upon the course of events. As we realize our ideas in concrete action, we make history.¹³

Cary's characters are creators and makers of history: Harry Jarvis was among those who made the British Empire. Gobden Chorley and Geoffrey Tew, though not the originators of the "art for art's sake" school, yet, by writing in that new tradition in the 1890's, helped in the establishment of the new school. Helen Pynsant in the 1890's, and Ella Venn in 1900, by defying established traditions, took part in the emancipation of woman. Jimson, the artist of The Horse's

¹² Wright, Joyce Cary, p. 36.

¹³ Power in Men, p. 237.

Mouth, spent his whole life creating and practicing new styles; thus he added new methods to his own field. Chester Nimmo, the political figure of the second trilogy, showed his creativity in the making of a government. He was among those who led the country during the war. As a member of the War Cabinet, his decisions, with those of his colleagues, affected the fate of the country. The engineers, whom Cary introduced in A Fearful Joy, who designed aeroplanes and motor-cars, helped in the mechanization of the twentieth century. The ideas of young, educated, and emancipated girls like Kit Lang and Amanda Cranage helped in the forming of the intellectual and social climate of post-war England. Thus the historical background in the novels shows the inventions and the creation of two different generations, the Victorian and the modern, and the changes that took place as a result of the creative abilities of these two. Cary, in point of fact, did well to use historical background in his novels, for it illustrates in actuality his theme of the "creative imagination" of man. This theme and history, as he sees it, a record of achievement and change, are related and do indeed "grow on the same tree." For it is the free, creative man that makes the record of achievement and change possible.

Andrew Wright classifies Cary's characters into two main categories: "The man who must create, the man who would preserve" ¹⁴

¹⁴ Wright, Joyce Cary, p. 72.

He continues to describe each type by saying:

The first and most interesting type is the man who rejoices in freedom: the anarchist, the artist, the man who destroys in order to create, the man who ignores all claims but his own. . . .

Opposed to the revolutionary is the man attached to the past because there can be found certainty, continuity, civilization¹⁵

Wright places in the first category mostly the artist characters like Dick Bonser and Gulley Jimson, while in the other, he places Thomas Wilcher, the lawyer, and James Latter, the soldier. Wright comments on this classification by saying: "If the artist most truly represents the first of Cary's types, the lawyer and the soldier, those guardians of the heritage, most adequately represent the second."¹⁶ In describing Chester Nimmo he maintains that Nimmo is changed in the course of the trilogy from the "free to the unfree man,"¹⁷ meaning by that, changing from a "revolutionary" character to a "conservative" one. Wright goes on to say that the distinction between these two main types is not absolute, for, "even the most rooted of Cary's conservatives must do battle in their own souls with the impulse to create"¹⁸

A close look at Cary's characters will show that it is not only Chester Nimmo who changes from the "free to the unfree man,"

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 73.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 74.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 97.

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 91-92.

but that most of his characters undergo that change. It is possible and perhaps even more accurate to say that each individual, no matter what he is, soldier, lawyer, artist, man or woman, is a "creator" at one point in his life, and a "preserver" at another. One is most "creative" and "revolutionary" during one's early years. It is the young who always ask for new forms and new orders. Consequently, they tend to clash with the established order. Hence, a conflict between the old and the new, between fathers and sons ensues. Many of Cary's characters are called "conservative" by a younger generation that tries to promote its ideas, thereby, outmoding and replacing the ideas of the previous generation. Cary states that

[one] would expect a change of fashion, of style, of symbolic system, to take place roughly in the period of a generation, about twenty-five years; because it is the new generation, or the more enterprising and intelligent part of it, which demands always a new statement, a new form, or rather a new intensity and immediacy of expression.¹⁹

He adds:

The young Wordsworth and Coleridge, the young Keats, because they loved poetry, rebelled against the traditional poetry. It is typically the most intelligent and sensitive of the young who become revolutionaries, destroyers.²⁰

¹⁹ Joyce Cary, Art and Reality: Ways of the Creative Process (The Clark Lectures; New York: Harper & Brothers, 1958), p. 76.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 77.

Yet, the same "revolutionary" figures grow up to be "conservative," attached to what they had created, in conflict with a still younger generation that tries in turn to exercise its creativity. Cary himself says that

[the] passion for the old is an analogue of our own love of our own things, not because they are possessions, but because they are part of that world that we have created for ourselves, and, like any creative artist, we have a special pleasure in what we have made. What's more, as I say, we are committed to it. The reason why the young revolutionary becomes the old conservative is not some disease of age, but simply the fact that he has created in imagination that world, a free revolutionary world, which is being torn from him. We live in the creation and it presents us with two kinds of tragedy: that of the young genius who desires to create his own new world, in politics or in art, and is defeated by the academicism of those whose art and reputations are threatened by his innovation; and that of the conservative whose world is being destroyed.²¹

John Bonser explained this truth to his mother, Tabitha, who was upset because John's young students attacked his ideas; he said: "You musn't mind those children, they'll grow up; before they're forty most of them will be fossilised conservatives."²² Cary, as a matter of fact, deals at length with the above discussed themes in his novels.

Castle Corner is a diffuse novel with many characters.

²¹ Ibid., p. 74.

²² A Fearful Joy, p. 284.

However, if one considers the different generations of the Corner family, one can easily see Cary's themes. As the novel opens, we are introduced to John Corner, the head of the family. We are also introduced to his two sons, Felix Corner, a well-read philosopher and John Chass Corner, an amiable person. Cary directly makes clear his theme of disagreement between different generations by describing the relationship between John Corner and his son. He says: "Felix, the eldest son, could not agree with old John on any subject, religious or political, and rather than quarrel with him, he had stayed away from home."²³ Cary goes on to tell the reader about the activities of Cleeve Corner, Felix's son. Cleeve, as a young boy in Ireland, seduced a young peasant girl, who gave birth to a boy called Finian. Cleeve went later to Oxford. He became involved in the 1890's, with the aesthetic movement of that decade. Finally, he is seen in the novel as a pro-Boer agitator. He is thus presented as a fashionable, young man who adopted the different current ideas of his time. Gradually, Cleeve is in turn estranged from his father. Felix tried to be broad-minded, and to sympathize with his son's ideas. Cary, talking about Felix, says: "He would not like to seem unsympathetic with Cleeve's friends or notions, however foolish."²⁴ The father, attached to his own

²³ Castle Corner, p. 9.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 245.

ideas, considered those of his son foolish. The son, urged by his own creativity to develop new ones, regarded his father's ideas old-fashioned. Cleeve, like many young people, was impatient with old men and old ideas. He seemed to enjoy destroying and criticising their creation and taste. He revealed this attitude in a conversation that he had with old General Pynsant about a modern settee:

'What they call modern,' the General choked. 'Look at it -- vulgar -- pretentious -- decadent.' He was so angry that Cleeve was afraid he would have a fit. He murmured, 'It's a bad colour.'

But he felt suddenly a strong boredom. The word decadent excited in him a secret protest, as if it had been aimed at him. He was all at once disgusted with the old man and his excitement, with the old man's room, and his old ideas, with everything old; and beneath his disgust, rising up like a wave or life itself, an exhilarating confidence in his own power. It seemed to him that he could remake the whole world to his own taste.

'Rotten all through -- no beauty -- no truth -- all show and grab.'

'I rather like it all the same,' Cleeve said, smiling at the old man. He was surprised at himself; but he was bored, and also he was filled with this secret excitement to destroy, to knock down; like the baby who throws down the pile of bricks that another has built for him. 'It's rather jolly, don't you think?'²⁵

Castle Corner, as it stands now, a single volume novel, with the activities of the characters taking place from the 1890's to the 1900's, is actually incomplete. It was to be followed by two other volumes at least: "Over the Top" and "Green Jerusalem."

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 190-191.

Concerning this matter, Cary says:

Castle Corner was to have been the beginning of a vast work in three or four volumes showing not only the lives of all the characters in the first volume, but the revolutions of history during the period 1880-1935. Much of it was carried into the second and even third volume. There are in the attic whole scenes written even of the last volume, showing the end of the work, and the final condition of the persons. But I could never bring myself to finish any beyond the first. Partly I think this was due to lack of encouragement. Critics can easily depress a writer, not so much by abusing him, as by miscomprehending him.²⁶

Charles G. Hoffmann, who had access to the manuscripts of the "Castle Corner Series," says that Cary continues to tell about Cleeve's career in the second volume, "Over the Top": "Cleeve has made a successful career of politics until his defeat in the election of 1910 as a result of a scandal."²⁷ What interests me, is what Hoffmann says about Finian, Cleeve's son: "The attraction is Finian, who later shocks Cleeve 'by his bold mechanism, his denial of poetry, beauty, etc. his brutality as med. student.' The new generation, though rooted in the old, revolts against its elders"²⁸ Hence, each generation of the Corner family which was once "creative"

²⁶ Ibid., "Preface," p. 5.

²⁷ Charles G. Hoffmann, "'They Want To Be Happy': Joyce Cary's Unfinished Castle Corner Series," Modern Fiction Studies IX, No. 3 (Autumn 1963), 219.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 220.

and "revolutionary," with time and age, became "conservative," shocked by the ideas of the young, attached to the past which he helped to make.

The idea of the young rebel, becoming the old "conservative," is perhaps dealt with more effectively in Cary's novels, The Moonlight, A Fearful Joy, and in the two trilogies. In these novels, Cary presents a pre-war generation that has helped in the making of the pre-war civilization and atmosphere. Those "creators" became "preservers" of their own ideals and beliefs in the post-war period in England. They fought the rising generation that sought to create its own world.

As Thomas Wilcher narrates To Be A Pilgrim, he fluctuates from the past, which is pre-war England, to the present, the 1930's; he shows attachment to the bygone Victorian world. For this, he is classified by Wright as being a "conservative." He is so indeed if judged from the twentieth century point of view. But one should not forget that he was once a dandy who dressed in the "extreme of fashion" and a revolutionary who criticized older men. He declared: "To Edward, and therefore to me, Gladstone was an old-fashioned Whig, and already an obstacle to progress. We condescended to him as the Grand Old Man. It was not for many years that we realized how great he had seemed to my father's generation; a prophet, a leader sent from God."²⁹ Wilcher thought that Edward, his brother, who

²⁹ To Be A Pilgrim, p. 124.

was an active Liberal politician in the 1890's, was more fit to rule in that decade than the old-fashioned Gladstone. Wilcher preferred long skirts and unpainted faces. He also thought that a woman's function in life was to raise a family, and not to pursue a profession. In short, he was a Victorian who could not change his ideas in the changed world of the 1920's. Wilcher thus continually criticised the new fashions and the modern girls:

"What is the good of us if we don't stand by what we believe? Do you think it is a good thing for girls to paint their faces like the lowest strumpets and go about in short skirts or even short trousers and drink and swear like bargees? . . . We may be old fogeys, . . . but we have some standards and I am not going to desert them simply because they happen to excite amusement among a few ill-taught children."³⁰

Wilcher was a pillar of the Victorian order and a lover of the old customs. He quite appropriately said: "I have lived in terror of change to what I love."³¹ He thus became a "conservative" in his old days as a result of a deep attachment to what he participated in making -- the late Victorian atmosphere. The fact that Wilcher became a "conservative" should not negate that he was a "man of imagination," a "creator," and a "revolutionary" figure at one point in his life. Cary himself, talking about Wilcher with Lord David Cecil, says:

³⁰ Ibid., p. 265.

³¹ Ibid., p. 333.

Cary: . . . Old Wiltshire [Wilcher] is the Conservative, fighting for his life against change. You see, people often think, . . . 'Oh, the old Conservative. It's a perpetual complaint of the old Conservative that he lacks imagination.' Well, that's not so. Very often he's a man of the most intense imagination.

Cecil: That's quite true.

Cary: Take for example a man in the country, he's is intensely attached to his old house, and he may be an old workman intensely attached to his old ways, an old wheelwright. An old craftsman is intensely attached, and merely by the force of his imagination he --

Cecil: He feels it imaginatively.

Cary: Yes. He's created his world in depth. The man of vast imagination, he loves his things with more strength. His life goes into them, and old Wiltshire. . . is fighting for his life against change. I mean, his life -- his imaginative life -- what life means to him is in his old home and old ways.³²

Dick Bonser of A Fearful Joy is presented as a rogue and a liar. Thinking that young Tabitha Baskett was a rich heiress, he befriended her in order to get hold of some of her money. He fascinated her by telling her that he was the illegitimate son of a nobleman, and that he expected a large inheritance. Tabitha, under the spell of nobility and wealth, gave way to the rogue and eventually gave birth to an illegitimate son. Bonser, however, left her as soon as he found out that she did not have money. Through the course of the novel, Bonser stays with Tabitha and leaves her intermittently, depending on her financial situation.

³² The Novelist At Work," Adam International Review, p. 21.

He shows his creativity best in roguery, in lying, and in benefiting from any situation. After the war, the rather old Bonser detested, in general, the behaviour of the young boys and girls of the 1920's and 1930's. Yet, quite typically of him, he sought to take advantage of the new situation and the new breed. He saw that a hotel with a dancing floor would be a success in the gay twenties. He, however, did not have money to carry out such a scheme. He ran to Tabitha who had become after the war the rich widow of James Gollan. He made love to his old paramour; he even married her. After doing everything to please her, he was able to make her buy an old building for him. After reconstruction, the old building became a beautiful hotel with a dancing floor to which fun-lovers went. Bonser made money, and was all the more able to carry out other plans, to drink, and to flirt!

Though Bonser himself paid little attention to ideals and decorum, yet, even he, the promiscuous character, felt sorry that many of the Victorian customs and ways of dressing were no longer respected by the young. His grand-daughter, Nancy, shocked him by her striking make-up and dashing behaviour. He had the following conversation with her:

"How old are you? . . . You can't be more than seventeen. . . . And painting your face like that; it's disgusting."

"Well, you see, Grandy, the trouble is that I've got such a queer face I have to do something to it."

"Getting yourself up like a tart."

. . . "I'm sorry, Grandy. Are you frightfully shocked?"

It can be seen that she is utterly indifferent to his criticism. She looks upon him as an old fool, a back number.³³

Chester Nimmo rebelled, as a young boy, against his father's principles; he tried to find his own way in life. As a labour agitator, he revolted against the poor conditions of the workers. As a Member of Parliament, he called for the abolition of poverty and the elimination of classes. In everyway, he was a "rebel" who attacked a previous order, in order to bring forth a new one. He told the reader in Except The Lord that his career was animated by a deep religious faith.

In the post-war period, Nimmo found that the young generation rejected his political as well as his religious principles. He himself objected to their new ideas and innovations. He sought to preserve and to keep valid his own ideas. Like Wilcher, he disapproved of the new fashions. He made this clear in a conversation that he had with his wife, Nina:

"I notice you have begun to paint."

"But everyone uses lipstick now. If I did not use lipstick I should look ill."

"That's the cry everywhere -- it's the rule. Rottenness is the rule. Mothers paint their faces like harlots, and their sons propagate lies to raise a laugh among drunken wasters."³⁴

³³ A Fearful Joy, p. 295.

³⁴ Prisoner of Grace, p. 331.

The old Victorian remained where he was, untouched by the post-war changes. Nina said about him: "It was really I and Tom who had been swung round in the tide of those years after the war and Chester who had stayed, and it was only because nearly everyone had turned round with me that I didn't notice it" ³⁵

Chester, as the retired Lord Nimmo, started writing his memoirs of which Except The Lord is a first portion. Nimmo told the story of the first twenty-five years of his life. He especially emphasized his loss of faith, and his return to it, a return which, he maintained, saved him from despair. He wrote the story of his life, he said, in the hope that that story will throw light upon the "crisis" that shakes and endangers our civilization. ³⁶ The "crisis" that he talked about was the departure of the young from religion in the 1920's. He wished that those young would learn a lesson from his life and follow his foot-steps. That is, he wished that they would go back to religion, as he had done, in order to be saved from disaster. Nimmo was trying indirectly to teach the young who always (perhaps to their disadvantage!) hate to be advised. Nimmo was trying to preserve his own principles, religions and political, and to impose them on the young. It is odd that he, who was always a revolutionary character, and who sought his own faith in

³⁵ Ibid., p. 337.

³⁶ Except The Lord, p. 5.

life, denied to the young the right to revolt and to find beliefs of their own.

James Latter was a soldier who served in Africa and took part in the Boer-war. After the war, he came back to England only to be given another African post. He was put in charge of an African tribe -- the Luga. Latter was among those who believed that the natives should be kept away from European civilization. Back in London, in 1917, Latter found that the England he had known, had changed during the war years. He saw that new fashions had taken him unawares. Talking about him, Nina Latter, his cousin, said:

He was wearing a blue suit I had seen often before, but this suit, cut in the style of 1910, with its pipe-stem trousers which made Jim's feet (really small well-shaped feet of which he was rather proud) seem absurdly long and flat, and the high bowler that went with it, had suddenly become a little ridiculous. I knew, of course, that Jim, like many who have once been dandies, was strongly attached to his old clothes³⁷

Like Wilcher and Nimmo, Latter disapproved of the painted faces and moral laxity of the 1920's. Nina continued to say:

He would glare at girls in short skirts (which were not yet higher than mid-calf), and lipstick, which was just becoming obvious, caused him to mutter loudly about "trollops" and even (but not clearly enough for me to hear) "bitches." He objected also to their smoking in public (which I still think unbecoming) and their manly stride. Above all, he was enraged against the young officers. Many of the young officers did, at this time, affect

³⁷ Prisoner of Grace, p. 284.

a very free and easy swagger; quite different from the old regular officers, like Jim himself, whose whole art was to be unobtrusive, and who despised the slightest eccentricity of dress or manner as much as a Roman priest would despise a fellow priest who tried to attract attention to himself by richness of dress.³⁸

Jim remained temperamentally and spiritually attached to old, pre-war England. He showed in Not Honour More that he was not only dissatisfied with the "crazy" fashions, but also with the political life of the 1920's.

During the General Strike, Latter acted as a Special Constable to preserve peace. Nimmo acted as Chairman of the Emergency Committee which was established to resolve tensions. Nimmo proved to be a corrupt leader, for he acted dishonestly during the "Maufe trial." That trial was held to establish whether Maufe, one of Jim's men, had hit the Communist agitator, Pincomb, without warning during the strike in Tarbiton, or whether it was Pincomb who started the resistance when Maufe came to arrest him, causing Maufe to use force. Chester withheld evidence that proved Maufe's innocence and Pincomb's guilt. Chester, while knowing the truth, victimized an innocent man. He did that, according to Cary, in the hope of gaining the support of the Communists and of the Labour Party in order to form a cabinet in London. Jim knew all that, and also came to know that Nina, his wife during this period, helped Nimmo to play his political game. Exasperated Jim felt that England was

³⁸ Ibid., pp. 318-319.

suffering from corruption and corrupt politicians. It saddened him to see "good old England" so lacking in "honour," "truth," and "justice" in 1926. Being himself attached to such values, and to an idealistic past in which decency had its place, he felt responsible to revive that decency. To do so, he thought of ridding the country of one source of corruption -- Nimmo. He thus chased him with a razor and tried to kill him. The latter ran to the lavatory where he died of a heart attack. Jim, however, managed to kill Nina, whom he considered Nimmo's accomplice. Jim's crime was not considered by the press as a duty executed for the sake of the country. Instead, it was regarded as a mere "sex murder," a "common adultery case," committed by a jealous husband who was enraged by his wife's attachment to her ex-husband. However, Jim's motive was to purge the country, to help restore the decency, and the honour of the old days.

Like his men characters, Cary's women characters are creative, fashionable at one time, "conservative" at another. Rose Venn was a typical Victorian, a disciple of Ruskin, and an admirer of Gladstone. She believed in educating girls at home under the supervision of governesses. Her ideas were ridiculed by her nieces and nephews. Rose came into conflict with Iris, her niece, who wanted to send her younger sisters, Muriel, Dorothy, and cousin Amanda, to a boarding school. Rose hated boarding schools. Thus she told Bessie, her sister: "Send the young ones to us at the

Villa, my dear, they will be perfectly safe and I can get the most excellent governess,"³⁹

She tried to impose her old ways on the young. Bessie tried to make her understand that things had changed, she said:

"Things have moved on since Miss Simpson taught us ~~to~~ the use of the globes in the library. Why, Rose, you can't realize how changed things are."

"For the worse, and why? Because of these schools."⁴⁰

Rose felt lost in the new century. The young considered her an odd relic of the past -- an object of fun:

The sudden appearance of this obstinate old spinster, thin and black as a kitchen poker, with her provincial cranks, affected these London people . . . as a stupidity, an impertinence. The anxious William, who had enlisted in the ranks, gazed at her with sad wonder; . . . Bertie, who had found in war at last a way of escape from his hated classroom, who was already a smart major in the smartest of regiments, curled his new moustache at her and drawled, "Re-ally, Auntie -- and how are they all at Queensport? I suppose they've hardly heard of the war down there?"⁴¹

Some of Cary's female characters show creativity in the making of the social history of the era in which they happen to live. Their activities, however, center mainly round personal matters such as their own emancipation. Among those active women was Tabitha Baskett of A Fearful Joy. Tabitha proved to be quite revolutionary in the 1890's. In the 'nineties women started to ride the new ~~low~~ low

³⁹ The Moonlight, p. 269.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 270.

⁴¹ Ibid.

wheeled bicycle that succeeded the dangerous 'high bicycle.' The new vehicle further helped in the emancipation of woman, for it sent her alone to the countryside, or accompanied by one of the other sex.⁴² Tabitha was among the women who considered themselves emancipated and fashionable; she enjoyed riding the new bicycle. Even in the 1890's, she did not consider it wrong for a woman to smoke. With her intellectual friends of The Bankside, she led a campaign against the strict Victorian views. After the war, however, she found herself outmoded. Her ideas were those of a different generation. She believed whole-heartedly in the emancipation of woman, but she could not tolerate the idea of birth-control that was current in the 1920's. She tried to keep valid the idea of the "family" that was so highly respected by her, and by her generation. She tried to persuade her son and daughter-in-law to have a child. She wondered: "How could a woman not want children? How could she get married and refuse to have children?"⁴³

A few of the older generation of Cary's characters tolerated the changes produced by the younger. Among those few was Sara Monday who said: "I saw that Miss Cary's free talk was all in the fashion too. So I did not mind it, for I thought: 'The world must move.'"

⁴² G.M. Trevelyan, Illustrated English Social History, Vol. IV: The Nineteenth Century (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1952), p. 100.

⁴³ A Fearful Joy, p. 231.

I even got to like it, for, as I say, it made me friends with Miss Clary"44 Though Sara was broad-minded enough to know that the "world must move," and that it moves by taking new forms, she could not escape the nostalgic attachment that one has for the "good old days" when one is young, tender, and happy! She expressed that nostalgia by saying:

Indeed, looking back at that time before the war, in the nineteen tens, it seems to me that the world was all gaiety; delights crowding together till there was no room between. For it was parties, parties all the time, in summer, croquet and tennis and luncheons and teas and pageants and plays and regattas; and in winter it was dinners and balls, and such balls. . . . It was a heaven for girls in those sweet days, for the men had not lost their manners and at all dances there were chaperones to see that they danced with even the plainest. So they did too, for they knew their duty as gentlemen.⁴⁵

Nina Latter, who also respected the ideas of the young, tried to understand her son, and did not come into conflict with him. She respected his individuality, and sought to protect it. She found no reason why he should become a "success in Chester's or Jim's line." If acting was his talent, she argued, why should not he have the chance to develop it? Unlike Nimmo and Latter, she was not disturbed by the laxity of morals that followed the war. She quite intelligently understood that at that time people desperately needed some kind of

⁴⁴ Herself Surprised, p. 152.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 35.

emotional release. She said:

Those who wonder at the collapse of morals after that war simply forgot what it was like to come suddenly from the desperation of the Spring of 1918 into the victory of the Autumn. Every one wanted a holiday to do what they liked, -- the quiet ones wanted to go home and think and the gay and lively wanted a spree. The soldiers were so wild to get out of the army that some regiments almost demobilised themselves. They were tired of discipline, and it would have been dangerous for the officers to try to keep them in order.⁴⁶

Nina followed the new fashions, painted her face, and wore short skirts. She said: "I was simply following the fashion and had to do so unless I had wanted to look peculiar" ⁴⁷ She went so far as to reject the old ideas:

It is astonishing to think, now, how suddenly I had become reconciled to the idea that young men like Tom could live openly with girls who claimed to be respectable; that everything could be discussed in the plainest words; that all sorts of vices were not perhaps very wrong but only amusing or even necessary; that both sexes could lie almost naked on every beach; and that there was even something "right" about nakedness; and that all the old moral ideas were petty and ridiculous.⁴⁸

Gulley Jimson, the artist of The Horse's Mouth, was neither a pre-war nor a post-war figure. He actually belonged to no society and had no wish so to restrict himself. He was a Bohemian wanderer

⁴⁶ Prisoner of Grace, p. 324.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 338.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

who had no respect whatsoever for social institutions. He broke rules and social decorum whenever he could do so; he thus lived illicitly with Sara Monday. He showed little interest in what went ^{on} around him except in the field of art. This is, perhaps, why the book he narrates, The Horse's Mouth, documents very little social history. It deals with the changes in the field of art, but what it shows most, is the artistic temperament of the narrator, Jimson. He desired to be "non-attached." What he sought to preserve was his own freedom as a man and, especially, as an artist. Like Paul Morel of Sons and Lovers (1913), and Stephen Dedalus of A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (1916), he escaped family ties and obligations in order to remain free, devoted only to his art. Shaw's Tanner says in Man and Superman the following:

The true artist will let his wife starve, his children go barefoot, his mother drudge for his living at seventy, sooner ^o than work at anything but his art. To women he is half vivisector, half vampire. He gets into intimate relations with them to study them, to strip the mask of convention from them, to surprise their inmost secrets, knowing that they have the power to rouse his deepest creative energies, to rescue him from his cold reason, to make him see visions and dream dreams, to inspire him, as he calls it. . . . Since marriage began, the great artist has been known as a bad husband. . . . Perish the race and wither a thousand women if only the sacrifice of them enable him to act Hamlet better, to paint a finer picture, to write a deeper poem, a greater play, a profounder philosophy!⁴⁹

⁴⁹ G.B. Shaw, Man and Superman, Act I. (Penguin edition; Edinburgh, 1959).

Jimson was such an artist. He used Sara Monday as well as other women as sources of inspiration. He left Sara and the others as soon as he finished with them, or felt that they were in one way or another impinging on his most precious freedom. He said:

Materiality, that is, Sara, the old female nature, having attempted to button up the prophetic spirit, that is to say, Gulley Jimson, in her placket-hole, got a bonk on the conk, and was reduced to her proper status, as spiritual fodder.⁵⁰

One could not classify Jimson as an Impressionist, a Cubist, or anything else. He practiced different styles and refused to attach himself to any particular tradition. His father had clung to one particular school and was outmoded. He said that his father who painted landscapes with figures -- girls in gardens, and who was influenced by Constable, was not popular when he started because he was too modern. Gradually, he was appreciated, and about 1848 became famous. He, eventually, got into the Academy.

About 1858 a new school of modern art started to make itself apparent, namely, the pre-Raphaelites. Old Mr. Jimson, who could not paint in the new tradition, disliked it, and with many others attacked it. Pretty soon Mr. Jimson was thrown out of the Academy and the pre-Raphaelites replaced him. Nobody any longer appreciated his nice girls in gardens! Fashion in art is unstable like all fashions. The history of art shows the conflict between

⁵⁰ The Horse's Mouth, p. 52.

old and new schools. Jimson, who was aware of all this, spent his whole life seeking new forms in order to avoid his father's fate. However, he faced another problem, a problem shared by all original artists, and that is the inability of the public to understand and appreciate their works. Original artists, Jimson included, are ahead of their time. For this reason, the public fails to understand them. Jimson's works were not fully appreciated. His exhibition was almost a failure. Though this moved him, yet he was not completely discouraged. He continued to paint, and comforted himself by saying that William Blake was criticised during his life, but was highly praised by posterity. Jimson said in one of his discourses:

"When Van Gogh was painting his masterpieces, the clever ones were beginning to admire Manet -- that was very encouraging to Van Gogh, and if it wasn't, what did he care. And when Van Gogh was dead and rotten, and his pictures were being bought at thousands a piece for the public galleries so that students could get ideas from them, Matisse and Picasso and Braque were bad jokes, but how encouraging for them to hear Van Gogh, who was nearly as mad as they were, appreciated in all the best drawing-rooms."⁵¹

I tend to think that this was Jimson's hope too. Therefore, Jimson, unlike Wilcher and Nimmo, did not come into conflict with the rising generation, for he hoped to be esteemed by it. Posterity might consider Jimson an original artist of his own time, but definitely

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 149.

at one point, some young artist will come up with new forms that will outmode his forms. However, Jimson, as an artist, can survive change provided his works express fundamental, universal truths, meanings, and emotions that will continue to have significance throughout the ages. It is because of this immortal, surviving quality of great art that we still admire Shakespeare, Leonardo da Vinci, . . . ⁱⁿ spite of change, lapse of time, and upheavals of all sorts.

Gary also portrays young men and women who are participating in the making of the history of the twentieth century. Ann Wilcher is a doctor. Amanda Cranage is an Oxford graduate who is seen at the end of The Moonlight living alone in a London flat, working as a research assistant to a Mr. Moss, helping him with his book. She reminds one of Shaw's Vivie. Vivie had gone to Cambridge where she had distinguished herself in the field of mathematics. Vivie wanted to live independently and earn her own living. She thus asked her rich mother, Mrs. Warren, to leave her alone. We see her at the end of the play, Mrs. Warren's Profession, alone in her office, working earnestly. Ann and Amanda, like Vivie, pursue their respective professions, and prove to be stronger participants in everyday life than the domestic Victorian girls. Robert Brown contemplates scientific agricultural projects. We are told in To Be A Pilgrim, that he pulled down Tolbrook, the old Victorian family home, to turn it into a farm where he could work on his

projects.

These young "creators" depend on science, education, and the complete emancipation of woman to build their civilization. Cary has shown the creativity of two different generations. Wilcher, Nimmo, Latter, Rose Venn, and Tabitha Baskett had helped in the making of the late-Victorian civilization. They all grew attached to their creation. In the 1920's, it hurt them to see that what they created and loved, was being shattered by the young generation. But that is history, Cary seems to say, a clash between the ventures and the creations of two different generations, between the old and the new.

Cary, to allow the young generation to exercise its creativity unhampered, kills off his Victorian characters; hence, we leave Tabitha and Wilcher sick on their death beds. Dick Bonser died in a brothel. Sara Monday was accidentally killed by Jimson. In 1926, Nina was murdered by Latter, who consequently waited to be hanged. Nimmo died of a heart attack. The young people, Ann, Amanda, and Robert are left to work, to share in the making of a new order. Soon they will grow old and become "conservative," attached to their creation, in conflict with a still younger generation that would try to promote its creativity. History is made and civilization is enriched by the "creative imagination" and the creative effort of different generations.

CONCLUSION

Joyce Cary documents the two eras, the Victorian and the modern, and puts them in juxtaposition. He does not do this to say, I believe, that one is better than the other, but to show his historical vision of change and to illustrate man's creative ability that has produced these two civilizations. He does not, for example, resent the modern girl and favour the Victorian or vice versa. He says that the Victorian answer to the problem of sex which guards woman's chastity will always have "greatness and dignity."¹

The modern young woman, brought up in a completely different moral climate from her grandmother (and often her mother -- many Victorian households existed in full force until 1914), has almost complete sexual freedom, but, with it (or so I think, but I am, of course, too near the facts to be very sure of their relative significance), a sense of responsibility and integrity which, in this completely different situation, has value and distinction possibly greater than the other.²

According to Cary, as a result of the process of change, and of man's creativity and accumulative efforts through the centuries, there is a process of development in history. He wrote to Andrew Wright concerning this matter saying: "There is a process of development in history, a direction and, as far as I can see an irreversible direction, unless you can imagine

¹ Preface to The Moonlight, p. 6.

² Ibid., pp. 6-7.

all book education and technical knowledge being wiped out."³

He also states:

The tribal life has almost vanished and it will never come back. The peoples demand education and with it a new standard of life, for education gives a richer power of enjoyment and those who have learnt how to use their imagination will never be content with a narrower existence.⁴

Thus the twentieth century has become more complex and more "developed" than the nineteenth century. The Victorian world might have been more pious, and its girls more docile than the twentieth century girls, yet, modern girls, as Cary has shown, are better educated, and therefore contribute more to society. Moreover, the modern age can very well boast of its mechanical inventions, some of which Cary mentions in A Fearful Joy. Our century will become even more "developed" with more inventions and more "creative imaginations" at work.

Cary lived until 1957 sharing our problems and fears as twentieth century citizens of the world. He tried, with his idea of development and man's creative ability, to explain that a third world war is not likely to take place. He says:

People everywhere demand from government not only a reasonable standard of living but security. They hate and fear war. They have already made it impossible for any of the democracies to start an offensive war.

³ From a letter sent by Cary to Wright, quoted in Wright, Joyce Cary, p. 41.

⁴ Joyce Cary, "The Idea of Progress," The Cornhill, CLXVII (Summer 1954), pp. 334-335.

This is one consequence of the process of education and creative invention which is going on all round us all the time. The other is the modern weapon, terrifying in its destructive power, the rocket and the atomic bomb, which makes even swashbuckling governments fear the uncertain results of total war.⁵

He goes on to say:

All that seems to me assured is that world peace and security are inevitable. Not only from the fear of the new arms, but from the complex working of the creative genius of man producing a continuous revolution that compels all governments to seek international agreement and stability.⁶

This hopeful view is very gratifying and encouraging to people of the twentieth century. Similarly, due to this same process of development, education, and creativity many social problems would be solved. This is actually taking place. Governments, almost everywhere, as a result of education, are trying to do away with many of the causes of poverty in the world. Projects are undertaken to give opportunities to all to work and to earn more money in order to live better. Governments also try to give opportunities to all to receive a certain amount of education, thus eliminating one source of misery and backwardness, namely, illiteracy. Cary, however, is not looking forward to a Utopian society. Since man is the free maker, evils and troubles of all sorts will have place in society, for not all people do good deeds and act well.

⁵ Ibid., p. 335.

⁶ Ibid., p. 337.

Cary says:

A man can have a mind free from prejudice, and liberty of action, and choose to act badly. We do not say that all free-minded men are good or that all good men are free-minded.⁷

Some may choose to act wickedly and this accounts for evil actions in society and in the world at large. Likewise, some may choose to act well, and this makes the "good" possible. Moreover, Cary portrays human nature as being capable of performing good and wicked actions at the same time. In relation to this, Owen states: "Cary recognizes the co-existence of good and evil in every fellow-being and the difficulties encountered by all who would attempt finally to separate one from the other for the justification of their own particular moral codes."⁸ His characters commit wicked deeds, but are also capable of doing good ones, too -- good in the sense of showing human sympathy and compassion: Sara Monday lived illicitly with Gulley Jimson and with Thomas Wilcher. She stole things from the latter. These actions are essentially bad; yet, at the same time, she proved to be kind and generous. She stole from Wilcher mainly to help Gulley Jimson's family. While in jail writing her story to sell it for a hundred pounds, she thought of Tommy Jimson, and wanted to send him the hundred pounds so that he

⁷ Power in Men, p. 15.

⁸ B. Evan Owen, "The Supremacy of the Individual in the Novels of Joyce Cary," Adam International Review, p. 29.

could pay his school bill. Jimson, the defier of family ties, was not without paternal love. He loved his son, Tommy, and seemed to be proud of his scholarly ability. The cold Wilcher showed love and regard for his brothers and especially for his sister. Nimmo, in spite of his dishonest and selfish political games, was also a human being who cared for others. He showed in Except the Lord how attached he was to his sister, Georgina. Jim Latter who committed a murder did not emerge, in my view, a callous murderer without any remorse from his evil action. He emerged as a hot-tempered soldier who thought he was doing something good for his country. He was still capable of love even at the point of murder. He said: "I never loved this sweet woman so much as now when I knew she had to die."⁹ Charley Brown of Charley is My Darling was a destructive delinquent who went so far as to destroy unnecessarily the interior of a house. One feels that in spite of his destructive activities, he was an innocent, healthy-minded boy who would grow up to be a normal person. In this, he is different from Pinkie of Brighton Rock who, unlike Charley, was unhealthy, obsessed by abnormal ideas. Pinkie found it difficult to make normal contact with people, whereas Charley could make that contact easily. He showed great love for Lizzie, the young deaf heroine of the novel. Johnson of the novel, Mister Johnson, was a poet, a man of imagi-

⁹ Not Honour More, p. 220.

nation, a liar, a thief, and a murderer. He was also capable of love. He loved Bamu, his wife. He also showed great regard for Rudbeck, the Assistant District Officer. He kept liking him even when he knew that Rudbeck would be shooting him dead for killing an Englishman.

Cary thus does not portray human nature as being angelic nor does he suggest that because it is so we are likely to have a perfect society. Cary knows that human nature is capable of doing good and bad deeds. History shows the evils, the wars, the injuries done by man to man. It also shows that a lot of good was done too. Depending on man's ability to perform good deeds, he expects, not a Utopian society, but a more developed and a peaceful world in which most people are relatively happy and satisfied. Cary's views are optimistic. This is because he has a profound trust in human nature. It is good to hear, in the twentieth century, writers thinking so positively about human nature. It is comforting to hear that man is born free and that he is not tragically and absurdly crushed down by forces stronger than himself. It is gratifying to hear that man is creative, capable of doing good deeds, of going beyond himself, of showing compassion. It is good to be assured that humanity and civilization are not to be wiped out by man and his inventions. However, Cary's guarantee of a world peace, we shall have to leave to human nature and to history to prove!

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