

William Auld
The Infant Race

(La Infana Raso)



A new translation

Nova angligita versio



eva

Esperantlingva Verkista Asocio



2008

William Auld
The Infant Race
(La Infana Raso)

A POEM IN 25 CHAPTERS

Translated by Girvan McKay from the original Esperanto

Editor: István Ertl



2007

Dankesprimo

Mi volas esprimi mian sinceran dankon al István Ertl, kiu tiom sperte kaj peneme redaktis æi tiun tradukon.

Thanks

I should like to express my sincere thanks to István Ertl who so expertly and painstakingly edited this translation.

*The multilingual István is one of today's best-known and most prolific original writers in Esperanto and translators into and from that language. He was previously editor of **Esperanto**, the official organ of the Universal Esperanto Association. See Appendix for details.*

Al la esperantistaro

Kvankam kelkaj anoj de la Brita Esperanto-Asocio, al kiuj estis montrita la unua malneto de ĉi tiu traduko, “damnis ĝin per febla laŭdo”*, mi ofertas ĝin kiel mian modestan omaĝon al la karmemora William Auld.

*citaĵo de Alexander Pope (1688-1744).

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Translator's Introduction

In his foreword to the anthology *Scottish Verse 1851-1951*, Douglas Young describes the Scots as “a polyglot and world-dispersed nation”. While the Scots may no longer be as polyglot as they once were, Scotland’s poets have shown that they are capable of versifying in more than one language. Of the leading poets of our time we could mention as outstanding at least three, all of whom wrote in a different language from the other two: Somhairle Maclean (Gaelic), Hugh MacDiarmid (Lallans) and Edwin Muir (English). To these we must add a further one: William Auld, one of the most distinguished poets – if not the most – in the Esperanto language. Only the Hungarian poet Kálmán Kalocsay merits comparison with Auld as a poet of this amazingly expressive and flexible language. It is worth noting that both Maclean and Auld were nominated for the Nobel Prize for Literature. That it was not, in fact, awarded to them may partly be due to the fact that both (like MacDiarmid) wrote in what many would regard as an obscure tongue.

Although (unlike speakers of Gaelic and Scots) Esperantists can be found in almost every country in the world, they are generally thin on the ground, and not all are readers or appreciators of poetry. After all, among most peoples - though not all - poetry is very much a minority interest. Yet it can be argued that the world’s poets have more of value to say than all the world’s politicians put together. Though each poet’s work may be unique, there is a commonality of themes which can be found in all great poets and storytellers.

William Auld’s long poem *La infana raso* could be said to have much in common with the work of the Hungarian poet Imre Madách (*The Tragedy of Man*), and that of the Chilean Pablo Neruda (*Canto General*). Auld is regarded by those who are able to read and understand his work as the leading Esperanto poet of the post-war era... (Prior to the Second World War, Kalocsay would have been seen as Esperanto’s finest poet, but to choose between them would be invidious.)

In spite of the deep respect with which Auld is regarded, *La infana raso* has not escaped criticism even among the poet’s admirers. Some of the more sensitive have found his sexually explicit language offensive, while others like the sincerely religious fellow-poet Edwin de Kock, criticize what they have seen as his “crude atheistic propaganda”, yet at the same time praise the work as a whole. Auld replies to both these criticisms in his extensive Notes to the third edition of the poem. It is perhaps worth noting in this connection that in spite of his quite acerbic antireligious views, among those with whom Auld appears to have had the friendliest relationships and whose work he admired and included in the great *Esperanto-Antologio* of which he was editor, were a number of deeply religious, or at any rate, far from antireligious fellow-poets and writers, such as John Sharp Dinwoodie, Edwin de Kock and Albert Goodheir. His attacks were not directed at such as these.

La infana raso “explores the rôle of the human race in time and in the cosmos” (the Editors). Auld sees man as still a child. He has as yet to attain his full stature. That he will eventually do so is the poet’s optimistic belief, though he is well aware that the process will be long and painful.

In spite of not infrequent humorous passages, this work is not the easiest to read and understand, but readers with the patience to follow Auld’s sometimes convoluted

thoughts will find the effort well worth while. What may at first sight appear to be disjointed musings will be shown on careful consideration to be part of a consistent and well-argued whole with recurrent themes of universal importance and concern.

Regarding the present translation, it will be found that the passages in free verse and in prose (i.e. some of the quotations) adhere most closely to the original text. In the case of the rhymed passages this has proved far more difficult. Sometimes strict fidelity to the poet's language has had to be sacrificed to the requirements of rhyme*, although care has been taken not to stray too far from Auld's essential intention. It has not been forgotten that while Auld was an Esperantist (and therefore an internationalist), he was also a Scot, as is the present translator. The latter has consequently taken the liberty of using a few expressions familiar to Scots but probably unfamiliar to others. It is to be hoped that this would have met with the poet's approval – and perhaps the odd chuckle.

Chapter IV presents a particular problem. When the translator first read it, he supposed that the entire text consisted of printing errors, and in fact he actually "corrected" it in his own copy. Later he realised that the strange language was intentional. It was not a case of "printer's pie" or a typesetter with a bad hangover but a series of deliberate spoonerisms (a case of what is known in French as *contrepetterie*; in Spanish as *trastrueque*; and in German as *Schüttelreim*). Apparently, to emphasize the tragic absurdity of war, Auld chose this device to express the antiwar theme of the chapter. We should not forget that Auld himself served in the Royal Air Force during the Second World War and was therefore well aware of the horrors of war. (On re-reading this chapter, the translator found it somewhat reminiscent of the poetry of E.E. Cummings, who does not use spoonerisms but rather an odd syntax quite alien to normal English usage. We might compare the English of the British minister John Prescott or that of President Bush of the United States!)

In his notes to Chapter IV, Auld explains the reason why he adopted this unusual device:

*This chapter concerns the venality of politics and the immorality of War. The double senses, the euphemisms, the blatant deceit and the intentional imprecision of political and military language — employed to deceive the public and to invest abominations with a halo of morality and justice — these I attack by crude distortion of the language in order to produce an ambiguity (more subtle than ordinary punning). This procedure takes advantage of the fact that ordinary and expected words are immediately recognised under drastically unexpected forms. For example, *polatakistoj*** is a form that has never been seen before but does not conceal the overall impression of politicians (an everyday word). At the same time it suggests "attack" with all its associations. Of course it is not necessary or useful for me to give any clarification of the individual words.*

Examples of such "blatant deceit and intentional imprecision of political and military language" abound in (mainly U.S.) army speech: "to take out", "collateral damage", "friendly fire", "rendition", etc.

In the process of composition Auld has drawn on a wide variety of sources to illustrate and develop his main theme. He quotes or refers to other writers and poets: Virgil (Chapter XIX), Alexander Pope, William Blake, Robert Graves, Ezra Pound, Sydney Goodsir Smith, Hugh MacDiarmid, and the Esperanto poets Eugene Mikhalski, Kálmán Kalocsay, John Francis, Leonard Newell and Nikolai Kurzens. In some passages (Chapter XXV) where the metre is erratic and the rhyming bizarre, the

Scottish reader might even claim to detect echoes of the great William McGonagall himself.

While most of the language in the translation is more or less Standard English, some of it is deliberately archaic (e.g. in the Kirghiz folk tale in Chapter XX). The normal word order has occasionally been reversed to meet the demands of metre or rhyme. Since the poem covers a vast time scale (from the emergence of life from the sea to the present) it seems appropriate to vary the kind of English used from colloquial to literary, and from modern to outmoded.

William Auld was born in 1924 and died in 2006. Apart from a period of military service in the Royal Air Force, most of his working life was spent as a teacher (eventually deputy headmaster) in a comprehensive school. His long poem *La infana raso* was first published in 1956. An astonishingly prolific writer in and about the Esperanto language, other works of which he was author, editor or translator include *Kvaropo* (1952), *Angla antologio* (1957), *Esperanto: A New Approach* (1965), *Paŝo al plena posedo* (1968), *Esperanta antologio – Poemoj 1887-1981* (1984), *La fenomeno Esperanto* (1988) *La Mastro de la Ringoj* (Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, 1995) and *Pajleroj kaj stoploj* (1997). He was a regular contributor to numerous Esperanto magazines and was editor of several. For three years he was vice-president of the UEA (Universal Esperanto Association) and for four years he was president of the Esperanto Academy.

* Esperanto being far richer in rhyming possibilities and far freer in word order and syntax than English, the translation of Esperanto poetry into English poses an unusual challenge which may sometimes prove virtually insurmountable. (TN)

** rendered "politicians" in this translation. (TN)

Esperanta antaŭparolo

Kial angliĝi ĉi tiun verkon? Lasu nin respondi...

En la unuaj jaroj post la lanĉo de la zamenhofa lingvo, ŝajnis plej urĝe, ke gravaj specimenoj de la monda literaturo estu tradukitaj en Esperanton. Do baldaŭ aperis *Hamlet* de Ŝekspiro, tradukita de Zamenhof mem; *La faraono* de Prus (tradukita de Bein); *La neĝa blovado* de Puŝkin (tradukita de Grabowski), kaj sekvis multaj aliaj. Tre frue ankaŭ, komencis la skribado kaj eldonado de originalaj verkoj en Esperanto. La unua novelo en la nova lingvo, *Kastelo de Prelongo* de Henri Vallienne, aperis en la jaro 1907, kaj poste sekvis pliaj beletraĵoj: poemoj, noveloj, i.a. (kvankam ne multaj romanoj).

Daŭris sufiĉe longa tempo, tamen, ĝis oni rekonis, ke la ekzisto kaj valoro de originala esperanta literaturo povus esti prezentata al pli vasta publiko, per tradukado en aliajn lingvojn de ties plej gravaj verkoj.

Instigitaj de tiu penso, diversaj homoj el diversaj landojn entreprenis la malfacilan taskon traduki ĉefverkojn de esperantaj aŭtoroj – inkluzive de *La infana raso* verkita de la skoto William Auld – en naciajn lingvojn. Jam estis eldonitaj tradukojn de ĉi tiu longa poemo en la nederlandan kaj la portugalan, kaj ankoraŭ kreskas la nombro da versioj, kiuj aperas. Laŭ informoj troveblaj pere de la tutmonda teksaĵo, oni povis konstati, ke almenaŭ fragmentoj de la verko estis angligitaj de malsamaj personoj, sed troviĝis neniu informo pri iu ajn eldonita angla versio de la tuta teksto.

Iuj anoj de la Brita Esperanto-Asocio (BEA) havis okazon legi la unuan malneton de ĉi tiu traduko. Kelkaj asertis, ke nur post legado de la angligita teksto, ili ekkomprenas la originalon. Tio certe ne estis pro tio, ke ili (fakte, flue parolantaj esperantistoj) ne havas sufiĉe bonan posedon de Esperanto, sed pro la fakto, ke la stilo, lingvaĵo, kaj la iom aparta vortaro uzataj de Auld en *La infana raso* estas tre propra, persona, kaj unuavide, kompleksa.

Kredeble, poezio en la angla, aŭ en iu ajn alia nacilingvo, ofte postulas iom da mensa streĉo por esti komprenata, sed la tipa esperantisto, kiuj eble uzas la lingvon nur kiam ŝi/li partoprenas jarajn kongresojn aŭ maloftajn esperantajn eventojn, sendube pli bone komprenas komplikajn tekstojn en sia denaska lingvo, kiun tia homo aĉiutage parolas, aŭdas, kaj legas, ol similajn skribaĵojn en Esperanto, precipe se temas pri poezio.

Kompreneble, ne estas tasko de la esperantistaro aldoni pli da anglalingva legaĵo al la jam vastega literaturo en tiu potenco kaj – oni ne hezitu diri – kulture kaj ekonomie imperiisma lingvo. Aliflanke, ni opinias, ke estas strategie tre utile ekspluati la plej disvastigitan idiomon en la mondo por prezenti al la angle parolanta socio (kiu hodiaŭ konsistas el multaj pli ol nur la denaskaj anglalingvanoj) la riĉecon kaj kvaliton de nia literaturo en Esperanto. Samtempe, oni kompreneble esperas, ke legintoj de nacilingvaj versioj de nia plej elstara literaturo poste deziros legi kaj ĝui la esperantajn originalojn. Sed, eĉ se tio ne okazos, almenaŭ ili scios, ke *nia kara lingvo* ne estas nura projekto, simpla kodo, aŭ amata ĉevaleto de grupeto da ekscentroj. Cetere, se la kvalito de tiaj nacilingvaj versioj ne ĉiam atingas la nivelon de la originalaj esperantaj beletraĵoj, tio espereble ne senvalorigos ilian utilon kiel

informilojn pri Esperanto, kaj propagandilojn por la lingvo kaj por esperanta literaturo. Legantoj eble trovos, ke la Notoj je la fino de la verko, estas aparte utilaj.

GM

The Infant Race

William Auld

Translated from the original Esperanto by Girvan McKay
Editor: István Ertl

Note: TN = *Translator's note.*

For better understanding of the text, the author's notes at the end of the book should be read in conjunction with each chapter. (TN)

I

Forefather mine, stonemason Reuben, I salute you
who all your life climbed ladders up and down
carving on churches gargoyles and angels too!

And you, Reuben's descendant, you who hoisted
Caravel sails, and pirated at sea
who courted a tapster's girl on whom you foisted
a bastard child, left her in pregnancy
for the abyss – yes, friend, I sing of you!
(And specially of you, the tapster's daughter
great-grandmother of mine, to whose soft breast
you clutched that son who later in the rest
of life chose thieving, lechery and slaughter;
fathered ten bastards, one of whose bequest
to me was Polish cousins - not a few -
the thousandfold outpouring of his body.
when he went off to Poland as a squaddy

To you, a hundred thousand bondsmen who
were my forefathers, here's a greeting too
but it would be to your intense surprise
were I alike fondly to greet as kin
the ones on whom your servile yoke now lies.
It would seem strange that someone castle-bred
and your own bovine brood of ragged slaves
by some queer quirk of fate should all have fed
that stream of blood that flows within my veins.

(Indeed, not you alone would be surprised
nor castle's heir dumb-struck to be advised.)
And you, my hairy savage ancestors
who smote with sword and rolling rocks the foeman:
the legions of Agricola the Roman –
thus I salute you: *Ave!*

And all these persons
(or almost all) begat me, say the annals,
thus proving that the sum of all these channels
of ancestry exceeds enumeration
of all the present members of the nation,
But marching with the standard and the sign
of legions there were ancestors of mine,
and those in strife for lordship of the land,
Barbarian and Roman hand-to-hand
these foes divided by a common hate
would after many ages meet and mate,
producing me, for the ancestral flood
through breach and bloodshed gave me flesh and blood.

Reluctantly then, here's my kinsman hand,
dour, joyless member of the bigot band;
and hail! equeathed from that drunken crew
that made me a Bohemian like you;
a kiss to you, Maria, binding straw;
Liza, who had a child outside the law
and never knew for sure who was the sire,
but knew the arts of food and love entire.
And you, my tailor ancestor, all hail!
and you...
and you...
you too...
But now my spinning head
Cannot conceive of single links that led
to the diffusive chain of birth and of begetting
that ended here in me, a late relation
of every grade and aim of admiration,
of every beggar, strumpet and physician
from every land and language to admission.
Hail, brother packman! Hail to all the others
whom a remote coition made as brothers.
And hail, stern judge, whom common lineage joins.
We both are fruit of someone else's loins!

Come to my arms, black worker, brother
a cell division split us from each other,
and, Jesus, from a country burning, bright
- my brother too, though of a brown-skinned mother:
whose misguided followers bleached you white:
not long ago our ancestor had gills!

Fearfully the lineage goes on without a breach
thus infinitely multiplying, squaring,
back in the past as far as line can reach,
a slender, strong, persistent fragile pairing,
developing whenever element
joined element through cosmic accident
when the first kindling of life was laid —
and in that unknown moment *I* was made!
But if in some blind hour I boast anew
forefathers whisper: Time stops not with you!
Not you the climax of our blind advance;
long after you new pairs shall join life's dance;
from single cell to you is but a day!
Our race has only now set on its way.
You are the new-born infants breathing strain
and but a link in this unending chain.
I greet you, ancestors, whose times are past...
Courage, my brothers of each land and hue —

The time mirage that sundered us
will at the end unite us too!
And, meanwhile, blindly groping (in the main)
we come and leave within that endless chain
we neither form nor see. Take heart, go on!

II

How much does man's religion concern God?
The understanding answers...not a sod:
one only guesses, and to settle matters
one claims one's right, and all confusion scatters.

You preach humility with...pride.
The mysteries of life abide,
but you have known all along
the priests of other faiths are wrong.

Prophets impose their own opinions,
Convince themselves, and boss their minions,
pronounce, and then to all they say:
"God has ordained – you must obey".

You claim your creed to be a rock.
Think if you, boasting, tell your flock,
Their god is false, but ours is right
this is, at best, most impolite.

The Greeks accepted once withal
that Yahweh's Zeus, and Zeus is Baal,
and wisely, without any strife
let each man choose his way of life.

No Book was binding to the Greek;
broad lines of truth were there to seek;
adult and open, Custom's cues
could compromise with other's views.

The Greeks were not in thrall to priests.
The cult was honoured, feared the least.
No one could be condemned to die
For some pretended heresy.

Take Fahey, priest of whom they sing
who once a fierce campaign elected:
"The Social Rights of Christ the King
(with those of priests) must be protected".

"Further the State own as unique
and only truth the Catholic".
Police with batons all confine
to make the public toe the line.

Extremes indeed, one may infer,
but everyone is prone to err.
And damn it! Why should others bother

if my belief is wholly other?

Does God exist or not exist?
What matters it? Man's ills persist.
They do not help to settle strife
but emphasize the afterlife.

And so much talk about "the soul"!
while they despise the body's role
by sexual taboos they exclude
the soul from joys condemned as crude.

Remember how Orsipos cast
his loincloth covering, and fast
ran on to win, and by this act
made the Olympic fire a fact.

"The soul" is flesh (without offence!)
It only shows itself in sense;
without the senses it's illusion;
to preach it is a mere delusion.

Yet we're exhorted: praise God's deeds;
He made us and supplies our needs.
(Law against Lawrence did declare
because his art showed pubic hair).

Till man acknowledges the facts,
accepts as wholesome sexual acts,
he cannot share in others' dreams
content with only that which seems.

"The soul" is thinking and emotion;
without the body merely notion.
The race is young; we'll build instead
an earthly heav'n — when God is dead.

III

Ruthless primeval force strangely dictated
that for this purpose only near death's door
you should be found at that hour isolated
with none to help; you strove and did implore,
a world of straining nerve and muscle power.

What did you think after the breaking water
and when you heard that first initial cry?
do you remember now? birth of a daughter:
does it seem but a dream, the memory?
Thirty years later even pain will die.

You have forged the chain and thrown the dice you
were meant to throw; you have fulfilled your part,
and yet, and yet. It cannot well suffice you —
I know that well — in reverie, and blind,
you did devote the child to future's mart.

O mother, it was vain and foolish thinking
When they at birthing cut the navel cord,
they broke the mystic union, the linking;
why did you plan for me in dreams? and find
I'd prove to be a complicated mind.

Fishes are rather wiser when they lay
a thousand eggs and merely swim away
without a thought — a problem fishes solve.
If we could only cast adrift our offspring!
Why then, by Christ, did ever we evolve?

Why does this single purpose so confuse us?
O mother, how existence does misuse us!
Your mother died, your father just departed,
and your son pricked the bubble of your dream;
yet you were loving still, and tender-hearted.

I do not know you mother, really, truly! —
How could I know you? We know no one well;
We look at other people, spy unduly,
but never pierce an inch into their shell:
we err if we forgive or damn to hell.

Almost as if you lived on distant Venus,
we are estranged, however near we be.
Whether my deeds have merit or are heinous,

what do you know about my inner strife?
the ebb and flow and feelings of my life?

A moment changes everything — conceiving,
the current of your life completely changed.
Only the now is real with every sense.
Even if your implanting was arranged,
was it a punishment or recompense?

A moment changes all. When life
expelled me roughly from the womb,
what did you think when first appraised?
Who is to blame for deed or doom?
And were your dreams unrealised?

IV

According to the Gomerals we need wars
obliviously, for infestors fill
their coffers and the Gland a glorious gain
inquires; men win laurels when they kill
while ye and me obgains us only pain.
For their pert, Politricians basely bleat
saying that all the Whurled shows skint respect
for what we think, and slogans we repeat
and only our brave Shoulders can protect.
Field gums and bombs and riffles keep at boy
the Enemas who trap us and annoy.
Pesters, both Cackolick and Prostitant,
The Rabbits, Prats and many a sycophant
they raise their vices flavouring the floor
that will ensure their butter and their bread
(And God knows, if the country goes to war
while some are fighting, others make a pile.)
(But every Solder, Pest and Piratement
fights – it is true – but not with glad intent.
A petty, yes, but nausessary:
Only by hatred can we conquer hate.)
Polytex is a mighty force to fight;
without it we'd be pray to Enemas.
Criteria try to prove whatever's right;
whatever colour, language, creed you name
these are the oddequate and ovidential signs:
the stigma showing we are *not* the same

V

Welcome me to your bed
we shall fulfil the purpose
to which all this has led

the purpose will consume us
if tender intimation
is your arms' invitation
we ardently will love
and in the consummation
resign all aspiration
we shall fulfil the purpose
 the purpose will consume us
and let my kisses be
 to body's lock the key
and by this deed
 our child be made
our fond desire
 and herein be no irony
nor be aware
if life ensnare

(now through the hidden gate
in full to penetrate)

*my song! they condemn you as erotic
the truth is somewhat less exotic.*

the night is stifling me
belovèd mine!
from far I call to thee
 empty the present moment, empty now!
 if in my embrace you lay at night
 on your shoulder
 there would appear a radiant patch of light,
 enchantment of a passion stiller, bolder

 girl of soft breast
I draw you to my chest
 for by the curves
of your body I'm obsessed
 your clinging arms
immerse me in a deeper sea of charms
 and through your hair
I float as through a timeless sea
 to sunset country where
I'll lie with joy upon a mossy shore

and, oh, your hands
will hold me up, will make me tremble more

sing lullaby

a thousand million seeds
to make one child
a million men
it takes to make one man

*(women bear in pain
millions of young in vain)*

the stifling night awoke,
belovèd mine!
obsession to provoke
by flickering skirt, an ankle's curve
the joyous, teasing body's verve,
a young pair walking hand in hand,
would that my questing hand could lie
in darkness on a firm, fair thigh
— but that thigh yours!

Les Sylphides on the gramophone
tired I switch it off,
without you, music can have no appeal,
music for me must be enjoyment shared,
joining us in a pleasure intimate.
today the music charms me not at all,
poetry only bores me,
words have no meaning for me.
why is it only you that can possess me?
why only your fair body would caress me?
The world is full of women who are willing...
but all my being longs alone for you, dear
it reaches out to you, but mutely, vainly!

and at my kiss
unto my member open now
and we fulfil the purpose
the purpose that consumes us

VI

And on all beauty these black termites shite
 And all around this wonder build a wall
Of sun-baked mud; and hairy ogre arms
 Slavishly police the ancient custom,
Manipulated by these skeletons
 Of pious pomp. Our racial memories
They exploit, for these very fleshly beasts
 Are fearful of the flesh and value more
The desiccated testament of grasshoppers.
 Oh fascination of the *logos!* It indoctrinates
The almost foetal brain, because the father
 Pounds on his drum when cursing is involved,
And from the rest is born hypocrisy.
 Out of the forest confidently soars
The taloned predatory hawklike prude;
 The fronds are parted by a saurian head,
Chomping and squinting at the silent earth,
 Eternal fossil decked with sacred stole.
No foot can wholly crush the termites' mound
 Or all their power, but they can be curbed;
And certainly we can confine within
 A mythic cave the phantom saurians.
Why so? — so that the rose of happiness
 Can blossom in the whispering wind-blown snow;
So that instead of glaucous jungle mould
 And fungus, once again may spring up corn.

Ever more firm is superstition's hold,
 For fertile are the seeds of cleric power:
It sows its tares and poppies in abundance
 Throughout our fields. Oh, how much nuptial anguish
Is caused by those with beams within their eyes.
 In name of the eternal, how our hand
Is bound by the insidious conquering gland!
 If we but read the tempting page of power
With honesty, without sin of forgetting,
 A double standard of its focusing,
Already prologue to a silent lifeless planet.
 We are poor foetuses awaiting birth
In lethargy before disintegration.
 Like earwigs in the dark before the dawn
We wait for what is novel and is new

And yet, and yet — the embers brightly glow.

VII

there was a time that I rejoiced
over the Mars-like Persian mountains
(ah, what ecstatic joy I voiced
who drew life's verse from nature's fountains!)

- yet Galileo Galilei
had all his findings to gainsay;
much later, though, they were to prove
eppur se muove – it does move!

the acrid mildness of the evening
in a night club in Kermanshah,
it passed — like what? — a melting snowflake? —
I did not even notice. Ah!

and young I never really was
my present state of life in truth
has naught to do with youth because
I found this out too late

— it's strange that still one genius more
should struggle, indiscrete, unsteady
and in advance be waiting for
a world that's only later ready —

accordion, *Plaisir d'Amour*
a café terrace, marble-faced
and one brief hour of pleasure, for
she was a tart, and I was chaste...

regret for such drab hours of lust?
time, that magician, source of madness
through the cicadas chirping must
extend a little shade of sadness

upon this moment only real

— comes clerical authority
and puts its own official seal
upon the long-termed verity

these moments freely flew,
now an extended second,
and somewhere died the suns
that showed no link, nor beckoned

to socialise was simple;
the passing hours concealed
behind a nun-like wimple:
and all those NOWs unreeled.

my mental album treasures
pictures of moments sweet
does yours record such pleasures,
Clare, Hilda, Robert, Pete?

— and what preceded this
is. after, not the same
one almost god became —

and even tender times like this
come and are gone (for so was meant)
a thousand lost in ecstasy
and every one is different
save one, a mere facsimile,

and only few remember now
future's five senses all aligned
chance is in charge of all we do
chance is the censor of the mind:

odours of sand and gasoline
more music then, spread music wider
strong tastes of haddock, brandywine
Betelgeuse and spinning spider.

VIII

To love an ideal is a lonely thing
At the bottom of the ocean
the heavy stirring of dark water
cold
immovable
Why do you people not return my love
why do you not accept me?
To believe alone
against the majority —
is easy
but even against those one loves?
Shelled monsters of the deep

ancestors

you are content with hunger
but I am driven by this silent, unknown world
breathlessly shouting, furious

s
d
r
a
w
p
u

to the strange wet rocks
and the dying clouds
and a blessed childlike calm

blind blind

lies

I forget about the cactus cloud of Hiroshima
I wish only for work, woman, distraction
I learn only randomly, forget much
choose only that which is easy
and convenient
which others choose for my enlightenment
but do not hesitate to decide, judge, condemn
if circumstances compulsorily intrude
Before all I am circumspect.

the brain is too small
 why do I need this sabre tooth?
I no longer wish to bite my enemy
 In the frenetic hour
 when the giant foot
 will hide the sky in darkness
 then I shall remember
 but too late
 and then
 again the purpose will draw on

blind hunger, blind pervasion, blindly

scaly, grotesque, the beast is murderously shaken
 silently
by instinct the gilled victim flashes darkly by
and the timeless primeval state of the deep
 endures
the purpose consumes

 but at times a never isolating ideal
pumps the juices
 and sometimes it

 endures

if I do not feel rain upon my cheek it
 does not exist
we only know one person and do not understand
 All by a pair of eyes, all
for ever by ten fingertips only
 Your concave back
was born for my touch
 it died
when night closed my eyes

c o d	w v	s r e	w n	m n
l u	a e	u g	i d	a
cloud	wave	surge	wind	man

cry hop and I jump
 indisputably I am wise
sagacious and, above all, prudent
 for I have been told this
and I am sure the Earth is flat
 with my own eyes I have seen this
and if it turned I would certainly fall off into space
Under the living flesh swarm little worms
 We are the unsilent beast
The yellow and black world of giants

soundlessly dawned and even the atom bomb
does not change the contours of the Earth

We are not to blame for our sins of omission
the brain contains only ourselves
and is too small, too small
In the final crazy hour
when breasts are torn by glass splinters
when beams are offered to the Fire
when worms crawl forth
I am the world Only my brain is tormented
by the sun's tearing apart of nerves
when death closes
my eyes
the world dies
but the purpose
endures
And lakes lightly lick the shady banks

but are not there where human ears are absent

the heavy pulse of water
cold
motionless

but a blind purpose

IX

*“The chronological distance between
Sargon the First and Alexander the Great
Is as great as that between Alexander the Great
And the present time, and
just as long before Sargon the First*

*And thus:
one may assert
that half the period of civilisation
and the clue to all its main institutions
are to be found before Sargon the First.”
Man dwelt in cities
under Sumerian rule
practising religion
farming the land*

*“When a certain number of units
of hydrogen and oxygen
combine
they attract each other without external influence
and water results. There is no need to postulate
any water-self
wishing to combine the two elements
and to create itself out of them”.*

*“...somewhat paradoxically it may be that capital punishment
instead of deterring others
encourages them to do likewise”.*

Wong Su-Ling: *“I began to learn English and was informed
that ‘the cat sees the rat’
I remembered the sentences that I learned
during my first day at our family school:
‘Human nature is innately good’.
English education seemed less philosophical”.*

Regarding the abolition of a Mormon community:
“In this village the children are better educated

*and more polite
than the usual American child. In spite of poverty
they are sturdy and rosy-cheeked.
Health officials frankly admitted that there were no grounds
for complaint regarding the physical or emotional state of the community.
The concern is in respect of the moral question”.*

*“Neither the Catholic Church
nor English immigrants into Ireland
were able to destroy the healthy customs of the old nobility
in Ulster where
in the reign of Elizabeth
the magnificent O’Cane himself
who spoke Latin as fluently as his own tongue
welcomed a Bohemian nobleman
to the hall of his Great House
where he with his sixteen ladies
sat aroundt naked
and invited the embarrassed and unenthusiastic stranger
to undress and make himself comfortable”.*

*“In attacking a doctrine, a doxy, or a form of stupidity,
it might be remembered that one is not of necessity
attacking the man, or say “founder”
to whom the doctrine is attributed
or on whom it is blamed.
One may quite well be fighting the same idiocy
that he fought
and wherein his followers have reslumped from laziness,
from idiocy, or simply because they
(and or he)
may have been focussing their main attention on some other goal,
some disease, for example, of the time needing immediate remedy.*

*The man who builds dykes is not of necessity
an anti-irrigationist.”*

*“A Christian
who pities a freethinker
because of his lack of a religion
is like a person
with a boil on his neck
who is surprised
that another person is able to live without medicines”.*

*“The study of conic sections was devised
by Menachmus
a pupil of Plato
about 35 B.C.
and it was perfected by*

*Apollonius and Pappus.
For one thousand eight hundred years it matured.
Later was born Kepler whose laws of planetary motion
led to Newton's theory of gravity
and the whole of celestial mechanics
was expressed by*

*conic sections.
Thus the long-dead seekers of
useless
knowledge
were, in 1609, obstetricians at the birth
of modern cosmology”.*

*“The flame which issued from the summit of Mount Mosiklos
on the island of Lemnos
was mentioned by certain ancient writers
to whom it was an inexplicable wonder...
It was known very well that it was of volcanic origin
yet the mystery was worshipped as
a God
just as for many centuries some Parsees
have worshipped as God
the fiery columns
on the great oil fields of Baku...”.*

*“...and the clues to all its main institutions
are to be found before Sargon the First”*

X

formation of Earth

emergence of life

Sargon
Alexander
Zamenhof

XI

“She has conceived. Oh, we salute
you, child — for Man a new recruit!
Now I have forged a link from out my loins,
one further link in that frail chain that joins
the line of time and leads — whither? and whence?
Only our little hour we dimly sense.
Hail, little stranger! (I myself feel strange —
stranger to you I’ll be, my longed-for dear
and lead you gently on the paths of learning
whether it be for joy, for grief, or yearning
I wait so fondly for, and all the range
of possible regrets and griefs and all...)
Blind we begat in rapturous embrace
(from single cell to you — a second’s pace)
and blindly you’ll go forth, purpose’s slave,
destined to unknown deeds, servant or knave.
Your own creed you’ll believe, forge your own chains
Under this strange world’s spell of loss and gains.

Now let me, child, (for later you’ll refuse)
sketch out the paths your feet will have to use

— your little lively feet — and show to you
important principles to guide you through
I use the chance to dredge my brain for ways,
though no child follows what a father says;
no father has the right to tyrannise,
yet everyone can counsel and advise,
but here’s a double problem which concerns:
how much a person from his elders learns
*You never can be sure if something’s true,
but others are as unassured as you.*
(And I? Uncertain too. I think about
whether to counsel you in spite of doubt.)
The moment changes all, and all again.
For everyone there’s change: why then complain?
And how will your world be — I’ll never know;
across the veil of time I’ll try to go
vainly or not, to lead you on your way,
wisely direct you, or lead you astray.

If I tell of myself, does it make sense?
that you could learn from my experience?
Learn not to copy the mistakes I’ve made? —

Others can challenge what I leave behind.
Everyone forms his own world in his mind,
Makes his own rules to stand by and obey.
Little I fully know. I gave a lead,
and the whole world was changed by this blind act
 (Bob, Peter, Clare, say, did your seismograph
 record this quake, this lava, when it cracked?)

Forgive me, child, I am without recourse;
a bore, I fear, who talks until he's hoarse,
but come and I shall love you, protect you if I can
until you find your way as a woman or a man

 (Through Neolithic woods come a sighing and a sigh,
 The dawn man stops, he listens. in a moment he is gone.
 There are saurians no longer, but the forest gods are nigh;
 they are angry, they are jealous of all that man has done.)

We have fulfilled the purpose. Dense smoke conceals the sky.
This human life is but a cosmic blinking of an eye,
a fragile link within a chain whose end it cannot see
(nor is itself the end), but already can descry
its hallucinative form: spawn of cosmic accident.
The ashes of its pride all are scattered by the wind...
Flowers that budded in the morning, with the evening frosts are gone
the individual dies, but the race must still go on.
Clocks and tombstones are deceiving
and our instincts are illusions

 Our instincts and conclusions.

XII

Newell was wrong: not even the head of an astronomer
can contain the whole universe
(a fine concept but, my friends, not very exact)

Life is a Golgotha Two crosses
in common sense one is enough

Plus ça change

SAL BER YON ROSH
morning is spread on the cool earth,
a tenuous gauze upon the marriage bed
plus c'est la meme chose

a flood shakes and splits the rock walls
waters flow in roaring torrents through the gap
foaming they hurl great boulders
and uproot trees

if, blinded with terror, you try to run
you will drown screaming at the empty light
but if you stand and fight with a cool head
soon the black torrent will subside
the waters will be stilled
and a wholly new ground be rendered fertile

and in that new ground you will find
courage and a cool head
you will find salt and berries

*“and whispering round the bones, the sand
beds down like a coffin”*

*“asunder lie the bones
the sand allies and bonds them”*

He was thirteen years old and inherited a kingdom
Deligun Bulduk near Onono was the place
At once he had to fight against his rivals
ever successfully, even against the mighty Wang
(after a year in the desert, a desert year)
he gathered an army and vanquished the mighty Wang

and from the Turkish Uigurs he received laws
an alphabet and the seeds of civilisation

then he refused tribute to the king of Kin
black tents, the smoke of ruddy fires
dance, brassy tinkling of musical instruments
smoke hides the sky
howls, the drumming of ponies hooves, blood
cries split the sky blows blows
virgins moan in alien arms
odour of rancid grease
and in the morning
they saddled the ponies of the steppes and galloped off

Otrar surrendered in the following year
Sikhnak, Khoyend, Bukhara, Samarkand

smoke hides the sky

from off the burning tower of the citadel
she plunged with her children into the furnace
and all burned eternally in the inferno
and still they burn
still they burn eternally in the inferno
and all souls will burn, except those of our sect

five millions died in that war
and virgins moaned in alien arms
and yet were loath to go to heaven
For three years, plague afflicted the land
and half the population did not go to heaven
for lack of the correct rites

(common graves)

yellow people south of Lake Baikal!

the wind scatters the remains of brave ponies
remains of brave ponies scatter the sand
yellow sons of Adam south of Baikal
because of this the sinful amoeba splits
a black panther lazily licks a paw
an inguinal spasm under a hair tent begets
pain moaning cruelty inguinal spasm

and then?

oh Mimi, Mimi
dead of consumption
suffering purifies?

suffering crucifies
two crosses

life is a blink

XIII

“God is so great that he cannot be defined by us
God is so great that he does not deign to have personal
relations
with us human atoms that are called men.
To develop to the utmost our genius and our love
that is the only true religion.
Our Hope is placed in the happiness of our posterity; our
Faith is the Perfectibility of Man.

God is only a special name for king
religion is a form of government its precepts a code of laws
priests are gatherers of divine taxes
officers of divine police
men resort to churches to fall on their knees
and to sing hymns from the same servile propensity
which makes the Oriental delight in prostrating himself
before the throne.

...in the second century
the Christians of Judea, who had faithfully followed
the customs and tenets
of the twelve apostles
were informed that they were heretics.

There is one God, the Creator of the world
He has long been angry with men
because they are what he has made them
But he sent his only begotten son
into a corner of Syria
and because his son had been murdered
his wrath had been partly appeased.
He will not torture to eternity
all the souls that he has made
he will spare at least one in every million that were born.
He is the emperor of heaven, the tyrant of the skies.”

The pagan gods were rebels
with whom he was at war
(although he is all-powerful)
and whom he allowed to seduce the souls of men
although he is all-merciful”.

And he said:

“He who in reality contends for the just,
if he wishes even but for a little time
to be safe,
should live privately
and not engage in public affairs.”

Further he said

“If you think
That by putting men to death
You will restrain others from upbraiding you
That you do not live well,
You are much mistaken.”

XIV

Pathfinders we, a people of the spaceways.
No clue to guide us. Our atomic vessel
Darts at the speed of light across the vastness
Of the still Cosmos, bound for other planets
For us no day succeeds the night, nor night-time
Follows the day; perpetual night surrounds us.
Within, electric lighting mimics daytime
Which neither ends nor dawns. The yearly cycle,
The days and hours, are meaningless to us now.
We shall not know the Purpose; we shall perish
When, in an unknown orbit, children's children
Will guide the ship that has become a planet
For us, Earth's orphans, of our Solar System
Madness? Indeed. But driven by the torment
Of questions yet unanswered, but surmising
There must be answers: dire need drives us onwards
Of multiplying, hungry crowds tumultuous
Devouring planets like a swarm of locusts
We flee and hunt; we drive and we are hunted.
We sought a heaven first, and now discover
Heaven is empty — empty and yet crowded.
Our offspring by our death will find new life there
We shall not see the purpose; we fulfil it.

The white sand gleamed to the horizon's end
Misty and pale where all the sea is grey:
Beyond lies far-off Canada they say
Once? When? After the moment or before?
(Beyond lies Ithaca.) Mild summertimes
of all men's childhood, always mare's-tail clouds!
Yet shameful minutes always come to mind.
"What," asked a soft-voiced child of the Gael
In the small shop one quiet afternoon,
"Is English for the thing a woman has
Here?" Fortunately then the uncle came.
And that same holiday I mind I smoked
For the first time. Under what impetus?
But the sea whispers and the boy alone
Plays, self-sufficient by the waterside.
Outside the stars, and at the speed of light
We arch across the void, and yet we seem
Motionless on a world, a grain of sand
Where time, a human construct stopped and died.

XV

The city gate has fallen! — Run, oh run!
Where shall we run? — oh, anywhere, but run!
Cavernous night, mouths gape aghast, eyes gaze,
swarming shapes, awe-stricken, numb, ablaze..
Terror reigns, desperation everywhere,
the frantic victim cringing in despair:
an enemy has trodden down the mound,
the panicked ants are fleeing all around!

Now by the fallen gate the foes abound;
triumphantly they stab, and club and wound.
Victory! Drunken with the smell of gore,
their triumph but incites to murder more:
their foe now put to flight — their power
grows of itself from hour to awful hour
forward! Tonight your lusts will all be sated,
wolves of the race, in every country hated!

The women cower, sick to see the sight,
Men curse and swear, dwarved by their looming plight,
the mothers weep while infants are in tears,
in victory the vile pursuer cheers.
In all the churches now they pray in vain,
they tremble, babble, mourn the slain.
The candles gutter while death lies in wait;
If only they were spared by such a fate!
They broach the barrels, drink like swine
from every cask spurts out the wine;
the raging fire illuminates
faces that filth contaminates.
Comrades, go on! Act at your ease!
Without restraint, do as you please!
Why should we spare our enemy?
If they had won they'd do as we!

Women they vilely hunt and violate,
mothers-to-be abort at every gate,
a child's brief life begins and then it dies
impaled before its mother's very eyes
None quickly die. In agony
their wretched tortured bodies lie.
Foes desecrate the sacristy
(and then thank God for victory).

At last comes dawn and revelation:
ruin and hellish desolation.
The victors snore, their lusts all sated,

to wake more sober, less elated.
Is it too much? Is it too evident?
Do you remember, malcontent?
Is this the worst imagination faces?

And all a thousand times, a thousand places

I think about that road from Nagasaki
on which crawled figures, stripped of skin, reptilian,
no longer recognisable, and yet,
that moment only modified, not changed.

I think of those still ready to repeat it
in the name of some greater good, some view of life,
that heinous moment which so soon destroyed
so many fellow-sufferers and brothers.

Man is a child
and like a child he sees
only that standing out
before his eyes
Man is a child
and like a child he comprehends
only that which
comes from his own experience.

Man is yet young
capricious and grotesque:
he only starts to understand
when adolescent.

Die then, and damn you all!

(It almost frightens how a dream reveals
a need that none of us yet clearly feels
how one man's mind can prematurely solve
a problem which as yet has to evolve —
that, in a word, there does exist a means
of which those without vision never think
so that whenever needs for it appear,
at its disposal earth can find it here.

Is there a scrap of hope in this?

SAL BER YON ROSH
the purpose

readiness

XVI

Dost thou think because thou art virtuous
There shall be no more cakes and ale?
Timor mortis tuae conturbat me

The priests came forth: pomp and ceremony
plumes, fanfare, incense, prayers, sacrifice
and before the crowd they performed the rites
appropriate for that feast
for a holy day.

In the market place they smashed
the head of the heretic who did not believe
the Earth was flat.

The priests approved
though they themselves well knew the Earth was spherical

ESPERANTO is simple, fluent, and so on
*I was much delighted having found it having been translated
into Esperanto*

Even the *kara lingvo* can be botched

After the war he returned to Warsaw
never again to see his family,
he consoled himself by translating the national epic

and probably died in front of a bookshop window.

THEY CAN BE FOUND BEFORE SARGON THE FIRST

*(They attacked you, O my songs —
even Catholics will change to Protestants!)*

The minister asked how much the book cost.
He was told ten guineas:
“So that book will not cause a revolution”.

When I became a man, I put away childish things —
a downright untruth where the author was concerned.
Two thousand years after Christ
(four thousand after Sargon)
twelve million human beings were gassed
to death in concentration camps

the world is old
experience teaches?

...but in another universe
another nose sneezes with the same catarrh.

Incest is particularly shocking — WHY
A corpse is mishandled. Protests — WHY
Money has become the yardstick — WHY

WHY?

the reprobate can be recognised by their tempestuous laughter

A breeze bends the wheat, the sun gives heat
a cool wood dozes at the back
around a hill, by a meandering river.
Star, symbol of hope
green like wheat!

A quiet world where no man makes a noise
O lovely world which man destroys.
plague of the universe
consumption of the Earth
bacteria of the cosmic organism!

XVII

I am the spider and the fly
I hunt myself in my own brain:
but through a major blunder I
hide beyond noun and verb again.

I brought you only shame and heartache
forgive me
I love you but did not express it
forgive me
You dreamt of me, but I did not fulfil
the dream; instead I sit and type my verse
in an unknown and *ardificial* tongue
forgive me.
If only I could, prior to my death,
comb my hair, sing a threnody.
But let us dance — savage is our dance:
I wished to live until the end of war...
I grunted in the caves of China
and somewhat later —
I sweated with the Egyptian sun above
I ate, and I excreted and made love
repairing errors of the gods
...and then whatever went before
afterwards was never known...
leaving a skull under the desert sand.

Thoughts of a dog, and I myself a hound
it is too late now to regret the wound
a piercing wound that was so soon to kill you
but you don't know and this I cannot tell you
I cannot, for my life creeps onwards and
I am what I am, just as sand is sand.

Throughout my life I had to shovel coke
to keep a furnace burning I'd to stoke
but what the furnace was supposed to do
I do not know and do not want to know.

bone – gone
sea – we
cost – lost
goods – moods
curse – worse
scale – mail
beast – least

love – move
lingam...

Without you, days drag on in mere inaction
Orion greets me in the sky above
At night, for I am only half a person:
O darling mine, I love you to distraction!
“It is my lady; O it is my love” —
too pat for this poor cellular collection:
Where can I find my consolation soon
But in your arms, beneath
the pitying moon?

The roundabout of life turns frenziedly
to work to eat, and eating just to work:
this the whole purpose of our human culture
race propagation, individual life.

XVIII

It is not only faith: facts bear this out.
Language an interchange machine,
by social contact brought about,
is altered by the changing scene.

Our age is not mature. But need
is felt by some who find a plan
or answer, and adopt with speed
apt knowledge: he who wishes can,

And while the need exists, the way
("not for the future") by design
also exists, (perhaps I'll play
a part). A driving dream. And sign.

He knew "after five score of years"
ars longa...yes, but *vita's brevis*
it lasts as long as fleeting tears
and dreamless life's like snow on Nevis.

The dream is everything, and boldness,
for only valiant hearts have dreams.
Many are lost: blackmail, life's coldness
And every day's hermetic schemes.

He knew, of course. A faithful mind,
and by his faith he moved the mountains.
A miracle? Factors combined
To make a trickle future's fountains.

"...nothing remained the same", and faith unbending
that can console obsessive minds and cranks,
the only final challenge to life's ending
(the distant quack of ducks on river banks).

And in the hard dark days in wartime Warsaw,
he did not know this, neither what would last;
it is too late to curse one's cross, and more so
to have regrets when once the die is cast.

The factors coincided; for example
the *Proverbaro*, And by happy chance,
concise and certain. And above all simple,
the sixteen rules permitting free advance.

And *rigor vitae*, did it threaten ever? —
not while required by society
whatever meets demand, and such endeavour
is not a game played out in privacy.

Whatever comes to be within the family,
within a million tribes and groups that function,
consolidating, crossing tribal limits,
increasing by production and consumption

brings unity. And this our orphan tongue
will never disappear, 'spite bar or ban,
(whether or not it conquer the world over)
while man seeks understanding still with man.

Almost frightening...useless knowledge
human nature found innately
alea iacta, boasting's over
we must go on obstinately.

XIX

Syrian innkeeper's woman, your hair bound with a ribbon,
Dancing to castanet's rhythm, your hips gracefully swaying,
Wreathed in the smoke of the tavern, lascivious, drunken,
Marking the time with your elbows and harsh exclamation –
Why through the dust and the heat do you trudge to the *souk* in the summer
When you could drink at your ease, upon your triclinium resting?
Cups, glasses, measuring vessels, roses and flautists
Are here in a sheltering bower of reed intertwinings
As somewhere once in a grotto was heard the sound of Pan's piping
Trilling the music bucolic of countryside custom.
Light wines are here to be had from the cool of pitch-coated barrels.
Noisily burble the waters of burn and of river.
Here you will find garlands of violet and saffron,
Roses and melilot blossoms woven in garlands,
Together with lilies they pluck from the virginal river,
Borne in a green wicker basket to you from Achelous.
Here you have cheeses small, matured in baskets of willow,
Plums that have ripened in autumn to mellow perfection,
Nuts from the sweet chestnut tree and gay crimson apples:
Here in the kingdom of Ceres, Bacchus and Cupid.
Bunches of grapes are here and mulberries, blood-red,
Cucumbers ripe-green, hanging in woven rush netting;
Here stands the guard of the bower, armed with a sickle of willow,
Frightening no one at all with the size of his phallus.
Come hither, traveller for the ass is sweating and tired:
Have pity on him, for he was beloved of the goddess!
Now in the forest glade, ear-splitting chirps the cicada;
Now seek the lizards for freshness under the shade of the thickets.
One would be well advised to mitigate heat in the wine glass –
Or would you sooner gaze at the wine in goblets of crystal?
Pleasant it is to rest here in the cool of the vineyard,
And round a head that is heavy weave garlands of roses;
From the red lips of a girl reap a harvest of rapturous kisses!
(Damn the dour heavy-browed puritan's humourless censure!)
Can ashes ever be grateful for tributes of garlands?
Would you then cover the gravestones with garlands of roses?
Pass round the wine; throw the dice! Perish thought of the morrow:
Death pulls the ear lobe and whispers: "Live now, ere I come!"

HOC FECIT VERGILIUS.

XX

With my contempt comes satisfaction
For who fears that which he disdains?
 (And it is the system I mean, the entire system)
We must preserve it, say the pundits –
And better ones can easily be found.
A good hard-working citizen
(who looks upon all the world as his parish)
 that is what I am.
Therefore I am entitled to every privilege
to fill my home with all kinds of consumer goods
(also I am entitled to a home)
 Full stop. The end.
I do not understand what squandering money means.
Squandering money? – That's impossible.
I would pass a law against saving money.

Meanwhile, I despise and am happy

Money, money, nothing but a phantom
 Panem et circenses, and the tribunes
 of the people once again bring deception.
Why do men study history no longer?
 Progress is no advance
 Progress is a roundabout
There is no wish to teach the basics..

He tried to convert me to Zen-Buddhism
but was unable to prove that I would benefit
(John will immediately remember about the Indians:
'but was unable to prove the superiority
of Christianity')

 Already I laugh
Bare, without conceit, the song is heard.

The goddess Aruru created Enkidu from mud
to be the double of the war god Ninurta
Urizmag was born on the seabed: a virgin
woman in a high tower gave birth to Batradz.
 In a steel coat stands the son of Sigmund
 he is half a day old: the day is dawning;
 his eyes burn fiercely like those of an agile warrior,
 he is a companion of wolves; loudly we rejoice.
Enkidu bars the door with his foot,
he prevents Gilgamesh from entering.
They snort like a bull and struggle,
the threshold shatters, the walls tremble

(Alaman Bet in the house of Kanishaya...)
My heart compels me, my hand and my shining
sharp-edged sword fulfils the word.

On one occasion Batradz deeply pondered
“I have my strength, but strength I need
more than a strong man could defeat.
It would be better now to go up to the sky,
I shall go straight to Kurdalag
And I shall ask him there to temper me!”

So he departed thence to Kurdalag.

Batradz then made for the celestial smithy.

“O Kurdalag, thou the celestial smith!

Cast me into the fire, temper me!”

“Think not so, make not thou such a wish:

Fire will destroy thee and I pity thee;

Much pleasure hast thou ever given me”.

“Nay, I have need of it, O Kurdalag.

I do implore thee, I do beg of thee.

Temper me now in the celestial forge!

This fire of yours could never melt me down!

Why dost thou mock me so, O Kurdalag?

It is so tedious in the smithy forge;

Give me a harp that I may be amused!”

“Now thou hast tempered me! ‘Tis time to cease!

Take me out quickly, cast me in the sea!”

The heavenly smith then took his pincers down,

And with the pincers grasped him by the leg

Hurled him at once into the blue-tinged sea

Which foamed and bubbled, hissing as it boiled.

The water of the sea all turned to steam

And on that day the sea all dried away.

Thus Batradz then was tempered bodily,

His body was transformed to hard blue steel.

Only his liver was not tempered so:

The water did not touch it, boiled away,

And when Batradz emerged from out the sea,

Water again refilled the sea’s dry bed

Remember when together we drank mead

And sitting on a bench, talked boastfully.

Heroes of hall and hard-won battlefields:

We shall know who is a courageous man.

(Who would choose between Ogres and Pygmies —

The thundering text, the snivelling commentary? —

Reading between such covers he will likely

Prove his own disproportion and not laugh.)

XXI

Let us consider the facts: a third war
Is inevitable in our century
To prevent it SOMETHING NEW is needed
we hear old sophisms, ancient clichés.
Ten years after the execution of the king, the son
returned and all began again,
after a thirty years' war the territorial
situation remained unchanged.

...plus c'est la meme chose.

(the CLUES to all its institutions
are to be found BEFORE Sargon the First.)

INEVITABLE because they have changed nothing.
Who but a fool (not even a child)
would put his hand a hundred times into the same fire? —
X, Y and Z, because they still believe
in the superiority of their nation's power.
They are not mad.

Only ignorant.

Dust, dust of Persia. Beside the road
cowers a woman dressed in black, with a child
whose eyes are covered by a thousand flies
To acquire anything without effort
to acquire art without effort
that is the malaise.

Dust and sheer heat, pressure of the sun,
there I lost a shoe but saved my life,
petrol burned, but the cartridges did not explode,
and then my messmates drank my beer.
I grow old, for I start to think fondly
of the dry days and smell the African earth.

It has not been proved that growth is praiseworthy.

A sculptor (I have already said) —
Acclaimed as a consummate teacher
his statues were more than inspired
and "life-like in every feature"
But now his smug detractors
Condemn him, scorn and rail -
because, he carved a penis
on the statue of a male.

IF there is a clue, it is: Why
Or simply: ?
TOO NATURAL

He bleated: No matter: he is a genius,
perhaps he will never write another book,
perhaps he needs money for drink and women;
but it is time now to give to geniuses:
we subsidise too much the bourgeois virtues.

Like Marduk he led a victorious attack
of gods against the goddess Tiamat
the Creator Goddess
whose emblem was She-Dragon of the Sea
or Columbus who laid the World Egg
The cherubs round the Throne of God (this is not taught
at Sunday School) are intertwined
in realistically erotic embrace.

To make God to compete with Its creation
is blasphemous (it is a case of prayer for rain)

Rain?

— here you would already know about rain, Nikolai!

The minister (conservative) praised the sagacity
of the trade union leaders, tribunes of the people,
and to this the workers paid no heed
(Eternity in a grain of sand, isn't it, William?)

The trade union leaders are NOT Communists
The trade union leaders NOT
the trade union LEADERS

Why do I concern myself with politics? —

I do NOT concern myself with politics,

I am concerned with the infancy of man.

Reader, the winter turns to autumn, leaves
are glued to the wet streets, to the gutters.

Night comes early, the labourers labour
until after nightfall, they cannot greet the sun...

A drunken sailor sings all out of tune

I'm looking for

a girl to love

while the bus runs, whirring through the night.

...poor dupes!

Syndicatastrophe!

Thou shalt have no other gods before Me

finally you will perish, haughty child.

Already the young speak of a new war
while the blood is hardly dried upon our hands:

the age of God is followed by the age of gods,
Bombs acidify the rain

experience teaches? —

upon your ridiculous grain of dust, upon the brink of the cosmos
you swarm, bacteria of the universe...

neither you nor I will live to maturity
it will take a million years.

*For in much wisdom
is much vexation
and he who increases knowledge
increases sorrow.
Man has no advantage over the beasts
...and even though a wise man
claims to know
he cannot find it out.
Whatever your hand finds to do
do it with all your might;
for there is no work, or thought,
or knowledge, or wisdom
in Sheol, to which you are going.*

***WISDOM IS BETTER THAN WEAPONS OF WAR,
BUT ONE SINNER DESTROYS MUCH GOOD.***

XXII

Le jour de gloire est arrivé

— *pas encore, mes amis, pas encore*

And I would sit under a chestnut tree.

The white wall glitters, blinds me with its gleam,

white dust is trampled under my sore feet

a whip comes swishing down on my bare back,

and I would sit under an almond tree

drinking my sherbet, listening to music.

I sing, while working some old melody

melancholy and with a savage rhythm

and raucous fellow-sufferers sing along,

and I would sit under a mimosa tree

fondling the firm breasts of an odalisque.

I sleep at night bound up in iron chains,

and I would walk along a sky-blue terrace.

I mine tin in the bowels of the earth

And my peacocks would parade on the lawn.

By day I guard the palace of the queen

and get drunk in the tavern by night.

And my skin's black, while your skin seems to be

yellow. The same red blood flows in our veins,

and your life, like my own just flickers

for one brief moment, and death blows it out.

How do the gentle whispers of your lover

compare with Plato's penetrating wisdom

and yet you listen to the am'rous whispers,

and close your volume with a tired yawn.

You live in isolation. And are sad

You love. And you know joy and jubilation

but great joy must be paid for with great sorrow.

To die, to die alone. *Ah, like a dog.*

On jubilation weigh a mother's tears

but before death to sing a dying song:

As daylight once more broke for them that morning

they rose up early, and a soothing breeze

caressed their flesh for this, the final time

before the world's end. And they combed their hair,

looked at their faces mirrored in a pool;

and unresounding through the morning air,

their sombre song was heard by all the Persians.

For them, to die like this was full of meaning:

who would not wish a death with dignity?

Better it were to die with dignity

than, young, even to sit, beneath an oak tree's shade.

Oh, without ugliness can be no beauty
nor bee without her honey-making duty
(stillborn a tongue that cannot play on words).

Reader, I have a heavy heart today
I even doubt about the middle way
Peacocks, flamingos and a phoenix,
bubbling water, gold and onyx,
soft lute beneath pilaster bars,
a quiet night of jewelled stars,
goblet of wine
 a friend to dine
and brutish snoring in a stinking stall.

And do not forget the tawdry shop-windows
 thousands of houses, each as grey as ash
 where wind blows through
 and frost lays bitter siege.

XXIII

GERM
WHEAT
FLOUR GERM
BREAD WHEAT
EXCREMENT FLOUR GERM
MANURE BREAD WHEAT
GERM EXCREMENT FLOUR GERM
WHEAT MANURE BREAD WHEAT
FLOUR GERM EXCREMENT FLOUR GERM
BREAD WHEAT MANURE BREAD WHEAT
FLOUR GERM EXCREMENT FLOUR
WHEAT MANURE BREAD
FLOUR GERM EXCREMENT
WHEAT MANURE
GERM

XXIV

We cannot see beyond the speed of light
So limited indeed is human sight!

Mercury near the sun
fiery, sterile sun
hiding in solar shades
modestly promenades
to and fro, to and fro
pallid and hopeless
to make popes discuss theology
oh anarchy, oh anarchy!

Venus cloud-covered
star of the morning
sister-world hovered
in her weeds mourning
ceaselessly turning
cold face to burning
sun

'Words are like leaves: where they abound
very little fruit is found'

Earth, sick globe
I've seen the moon leap and tremble
playful moon, you are besotted!

Dying Mars
(what does it mean?)
atmosphere thin
the last fatigue
of failing brains;
slowly the red sphere strains
to wink an eye,
as if the sun
were far too bright
the god of war
is his life done?

And beyond, beyond
in incredible isolation

Jupiter
a tenth of the sun
Saturn has rings
and beyond, beyond
Neptune and Uranus
And what before were
eight became nine

The end. Or?
and beyond, beyond
galaxy, galaxy
where is god?

Absent.

XXV

An -ologist knows only his own field, his -ology
Of life or God no man knows less nor more than we
He lies who claims to have an answer; for if the truth's confessed
in our research the surest fact's provisional at best;
We lack true patience, yet do not rebel, and miss our cues.
We are like flocks that scatter when the shepherd's dog pursues
 (and in its estimation too the sheepdog is a man).
Forefathers of the future, we're but symptoms of the plan...
 and we, Lords of Creation, had once a fish-like form
 until our fishy fathers played havoc with the norm.
Tomorrow or thereafter may a wiser race appear
if those who will succeed us prove honest and sincere...
 But meanwhile we measure all by our inglorious scale;
 our eyes are but a window, a lens that might have been
 indeed discerning something...but what? – the passing scene;
 we have no understanding of what another sees.
Our back may be concealed but the front's a red eruption
when caution seems to count rather less than reproduction;
dancing before a woman we bow our backs and bend,
but the forging of the chain is more urgent at the end
than the saving of one's life. (As a lapwing by her nest
pretends to limp and cries if a sound approaches, lest
there is danger to her eggs or her chicks; or giving tongue
hounds are led off by a vixen to distract them from her young
left trembling in their den till the hounds and hunt are past:
it is only through descendants that individuals last.)
 To give life we exist, but we take the thought amiss
 because our EGO feels there is more to life than this;
 the tedium of life makes existence agony
 and there appears to be no solution but... to flee
 to dogma, superstition, to force and cruelty
 and slavishly we bow and CHRIST or LABOUR deify
 and thus pursuing Custom, like Greeks we follow after.
We fear to stand alone, and shrink from mocking laughter.

I hail you, my descendants — you will not remember who
I was, but looking forward I can but weep for you;
 I ask you to forgive me for giving you existence,
 for I begat you blindly through instinct's strong insistence,
the urging of the purpose that spins the web of life
you too will ask in anguish, what purpose, why the strife?

(Alas, my dear
here's my poor Will;
my Testament

for good or ill
hope and torment.
On man's goodwill
I pin my hope
that cruelty
will cease to be,
that reason's reign
will come at last
when tears and pain
of man are past.)

Pull down thy vanity; Oh, wise words these!
but if brave words could save us; all the chains
of fear, misunderstanding, spite and pains
would have no stranglehold; but as of old,
the *logos* net would keep us in its fold
with economic pressure (daily ruction)
anger, fear, glands and reproduction: —
dialectic, dia-antics! —
we are drowning in semantics.
Even a day without you drags, I moan.
Put *Les Sylphides* upon the gramophone...
(More music, please, put some more music on.)
Two crosses
damnation to the Puritan
the moment lives, the past is dead and gone!
Today at least
is not the end but the beginning;
man is a beast.
despite world-rape
the dream takes shape
reality is but a day
truth many-faceted, but may
be truth a thousandfold, but stay!
TRUTH and DREAM —
VERity and REVerie —
are real or merely seem?
GoD and iD*
a matter of degree?
Could peace on earth
then come to be
achieved by human dignity:
a question mark
a mark of hope.

Do not believe without some proof. Let reason reign
but a new generation will destroy us
a struggle of counterweights is all
the brain is far too small
say what is simple simply:

On a dry seabed sneers a skull
(we shall fulfil the purpose
the purpose will consume us)

AUTHOR'S NOTES

When the first edition of *La infana raso* appeared a number of readers expressed regret that I had not attached any explanatory notes to the text. I did not see any need for such notes because in my opinion everything necessary for a full understanding of the text was already there in the text itself. Not only that but I felt that such an addition would serve only to direct the attention of readers away from what was essential. For example, when someone asked what was the name of the person who had said some sentence or phrase mentioned in my poem, I would sincerely reply: "It doesn't matter who said it; only the saying matters — think about it". All too often in our strange and sometimes deplorable world, people are inclined to accept an opinion because of the source rather than the content. (This was satirized by the author of *Jurgen*, in which the hero usually wins in discussions by quoting totally fantastic authorities whose names sound impressive. Sometimes when in discussion with Christian friends, I myself have paraphrased passages from the Bible, but adding "...as Lenin said". My friends immediately attacked the quotation, but afterwards were very embarrassed when I confessed my "mistake".)

However, I told those who wanted notes that I would willingly clarify any point if they would please indicate what the obscure parts were. Up to now nobody has done this; so I still do not know what the said obscurities were. But I did not wish to be awkward, so to this edition of my work I am adding all the notes that it seems to me may perhaps be necessary or desirable.

It may be that, after all, the main barrier is my poetic method — which in any case I did not invent — and this being so, I should like to explain it. The most commonly used method of presenting any thesis is by argument according to logical sequence; and its purpose is to appeal to logic. But this is not the only method and one can also appeal to intuition. I have heard that many scientific discoveries (for example Darwin's great discovery) have resulted from intuitive findings of which evidence was found only at a later stage. Now, in the case of my work, I do not wish to "prove" anything; I present phenomena which in my view should stimulate the intuition of my readers and *lead them to conclusions similar to my own*; further, I deal with themes which, it seems to me, have not yet been finally proved.

My method therefore implies *choice* and *comparison*. Both logicians and historians choose those facts which appear to them to be crucial or significant. For this reason I select those phenomena known to me which seem to me to be crucial. I then juxtapose them for purposes of *comparison*. This is a totally normal procedure. We decide that Shakespeare is a greater dramatist than Johnstone by comparing their works; that something is virtuous and another vicious by comparing them. So I juxtapose phenomena so that they can be compared. Moreover I hope that such comparison will, for example, reveal unnoticed relations between two (or more) seemingly disparate or unrelated phenomena. Let us take an example:

*An inguinal spasm under a hair tent begets
pain moaning cruelty inguinal spasm*

*and then?
oh Mimi, Mimi
dead of consumption
suffering purifies?*

This is a not wholly uncomplicated comparison, but fundamentally two phenomena are juxtaposed; begetting among the hordes of Genghis Khan, and the death of Mimi in Puccini's famous opera *La Bohème*. Between them a common feature is obviously human suffering, and there is a contrast between the first moment of human life and the last moment of human life; in both cases there are sufferings. Of course, this juxtaposition occurs not only within each chapter, but the chapters themselves are consciously juxtaposed with the aim of similar comparison. Having read them, the reader should have gained a sum of impressions which reveal to him the totality of my thesis.

NOTES TO THE INDIVIDUAL CHAPTERS

I

This chapter deals with the more or less symbolic unity of mankind. If we accept the theory of evolution — and it seems to be generally proved, but as far as poetry is concerned this does not matter — we must accept it consistently. Whether life began in one place or in several places at the same time, an intermixing of all elements certainly occurred, and man originated from one source, so that he was originally a unit. Even after that, intergeneration unceasingly took place. I have read that the presently living Prince Philip is a direct descendant of Genghis Khan. Whether this is a true fact I do not know, but symbolically it certainly is true. Recently one thinker suggested to me the following thesis: that the number of the dead is approximately equal to the number of the living (do the calculation yourself!). This interesting thesis can also contribute to the concept of my first chapter, which moreover will make it less of an effort for the reader to understand.

Line:

- 1 *stonemason*: the father of one of my grandfathers was a stonemason, but obviously the poem does not refer to a real person.

Line:

16. *a squaddy* (mainly Scots): a soldier, member of a squad. Cf. line in Hamish Henderson's Scots song *The 51st (Highland) Division's Farewell to Sicily*: "Puir bliddy squaddies are wearie". (TN)

- 29 *Agricola*: Roman ruler (*legatus pro consule*) in Britain 77-83 A.D.

- 42 *that stream of blood that flows within my veins*: obviously only symbolical. Even I know that blood is not transmitted from father to son, and that genetically the chromosomic effect of one person is no longer evident after five generations.

II

This chapter — although not every reader has noticed — makes a plea for universal tolerance (see especially v, 14-16, 39-40) and condemns dogmatism. It pleads, not for the abolition of religion, but of religious *taboos* as well as sexual taboos; the two kinds of taboo seem to be very closely related. I am alluding to the fact that any inclination towards dogmatism can too easily become dictatorial; all censorship, for example (see v. 59-60), is a kind of dictatorship and consequently it seems to me to be a great impertinence. One of the most abominable habits of all

times, including our own, is to compel other people to accept as truth something which appears to those people to be untrue. The perfect comment about this was given by Socrates (chapter XIII, v. 53-57).

Line:

18 *Yahweh*: The god of the Jews, and consequently of some Christians. It seems, however, that I misspelt the name*: should it be *Jave* or *Jahve*? *Zeus*: the principal god of the Greeks. *Baal*: god of the Phoenicians (probably a conflating of various local gods).

* *in the Esperanto original* (TN).

12-22 The words *Book* and *Custom* are capitalised because of their deification in the civilisations concerned.

27-28 On the manuscript of *La infano raso* Reto Rossetti wrote the words “ho! Sokrato!” alongside these lines. He was right. However my comment related to a thousand years of Greek civilisation, which certainly differed a great deal from place to place and from epoch to epoch. Furthermore, as I indicated above, Socrates also plays a part in my thesis.

29 *Fahey*: A reactionary Roman Catholic priest. The quotation is according to a press report. The southern part of Ireland (Éire)* is a Roman Catholic state quite independent of the rest of the British Isles. The northern part of Ireland is mainly Protestant, and forms part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (the correct name of this kingdom, which is generally referred to under the incorrect – and for many people offensive – title “England”).

* *This is not quite correct. Éire is the historical name in the Irish (Gaelic) language for the whole of Ireland.* (TN)

49 *Orsipos**: “The competitors wore a brief covering of the loins until, at the fifteenth festival in 720 B.C., one athlete, Orsipos, threw his off, ran quite naked, and won. From that time onwards he was universally imitated, first at the games at Olympia in honour of Zeus, and then at all athletic festivals, and subsequently at exercises and many public places, indoors and outdoors, throughout Greece. In Sparta, and perhaps in some other states, where the state encouraged exercises of girls and young wives, the same custom was soon accepted by these”. — Prof. Karl Seltman, *The Twelve Olympians*, London, 1952.

* Greek: Ὀρσίπιδος (TN).

59 David Herbert *Lawrence* (1885-1930), one of the leading figures of this century’s British literature, was repeatedly attacked and prosecuted at law for obscenity. In fact, it was only in 1960 that his novel *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*

could be published in Britain, following a sensational court case. In 1929 an exhibition of his paintings was closed down by the police for the reason mentioned in my line 60. “When the police invaded my exhibition they did not really know what to seize. They therefore took possession of every picture which showed a very small portion of a sexual organ, whether male or female. Then, irrespective of the subject or meaning, or anything else: they allowed everything in a painting exhibition, these fastidious policemen, except for a small part of the human sexual organs. This was the criterion of the police. Sticking on postage stamp — especially a green one which could be called a leaf — was sufficient in most cases to satisfy this ‘public opinion’”. — D.H. Lawrence, *Pornography and obscenity*, 1929.

III

This chapter introduces the important element of the theme which runs through the entire poem: the essential isolation of each individual. This is exemplified by the isolation of a woman who gives birth, and the subsequent isolation of the mother and the child, respectively (in spite of the fact that this relationship often represents the most intimate interhuman bond — in spite of the fact that both persons concerned remain essentially isolated). At the same time (v.2,11, 26) I refer to another main strand, the *celo*. Many readers purported to find in this word some mystical significance, akin to religious belief. Mistakenly. The *celo* can be concretely defined on the basis of observable phenomena: it is the instinct to ensure the continuance of the race by the creation of children. In addition, I introduce a third strand which is repeated throughout the poem (v. 41, 46): “A moment changes everything”.

Line:

36 *Venus*: the second planet from our sun.

* *celo*: The translator found this Esperanto word one of the most difficult to render into English: “aim”, “goal”, “objective”, “purpose”. None of these really seems appropriate since they all appear to imply some sort of deliberate intention or direction, and clearly the author, as a sceptic in respect of religion, cannot intend this.

The translator decided finally to use the word “purpose” but this too is hardly satisfactory. (TN)

IV

This chapter concerns the venality of politics and the immorality of War. The double senses, the euphemisms, the blatant deceit and the intentional imprecision of political and military language — employed to deceive the public and to invest abominations with a halo of morality and

justice — these I attack by crude distortion of the language in order to produce an ambiguity (more subtle than ordinary punning). This procedure takes advantage of the fact that ordinary and *expected* words are immediately recognised under drastically *unexpected* forms. For example, *polatakistoj** is a form that has never been seen before but does not conceal the overall impression of *politicians* (an everyday word). At the same time it suggests “attack” with all its associations. Of course it is not necessary or useful for me to give any clarification of the individual words.

The style of this chapter has a genealogy which perhaps is not without interest. Its progenitors were Rabelais’ *Gargantua and Pantagruel* in Urquhart’s English translation, and *Carotid Cornucopius* a prose work of the Scottish poet Sydney Goodsir Smith — which the head librarian of Glasgow at that time kept under seven seals, and which I could consult only in a private room under the watchful eye of the librarian. (A second edition of this work was published in 1964; this time it was freely on sale to the public and now graces my library shelves. I regard this as evidence that man progresses regardless.)

Inspired by these two not dissimilar books I composed a piece of ribaldry of which I quote the two first two sentences as an example:

(Here follows an almost totally untranslatable passage in the kind of distorted Esperanto described above. It would have to be read in the original, q.v.)
(TN)

“Se fi ĉerastis la kungrason en Brunmerd (mi amludas, komparnoble, la banige anusan, mirinte sukĉesan, kunvinon de la nespirantistoj, aŭ eŝparontristoj...”
etc., etc.

*(The translator attempted something similar in English, beginning:
“If you arsended the Congrease in Brighturd (I amlude of coarse to the marmelously anusing mating if inspiringists and nonsparingists...
—At this point, the translator gave up...) (TN)*

This word-play, however, was to me the justification that when I was getting ready to compose my fourth chapter, the means had already been proved and approved.

* rendered “politricians” in this translation. (TN)

Line:

1. *I Gomerat*: (Scots) a fool, a blockhead. In original: gonoraloj (“gonorrhoeals”: satirical distortion instead of “generals”). See *Chamber’s Scots Dictionary*. (TN).

Line:

- 13 *finti*: according to the *Plena Vortaro* (Complete Dictionary of Esperanto – TN) (4th Edition), *finto* = a pretence attack (blow, stroke, stab or charge) to

distract the attention and deceive the opponent; while the verbal form *finti* is intransitive and means “to make a pretence attack”. However, in my writings I (not noticing the above definition) consistently use the verbal form with a transitive meaning, e.g. “*finti* someone or something” in the sense:” to avoid skilfully or cunningly”. Thus in this line *verofintaj* means ‘avoiding the truth by cunning’.

V

It appears that this chapter offended some good people. Among others, it was the subject of comment by John Francis, bitterly criticized by Uwe Joachim Moritz, and defended by Carlo Minnaja. I certainly do not wish to get involved in disputes, and my sole comment is as follows:

In a work which claims to survey and deal with human existence, its past, its future and its motives, attention to the sexual side of human life, to which less than a twentieth of the whole work is devoted, seems a sufficiently modest proportion, if one also remembers that, in the opinion of the author, the instinct to ensure the continuance of the race is one of the fundamental motives of human behaviour — a viewpoint which is at least partly justifiable according to the conclusions of psychologists. But for some people I suppose it is not the subject, but the frank way in which it is treated, that is offensive. If so, I would draw their attention to the irrefutable article *Lingva deontologio* by Prof. J. Régulo — an article which was refused by the leadership of the U.E.A., but was praiseworthy accepted by the editorship of “Sennacieca Revuo”, 1964 (p. 39-43) — in which the author, from a linguistic point of view, reproves those who reject some words as indecent, while retaining the concepts expressed by such words, with the result: firstly, that the moralist is attacking the symptom instead of the disease (if it is a disease), and secondly, to express the concept one abuses and debases other words which up to then were respectable, with resultant harm to the language as a whole: “What should be the fate of the words that are condemned? What is to take their place? What legitimacy can be claimed for the words intended to replace those that are eliminated? Still more to the point: can one tolerate the supposition that there are words which should be pilloried and excommunicated? Is it permissible to reject the words and yet retain the concepts which the rejected words denote, and for the expression of which one searches or invents other words?” The English language *does not have* a respectable and unambiguous verb which expresses what happens during sexual congress: and this often leads to absurdity. In a newspaper report it was stated that a woman was found unconscious, near to death, with numerous stab wounds, and a bruised and bleeding face. “In addition to this” continued the report, “the woman was assaulted”. Even more seriously, beautiful and delicate expressions such as “to make love”, which means “to caress tenderly, to love each other”, is today used — and devalued — for lack of a more precise alternative, in the sense “to fuck”. We must not drag down our precise Esperanto to this euphemistic level

On the other hand, I must point out to our Christian moralists, that my work clearly and unmistakably praises monogamy. This John Francis (foreword to *Unufingra melodio*) finds inconsistent: I do not know whether he is right. If monogamy suits my temperament —I see no moral justifications to support it. The result, however, is Christian morality.

La motive of the *celo* is repeated (see note to chapter 3).

V: Line: 20-21: now through the hidden gate/ in full to penetrate. In the original Esperanto Auld is more explicit (*tra l' pord' de via grotto / penetri ois la skroto*). In the Notes to his Dutch version of *La infana raso* Verloren van Themaat mentions a letter he wrote to Auld in which he points out the resemblance of this passage to lines 4 and 8 in P. Peneter's *Secret Sonnets XXXVIII* which are even more sexually explicit (*En la humida pord' de via Grotto / penetras mi, dronante ois la skroto*). P. Peneter is a pen name of the Hungarian Esperanto poet K. Kalocsay. In a letter of reply Auld apparently wrote that, while he knew the poem when he was writing *La infana raso*, he had not noticed the resemblance. (TN)

Line:

50-51 Hugh MacDiarmid: *A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle*. Thistle = emblem of Scotland.

*Millions o' wimmen bring forth in pain
Millions of bairns that are no' worth ha'en.*

60 *Les Sylphides*: ballet music by Frederic Chopin.

70 See note on chapter 22, line 3, etc.

VI

This chapter criticizes ecclesiastical authority — which, of course, is not the same as the personal religious convictions of an individual. From an early age such authority uses an education system based on conformity, in order to perpetuate its doctrine. This ensures that subsequent “reasoning” occurs on the basis of “accepted” premises — that is if it occurs at all. More often people react instinctively, as it were, in respect of matters which have been instilled into them, like Pavlov's dogs (see lines 10-13). Admittedly, this is what all authorities do, as well as most parents; but regarding so-called “moral” questions the church is — it claims — competent, and in this chapter the subject is the evil (?) effect of church instruction on the sexual life of human beings. Here I continually compare the church with saurians and fossils, i.e., outmoded or dead relics of primeval times.

Line:

4 *the ancient custom*: i.e. sexual intercourse.

10 *logos*: a Greek word meaning “word”; according to Christianity it is the incarnate Word of God.

11 *Indoctrinates...pounds on his drum*: the enforced indoctrination of children ensures the repetition of moral errors from generation to generation.

22 *confine**:

* *Original has "libri" – to confine within a book. (TN)*

31 *beams*: “And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? — Bible, St. Matthew 7:3.

VII

Two themes are developed in parallel: the momentary nature of impressions and memory which are unique for each individual; and the genius by which each individual, even against to the wishes and intentions of society, advances the human situation and society itself.

Line:

8 *it does so move (eppur si muove)*: Everyone knows that the cosmological theories of Galileo displeased the church of the time which persecuted him and forced him to deny that which he believed to be true, and which later proved to be true. According to legend, after this denial, Galileo uttered the above defiant phrase meaning “nevertheless it does move” (i.e. the earth moves round the sun instead of the contrary). It is not clear whether the legend is true; but this fine phrase exemplifies the obstinacy of man who cannot remain content with the primitive state of our human understanding.

9 *Kermanshah*: a town in Persia.

19 *for a world that’s only later ready*: see e.g. chapter 9, vv. 80-94.

20 *Plaisir d’Amour*: a waltz tune, once very popular.

61 *Betelgeuse*: The name of a star in the constellation Orion.

VIII

The beginning and end of human life. Life begins in the sea; it will be very easy for the highest point in evolution, namely man, to bring about the end of life on earth by means of the destructive armaments which he creates. But in any case, there are two perspectives of life: the history perspective of life as a phenomenon, and the individual life of each creature. For every man the end of the world is the moment of his own death. This chapter follows the evolution of life in the sea until it emerges on to land, underlining the fact that one of the two motors of evolution is the instinct in each individual creature to preserve its own life. The second motor is, of course, my “*celo*” (see explanation before the 3rd. chapter above),

Line:

67-68 This typographical harlequinade is the only part of my poem which I now regret. The intention is to create in the reader the sensation of movement, of waves. It seems that all it did was to create a sensation of annoyance or mystification! (I think earlier typographical arrangement of the word *upwards* was more successful.) Nevertheless, I leave the text as it is, since the point does not seem to me to be very important.

73 *the world is flat*: Entirely by the way, there is a story told about two millionaires. One of them doggedly believes that the earth is flat; in vain the

other tries to convince him that his view is wrong. Finally the second millionaire exclaims: "I'll show you! Come on!" They go to San Francisco and set out to travel westwards without deviation. They go on by ship and automobile, ever westward, until one day they return to San Francisco. "There you are!" says the second millionaire. "We travelled west without deviating and yet we've come back our point of departure. Now tell me, what shape is the earth?" "Obviously it's flat", replied the friend. "How can it be flat?" demanded the second one. "I've already shown you — " "Oh, you idiot" mocked the narrow-minded fellow, "Don't you understand yet? The earth is as flat as a biscuit, and it just happened that we travelled round the edge."

78 *giants*: i.e., the saurians.

IX

This chapter consists entirely of quotations related to my themes. Although, as I have already stated, the person who said it doesn't matter; only that which is said; nevertheless where possible I indicate my sources.

- 1-14.1 A.C. Buke: *Comparative Religion*. Harmondsworth, 3rd. Edition, 1950, p. 70- 71.
- 15-22 From the above book. I have not found the exact page.
- 23-25 From a letter to the Observer, London.
- 26-31 From a letter to the Sunday Times, London.
- 32-40 From an article in the Sunday Pictorial, London.
- 41-53 Karl Seltman: *The Twelve Olympians*, London, 1952.
- 44 *Ulster*: a province in Northern Ireland.
- 54-72 Ezra Pound: *Guide to Kulchur*, London, 1952, p. 7.
- 73-70 From a book by Chapman Koen, a well-known English atheist. I have forgotten the title and I do not have the book.
- 80-94 From a letter to the Observer, London.
- 90-105 Karl Seltman: *The Twelve Olympians*, London, 1952, p. 96.
- 106-7 A.C. Buke (see above).

X

I was faced with the problem of making the reader feel the great almost inconceivable time scale of my theme (relative to human lifetime). This chapter is my poor solution. As Waringhien wrote: "...the poet was trying to make an impression on the reader by the typographical arrangement of chapter X — although, of course, this is only a feeble picture of reality: an arithmetical scale would require one to extend the line from 'formation of the earth' some hundreds of kilometres, and the line from 'emergence of life' some hundred metres from the top of this page, where the three names of Sargon, Alexander and Zamenhof, were grouped together as if they

were contemporaries relative to the scale of measurement (“La Nica Literatura Revuo”, vol. 2, p. 117

XI

This ode to my as yet unborn daughter naturally expresses the feelings of a person who is forging a new link in the chain of life, and at the same time, the difficulty of communication between generations. I do not think the chapter requires any notes.

XII

This introduces the theme of the hero figure, a complement to the genius who, in his own way, also affects and changes society. As a prototype I present Genghis Khan. Sub-theme: suffering.

Line:

- 1-2 *Newell*: L.N.M. Newell, of course. The allusion is to his poem *La Astronomo* (“Literatura Mondo”, 1947, p. 169).
- 4 *Life is a Golgotha. Two crosses*: A quotation from the poem *Ajno* by Eugene Mikhalski in the volume *Prologo*, Leipzig, 1929 — a poem which seems to me the most important of all Esperanto poems. The quotation is repeated in v. 73.
- 5 & 10 *Plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose*: French saying meaning: “The more things change, the more they remain the same”.
- 6 *SAL BER YON ROSH*: According to a theory of the Soviet linguist N. J. Marr, these four sounds are the first words of human language. Regarding this theory one can read Andreev’s book *Revolucio en la lingvoscienco* (“Revolution in Linguistics”), or Pro. Lapenna’s summary in *Retoriko* (2nd. Edition, 1958, p. 44-49). I wish to make it unequivocally clear that I am not at all concerned whether Marr’s theories are valid or invalid; the only thing important to me is that he provides a fine symbol of the primeval moment of this most important human talent, that of speech. Some rabid anticommunists triumphantly informed me publicly in their reviews that “the theories of Marr have long been discredited”; they conveniently overlooked the fact that the initial discreditor was...Joseph Stalin, who presumably would not be a top-ranking authority for anticommunists. But zealots would even quote the devil for their purposes... I repeat the scientific correctness of Marr is a matter of indifference to me. In poetry it brilliantly succeeds.
- 7 *friska*: Since Esperanto is a living language, living texts are to me a necessary and sufficient justification for our words. I first found this beautiful and useful word in the line: “*Statuo æaste-friske de pudoro*” (A.S. Pushkin: *Savage Pleasure*, translated by K. Stelov, “Literatura Mondo”, 1949, p. 100. It means “cool”.

24 ‘*kaj sible æirkau l’ostoj la sablo æerke litas*’ (“and whispering round the bones

the sand beds down like a coffin"): a quotation from *La kosmo* by John Francis. The line is a Welsh peculiarity: a verse consisting of two hemistiches; the consonants in each hemistich are repeated, apart from the last one which *has to be* different (in the above: *s b l æ r k l + st/t*). It was Reto Rossetti who told us about this interesting Welsh feature (*Summer University, Malmö 1948*, p.12, etc.)

Line:

24-27 . The translator is indebted to István Ertl who researched the matter on the internet and suggests the second couplet as an alternative to the first, in imitation of this Welsh verse form (*Cynghanned groes*). (TN)

26 *thirteen years*: here begins the passage about of Genghis Khan.

47-8 *from off the burning tower*: this concerns the wife and children of Hannibal or Hasdrubal (I forget which), who when Carthage was set on fire by the Romans, preferred to die rather than fall into the hands of the victors.

65 *black panther*: I confess that this line contains the one and only obscurity in my poem, i.e. the only one which the reader would not be able to penetrate without help. In *The Jungle Book* by Rudyard Kipling there is a black panther, Bagheera; I was surely not the only little boy who was enchanted by this parental cat figure, and my subconscious threw it up while I was composing the chapter in question.

69 *Mimi*: heroine of Puccini's opera *La Bohème* (see above).

XIII

This contains two fundamental principles. Lines 1 to 45 consist of quotations from Winwood Read's book *The Martyrdom of Man* (1872). Read was an enlightened pioneer of the freethinking movement. (However, this volume was given to me by an Esperantist, K. Baumslag from South Africa. Lines 46-57 are a quotation from the *Apology* of Socrates, his plea before the court which finally condemned him to death.

XIV

In this chapter I again present a contrast: on one hand it deals with people in a space vessel on their way to another star — a voyage which will last for more than a generation; on the other hand I explore the self-centred world of a small boy on an isolated beach. Both, or could be, aspects of the human condition; in both cases they act on dimly understood impulses.

Line:

8 *lose their meaning*: human concepts of time depend, of course, on the movement of various celestial phenomena in relation to the earth itself. Our calculation of time is consequently arbitrary.

37 *Beyond lies Ithaca*: this refers to Odysseus' sojourn on the island of Calypso. "But he did not find the magnanimous Odysseus within, for, as was his custom, he sat weeping on the shore, rending his heart with tears and groans, and shedding tears he looked upon the restless rolling sea". — *Homer's Odysseus*, translated by Manders (1933).*

* *This passage was re-rendered into English by the present translator, who was unable to locate Mander's version.* (TN)

Line:

35 *I mind*: *I mind* (mainly Scots and dialect): *I remember*. (TN)

40 *Gael*: the Celtic inhabitants of northwest Scotland and the Scottish islands who speak the endangered Gaelic language.

XV

The cruelty and senselessness of war which is not limited to Genghis Khan but endures to our own time — in, among other places, Vietnam*

* *and Iraq, Afghanistan, etc.* (TN)

It can be said that man is not only the *unsilent* animal (see chapter 8), but also the only consciously cruel animal. However, at the end of the chapter I return to the only scrap of hope: man is still a child, and at least some individual human beings solve problems, and these solutions little by little, but very slowly, increase the possibility of some eventual maturation of the race. At least nowadays we can watch football matches in our stadiums instead of sadistic cruelty: this proves that the aeons of time that the race has existed were not *totally* in vain.

Line:

1-47 This is based on vague memories of an episode in the classical French film *La Kermesse Héroïque*.

70-77 See also chapter 7 v. 20 and chapter 9 vv. 80-94.

XVI

An interweaving of various themes; juxtaposition of themes variously dealt with, or to be dealt with in other chapters of the poem: censorship; cynicism of rulers; Esperanto itself; human cruelty; taboos; moral turpitude of human beings.

Line:

1-2 Quotation from Shakespeare's comedy *Twelfth Night* (= the feast of the Magi);

speech of the crude bon viveur Sir Toby Belch to the Puritan Malvolio, who is later tricked and cheated by the merrymakers.

3 *Timor mortis tuae conturbat me*: Latin saying meaning ‘the fear of your death troubles me’. A variant of the refrain (which does not include the word *tuae* = your) from a famous poem by the Scottish poet William Dunbar (1460-1515).

15 Believe it or not, this unlovely sentence is authentic; I do not intend, however, to reveal the source!

Line:

16 *kara lingvo*: “beloved language” (TN)

17-20 This refers to Antonio Grabowski (1857-1921); and the national epic is of course, *Sinjoro Tadeo* (Polish: *Pan Tadeusz* TN). It seems that I was wrong about one detail: after some time he did, however, find his family. It is rather symbolical that it was precisely *Esperanto* books that Grabowski was looking at in the bookshop window.

24 The minister was William Pitt and the book was the famous *Political Justice* by William Godwin (1756-1836), father-in-law of the English poet P.B. Shelley.

27 See the Bible, 1 Corinthians 13:11. According to tradition the author was St. Paul.

34-35 Quotation from William Auld: *Provizore (Unufingra melodio)*, p. 44.

40 *the reprobate can be recognised by their tempestuous laughter*: allusion to the Calvinist form of Christianity which shackled Scotland in the 18th and 19th centuries. According to this doctrine, everything is predestined by God, including the fate of every individual after death: whether he will go to heaven or to hell. This is decided by God before birth of the individual and the decision cannot be appealed against. Furthermore, only one out of ten thousand souls will go to heaven, while the rest will be eternally tormented in hell (see chapter 12, v. 49-52), and you will understand that one can play an amusing game by dividing humanity into two groups: the saved and the reprobate (note: not those who *will* be damned, because this was already decided at the beginning). And, of course, the reprobate included the merrymakers who drank, played cards, made love and *laughed*. This was very aptly satirised by the world famous Robert Burns — one of the aforesaid merrymakers! — in *Holy Willie’s Prayer*, a translation of which by Reto Rossetti appeared in “*Esperanto en Skotlando*” N^o. 12 and “*Literatura Mondo*”, 1949, p. 11.

XVII

Continues the juxtaposition of themes more extensively dealt within other chapters: the relation between mother and child (ch. 3); Thermopylae (ch. 22); slavery (ch. 22); sexual intercourse (ch. 5), and the Purpose or *celo*.

Line:

4 *Hide beyond noun and verb*: according to fashionable linguistics and one western school of philosophy, the arbitrary limits of semantics are an impediment to the solution of philosophical problems.

Line

10 *ardificial tongue*: In the original *artdefarita lingvo* (“ardently created”) a word play on *artefarita lingvo*: “artificial language”. Here Auld is using the same device of word distortion as in Chapter IV. Detractors of Esperanto dismiss it as artificial. Its supporters can counter by pointing out that it is no more nor less artificial than, say, modern Hebrew, Bahasa Indonesia, written Slovak or modern Hungarian.

11

15 *savage... dance*: Perhaps an allusion to an incident in the novel *Abismoj* by Jean Forge (Jan Fethke). (TN)

25 *Thoughts of a dog* are late regrets (according to a Hungarian proverb?).

31-34 An autobiographical note: I wrote this chapter at a time when I was earning my living as a manual labourer — stoking a furnace in a hospital!

Line:

10 *In the original, the words in the first column rhyme in pairs. They cannot in English, hence the addition of a second rhyming column (not in the original)* (TN)

48 Quotation from Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*, Act 2, Scene 2.

50 Quotation from Kalocsay: *En amara horo*.

XVIII

If anyone still requires proof of the childishness of the race one needs only to think of the attitude of the race to the international language... The subject of this chapter is Zamenhof and Esperanto.

Line:

12-23 *ars longa, vita brevis est*: Latin saying: ‘art lasts long, life is short’.

Line:

16 *Nevis*: Scotland’s highest mountain (not mentioned in original).

...and dreamless life’s like snow on Nevis. The translator is calling to mind Robert Burns’ lines:

...like the snow falls in the river, / A moment white – then melts for ever. (TN)

27 Symbol of the significance of soft, barely heard sounds.

34 *Proverbaro*. Perhaps the most important of Zamenhof’s writings, neglected by those who think that proverbs are nothing more than popular wisdom. The importance of proverbs (probably in every language) is linguistic — one cannot, after all, claim that popular wisdom is very profound (and more often than not it is contradictory, so that one finds proverbs for every occasion and viewpoint). But the proverbs of Zamenhof have still hardly begun to influence the style and figures of speech of the common language — compared with what one could finally gain from them. And we owe this important collection to the fact that Lazaro’s father was a collector of proverbs in various languages! One of the many “coincidental factors!”.

36 *sixteen rules permitting free advance*: so far as I am aware, Reto Rossetti is the first person to draw attention to the importance of the fact that the sixteen Zamenhof rules of the “Fundamento” *forbid nothing*.

37 *rigor vitae*: Latin = ‘rigour of life’. A frequent expression is the Latin *rigor mortis* = ‘rigour of death’, the stiffening of a corpse. But phenomena have a

tendency to “stiffen” or “petrify” while nevertheless maintaining the appearance of life. One could quote innumerable examples from politics, religion and morals.

47 Whether or not Esperanto is universally accepted by governments and by the masses, it is a language with full rights since it is used by an appreciably large group of people for serious purposes.

51 *alea iacta* [est]: ‘the die is cast’.

XIX

This chapter is intended as my *carpe diem* (= ‘seize [enjoy] today’), a hymn in praise of sensuality and the pleasures of the senses. But the more I thought about it the more I asked myself: why should I re-do that which Virgil has done perfectly? So I decided, instead of composing an original piece, to translate his *Copa*, and that is what I have done. I say “his” *Copa*, although I am very well aware that his authorship is not definitely acknowledged. But while there is doubt, I prefer to accept the theory that pleases me. Let the experts argue.

Line:

12 *burn*: the word “streamlet” has never satisfied many sensitive people to denote a very narrow, shallow, babbling brook. It did not satisfy me either, and after careful consultation of innumerable foreign language dictionaries I found that no generally international word exists — perhaps because this “streamlet” is a very poetically intimate concept. So out of the very many alternatives I proposed the new coinage “burno”, after the Scottish word reflected in the infrequent but known English “bourn”. Probably my solution suits only myself. A more attractive alternative at that time was *rilo*; but this word was already used as the name of a Scottish dance (in at least two important translations). After a great deal of international discussion, one began, on the instigation of Prof. Waringhien, to use the word *rojo*, and this word has apparently taken root. Nevertheless, I obstinately retain my poor child *burno* in the context of this poem of mine.

25 *size of his phallus*: this takes the place of the text of the first edition: *size of his belly*. I still do not know how I misunderstood the original here. The meaning is quite clear *sed non et vasto est inguine terribilis*. The reference is obviously to the *priapi*, fertility gods who abounded even among respectable families during the early Empire. (One can see fine photographs of *priapi* with shameless sexual organs in the volume *Roma Amor*

XX

The main theme of this chapter is the Hero of the epics: an almost universal figure who possesses in exceptional measure those characteristics which are admired by the people concerned, and which, as it were, personify the aspirations of that people. “Bare and artless is the song” (v. 30). Moreover, there is a generic commonality between the heroes, divided by time and space. This theme introduces several statements regarding history and modern society, which contrast with the

artlessness and — so to speak — the naïvety of the hero narratives. (This is not a case of *approving* of such heroes, but only *acknowledging* their existence.

Line:

7 *who looks upon all the world as his parish*: A quotation from John Wesley: *I look upon all the world as my parish* (*Journal*, 24 January 1739) (TM)

Line:

18 *panem et circenses*: (Latin) ‘bread and circuses’. The point is that Roman rulers satisfied and subdued the generally rootless and unemployed citizens by giving them bread and public displays in the circuses.

26 *John* is John Francis.

31-34 The birth of heroes is usually abnormal; and Batradz is only one of the...heroes whose mother was a virgin, isn't that so?

35-38 Helgakvitha Hundingsbana, i, 6.

39-44 *Gilgamesh* II, vi, 10-15. Sumerian epic dating from the third century before Christ.

45 *Manas. Kirgizkij Epos*, Moscow, 1946.

46-47 *Fafnismal*, 6, 1-2.

48-81 *Skazannija o Nartakh*, Moscow, 1944.

Line:

68 *by the leg*: or, following the rendering by Dr. Willen Verloren van Themaat in his Dutch version (apparently approved by William Auld himself) : *And grasped the Nardo (or Nart) tribesman by the leg*. *The translator was puzzled by the word “nardo” in this line (“Pinæile kaptis la nardon krure”) as in Esperanto “nardo” normally means “nard”, “spikenard”.rture from the text. Dr. Verloren van Themaat, however, takes it that the reference is to the name of a tribe.* (TN)

Line:

82-85 *Maldon*, 211-215.

86-89 From an English poem (*Ogres and Pygmies* – TN) by Robert Graves (the poet later revised his text):

Those famous men of old, the Ogres —
They had long beards and stinking arm-pits.
They were wide-mouthed, long-yarded and great-bellied
Yet of not taller stature, Sirs, than you.
They lived on Ogre-Strand, which was no place
But the churl's terror of their proud extent.
Where every foot was three-and-thirty inches,
And every penny bought a whole sheep.
Now of their company none survive, not one,
The times being, thank God, unfavourable
To all but nightmare memory of them.
Their images stand howling in the waste,
(The winds enforced against their wide mouths)
whose granite haunches king and priest must yearly
Buss and their cold knobbled knees.

So many feats they did to admiration:
With their enormous lips they sang louder
Than ten cathedral choirs, and with their grand yards

Stormed the most rare and obstinate maidenheads,
 With their strong-gutted and capacious bellies
 Digested stones and glass like ostriches.
 They dug great pits and heaped great cairns,
 Deflected rivers, slew whole armies,
 And hammered judgments for posterity —
 For the sweet cupid-lipped and tassel-yarded
 Delicate-stomached dwellers
 In Pygmy Alley, where with brooding on them
 A foot is shrunk to seven inches
 And twelve-pence will not buy a spare rib.
 And who would choose between Ogres and Pygmies —
 The thundering text, the snivelling commentary —
 Reading between such covers he will likely
 Prove his own disproportion and not laugh.

XXI

Ignoring the lessons of history; the influence of chance; prudery; religion; politics: these are the themes of this chapter

Line:

- 5-6 Charles the 1st and Charles the 2nd of Britain.
- 31 *It has not been proved that advancement is praiseworthy:* paraphrase of *The last man, that unknown* by Alexis Carrel, chapter 1. “After all we do not know whether greater stature in any race (= people) shows progress, as one supposes today, or degeneration”.
- 44 *He bleated:* He was the famous Scottish playwright James Bridie, who was a member of a commission distributing prize money to selected artists.
- 60 *Nikolai:* Nikolai Kurzens; a reference to his poem *Aŭtuna elogio*.
- 64 *Vilhelmo:* English poet William Blake; a reference to his poem *Auguries of Innocence* (see *Angla Antologio*).
- 81 see Bible, Exodus 20:3.
- 92-105 Quotation from the Bible, from *Ecclesiastes*. Very wise words; but I particularly like the reference to Sheol — a place one does not often hear about among believers?

XXII

Deals with slavery and the dreams of slaves; also with the courage shown by human beings at times when courage is needed.

Line:

- 1-2 French = ‘the day of glory has arrived’ — not yet, friends, not yet. The first line is a quotation from “The Marseillaise”, the national anthem of France, in which the French Revolution is extolled.
- 3 Here and elsewhere I use the *us*-mood (conditional) which for me always implies the notion *if*. Hence: “I would sit under a chestnut tree...*if*”, etc.
- 34-43 This refers to the Spartans before Thermopylae.
- 52 *burn*: see note, chapter 19, v. 12.

XXIII

The ecological life cycle. What plants use and require is not required by animals, which in turn, need other ingredients of growth. Thus they mutually feed each other. The chapter should be read as if it were a family tree. There is a germ which becomes wheat. Part of the wheat is used to bring about the growth of a new crop of wheat; another part is consumed by human beings in bread (made of flour); the unwanted part of that bread is expelled as excrement; if excrement is used as manure, it feeds the germ which becomes wheat, and the cycle begins again.

XXIV

The astronomical hugeness of the universe. From our solar system one observes the immeasurable vastnesses of interstellar space.

Line:

- 1-2 Since we see by means of light rays, anything which moves faster than the speed of light is invisible to our eyes.
- 3 *Mercury*: The nearest planet to our sun; hence it is visible only in the morning and in the evening and is therefore known as the “morning star” or “evening star”, although it is not a star.
- 9 This refers to a pamphlet about the Bolshevik Revolution. One of the main “crimes” of which the Bolsheviks were accused was that they forced the popes to debate publicly about religion.
- 10 *Venus*: The second planet from our sun.
- 17-18 Quotation from Alexander Pope: *Essay on Criticism* (see *Angla Antologio*). Subjective interpretation of impressions. When I was studying at the Observatory in Glasgow, one young lady telephoned us to tell that she had “seen the moon jump and shake”.
- 20-21 *Mars*: Fourth planet from our sun. Among the ancients it symbolised the god of war, perhaps because of its red colour.
- 35 *Jupiter*: fifth from the sun and largest of the planets.
- 37 *Saturn*: sixth of our planets.
- 39 *Neptune and Uranus*: respectively, seventh and eighth planet from our sun.
- 40-41 The ninth planet, Pluto, was only discovered in 1931. However, the discovery of the eighth and ninth planets was a triumph of mathematics: in both cases

their position was calculated before any telescope was pointed in the right direction...and before they were seen! It may be (Pluto is very small) that yet undiscovered planets, may be detected farther away from our sun.

XXV

In the last chapter I naturally summarise the themes of the whole poem. Most of the various threads are interwoven here. It is to be hoped that at this stage in reading, no reader will still require general explanations!

Line:

53 *Pull down thy vanity*: Keyword quotation from Ezra Pound's epic poem *The Cantos*.

58 *logos*: see note, chapter 6, v. 10.

Line

79 *God and Id*: (Esperanto: *Dio kaj IDo*) – Dr. Verloren van Themaat points out that here there is an untranslatable play on words. *Ido* can be understood as the Esperantized form of "Id" in the Freudian (psychological) sense, or as denoting *Ido*, a planned language launched in 1907 by Beaufront and Couturat, intended as a reformed version of Esperanto. It was rejected by Esperantists. (TN)

* * *

One last word. I regret that from time to time even sensitive and capable experts call my poem "a collection of lyrics" or something similar, ignoring the fact that from the beginning it was already conceived as a whole. This can be proved by the fact that I did not compose the chapters in consistent order. Rather I first passed on each one to John Francis, and then they *already* bore the chapter headings which they have in the published volume — because they matched the scheme as planned beforehand. (Here for interest is the order of composition of the chapters: 1, 2, 5, 9, 3, 7, 6, 10, 8, 12, 13, 4, 11, 14, 15, 16, 19, 20, 18, 21, 25, 22, 23, 24.) Furthermore, I also find it annoying that they do not wish to call the individual parts "chapters" — which they in fact are! — but prefer to call them "cantos" or "rhapsodies" or some similar incorrect term. No doubt even this my "last word" will not change anything in this respect...

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ALDONO - APPENDIX

La redaktoro

István Ertl

El Vikipedio – *from Wikipedia*

ERTL István (naskiĝis en 1965) estas hungara esperantisto loĝanta en Luksemburgio. Ertl estas instruisto kaj tradukisto. Li redaktis la revuojn *Internacia Pedagogia Revuo* (1987-1991), *Opus Nigrum* (1987-1990), *Kontakto* (1990-1991) kaj *Esperanto de UEA* de 1992 ĝis 2001. Tiujare, li demisiis kun du aliaj oficistoj de UEA pro nekontento pri kelkaj ties estraranoj. Ertl laboris en 2002-2003 kiel inform-oficisto de Eŭropa Reto Kontraŭ Rasismo en Bruselo, kaj poste fariĝis la unua hungarlingva tradukisto de la Eŭropa Revizora Kortumo. Ertl kunfondis la retan bultenon *Libera Folio*. Li estas multjara kunlaboranto de la magazino *Monato*. Komitatano de UEA (2004-), membro de la Elekta Komisiono (2005-). Estrarano de IKEL, Internacia Komitato por Etnaj Liberecoj (2005-) kaj de Tutmonda Esperantista Ĵurnalista Asocio (2006-).

István ERTL (born 1965) is a Hungarian Esperantist living in Luxemburg. He is a teacher and translator. He has edited the magazines *Internacia Pedagogia Revuo* (1987-1991); *Opus Nigrum* (1987-1990); *Kontakto* (1990-1991); *Esperanto*, the organ of UEA (Universal Esperanto Association) (1992-2001). He has worked (2002-2003) as information officer of the European Network against Racism in Brussels, and later became the first Hungarian language translator for the European Appeals Court. He was joint founder of the internet bulletin *Libera Folio*. For many years he has been a co-worker with the magazine *Monato*. Since 2004 he has been a committee member of the UEA, and since 2005 a member of the Electoral Commission. Also since 200 he has been a leading member of *IKEL*, the International Committee for Ethnic Liberation and, since 2006, a member of *Tutmonda Esperantista Ĵurnalista Asocio* (The World Esperanto Journalists' Association).

Listo de verkoj – *List of Writings*

- Lajos Tárkony kaj la Budapeŝta Skolo (literatura studo, 1990)
- Tiu toskana septembro (kun Corrado Tavanti, krimromano, 1990)
- Esperanto kaj la estonteca plurlingvismo. Diskuto kun Umberto Eco (kun François Lo Jacomo, 1994)
- Du poemoj kaj kvar prozaĵoj en Ek al leg'! (1991), "Tempo fuĝas" (1995), "Sferoj 10" (2000) kaj "Mondoj" (2001).
- Eseo en "Struktura kaj socilingvistika esploro de Esperanto" (1997)
- La postdomo (satira romaneto, 2003)
- Provizore (poemaro, 2004)

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- Stilekzercoj de Raymond Queneau (1986, 2006)
- Pri feliĉa vivado (filozofia traktato, 1991), de Seneca
- Kaj ni solas (poemaro, 1991), de Heinz Kahlau
- Mi ĉiam tia rememoru vin (antologio de bulgara ampoezio, red. kaj parte trad., 1992)
- Esplorvojaĝo (1994; pirata reeldono de ERA en 2000), de Jules Verne
- Unuminutaj noveloj (red. kaj parte trad., 1995), de István Örkény
- Klaŭstralio (utopio, 1997, 2005), de István Bejczy
- Unu novelo en "Omaĝe al Aldecoa" (1999), de Ignacio Aldecoa

- Sensorteco (romano, 2003), de Imre Kertész
- Cu nur-angla Eŭropo? Defio al lingva politiko (monografio, 2004), de Robert Phillipson
- La unufoja lando (poemaro, 2005, red. kaj plejparte trad.), de Tomas Venclova
- La sekreta miraklo (antologio, 2007, red. kaj parte trad.), de Jorge Luis Borges

Aperis liaj tradukoj, en la hungaran, el verkoj de : *He has also published his translations into Hungarian of works by the following:*

- Horacio
- Jules Verne
- Roger Martin Du Gard
- Jean Echenoz
- Georges Simenon
- Dino Buzzati
- Jorge Luis Borges

krome, liaj hungarigoj de : *also his Hungarian translations of:*

- La infana raso (William Auld),
- Varmas en Romo (Corrado Tavanti),
- Kumeŭaŭa, la filo de la ĝangalo (Tibor Sekelj),
- La finna vojo (Urho Kekkonen),
- Kazinski venas tro malfrue (Deck Dorval)
- Maskerado ĉirkaŭ la morto (Teodoro Schwarz).

The Translator

Girvan McKay

Girvan McKay (Garbhan MacAoidh) estis dum multaj jaroj tradukistoj en diversaj landoj. De 1960 ĝis 2002, li kontribuis per originalaj skribaĵoj kaj tradukoj al la skotgaela literature revuo *GAIRM*, kaj poste al ĝia sekvanto *GATH*. Ekde 1988, li estas regula kontribuanto en Esperanto al la internacia magazino *MONATO*. De 1969 ĝis 1972, li redaktis dulingvan (anglan-hispanan) revuon en Buenos Aires, Argentino. Tradukoj de poezio kaj originala versaĵo liaj aperis en la antologioj: *Zapovit* (“Testamento”), Kiev, 1989; *Bàrdachd na Roinn-Eòrpa an Gàidhlig* (“Eŭropa poezio en la gaela”), Glasgovo, 1990; *An Tuil* (“La inundo” – antologio de dudekjarcenta skotgaela poezio, Edimburgo, 1999; *En nacia vesto- poemoj de Kálmán Kalocsay tradukitaj al naciaj lingvoj*, Budapeŝto, 2004.

Girvan McKay (Garbhan MacAoidh) worked for many years as a translator in several countries. From 1960 to 2002 he contributed original and translated writings to the Gaelic literary magazine GAIRM and later to its successor GATH. From 1969 to 1972 he was editor of a bilingual (English-Spanish) magazine in Buenos Aires, Argentina. His poetry translations and original verse were included in the anthologies Zapovit (“Testament”), Kiev, 1989; Bàrdachd na Roinn-Eòrpa an Gàidhlig (“European Poetry in Gaelic”), Glasgovo, 1990; An Tuil (“The Flood” – Anthology of 20th Century Gaelic Verse), Edinburg, 1999; En nacia vesto- poemoj de Kálmán Kalocsay tradukitaj al naciaj lingvoj (“In national dress” – Poems by Kálmán Kalocsay translated into national languages) Budapeŝto, 2004.