

**William Auld**

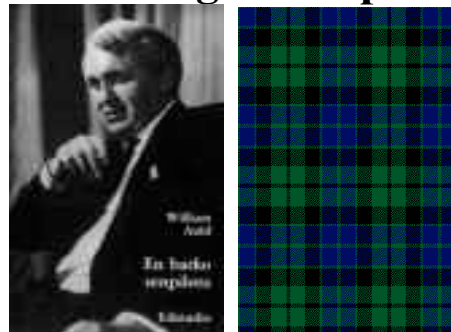
**A Bairnlie Ilk**

*(La Infana Raso)*

*Owerset till Lallans*

*by Girvan McKay*

**A Scots Translation  
from the original Esperanto**



*Traduko en la malaltejan skotan*

***eva***

*Esperantlingva Verkista Asocio*



2008

# **A Bairnlie Ilk**

## ***(La Infana Raso)***

***Owerset tae Lallans***

**A Scots version of William Auld's  
*La infana raso* ("The Infant Race")**

**A poem in 25 chapters  
translated from the original Esperanto  
by Girvan McKay**

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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”. Certainly 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 Esperanto. 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. Nevertheless, all nations have their bards and though each poet's work may be unique, there is a commonality of themes which can be found in all great poetry and storytelling.

William Auld's long poem *La infana raso* could be said to have much in common with the work of the Chilean poet Pablo Neruda (*Canto General*) and the North American Ezra Pound (*Cantos*). Auld is regarded by those who are able to read and understand his work as the leading Esperanto poet of the post-war era.

In spite of the deep respect with which Auld is regarded, *La infana raso* has not escaped criticism even among the poet's admirers. Auld replies to these criticisms in his extensive Notes to the third edition of the poem

*La infana raso* explores the role 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. 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.

Chapter IV presents a particular problem. After a second reading, the translator 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.

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... 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)... Of course it is not necessary or useful for me to give any clarification of the individual words.*

\* rendered *polite-ishyins* in this translation.

Examples of such “blatant deceit and intentional imprecision of political and military language” abound in 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.

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 language 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 war 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 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).

## **Note on the Scots Translation**

When the first draft of my English translation of William Auld’s *magnum opus La infana raso* was shown to some rather unenthusiastic members of the British Esperanto Association, one of their number suggested that a translation into Scots would be more appropriate. I eventually took up this suggestion and, for better or worse, here is my Scots version. Whether or not it meets with an equally lukewarm response as my English one, I at least, have derived far more amusement from this exercise than I did from my attempt to render the poem into English. Standard English has long struck me as being a far more artificial language than Esperanto.

There is no generally accepted orthography for the Scots language, and its many dialects prove a further problem for the translator. I have tried, however, to adhere to the forms and spellings given in the *Concise English-Scots Dictionary* of the Scottish National Dictionary Association.

Most of the text is in the Lowland Scots I associate with my mother's Ayrshire birthplace, although unfortunately this dialect is no longer familiar to younger people. For reasons of rhyme and euphony I have very sparingly introduced a few words from other dialects, such as *quine* from the Doric of the North-East, and *fader* and *peerie* from Shetlandic.

Auld himself translated some verse into Scots, but it is as one of the most eminent poets and writers in the Esperanto language that he will be remembered.

If this Scots version fails to do him justice, I am sorry. At least I will have tried to pay him a small tribute in the *Lallans leid*.

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**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)*

*A glossary of older and less common Scots words and unusual spellings is appended. (See end of poem.)*

## I

Hail tae ye, Dorbie Reuben, ma forefader  
 wha aa yer days climm'd branderin and ledder  
 kervin on kirks stane watter-spoots and angels!

An ye, nevoy o Reuben, wha haled heich  
 yer gabbert's sails an gaed a-reivin furth  
 begunked a browster's saicant dochter, feich!  
 gat her wi bairn and steered afore the birth  
 an sank at sea – Ah sing, ma fere, o ye!

(An mair nor him, o ye, the browster's dochter  
 foredame o mine, wha cuitert at yer breist  
 yon ill-gaen sin at later leeved tae slauchter  
 herrie and spulzie, fornicate an feast  
 fadered ten bastarts, ane o wham gaed aff  
 tae sodger in faur Poland an tae daff  
 wi aa the weemin-fowk he left in jizzen  
 bequeystin tae me monie a Polish kizzen!)

An hail, ye thoosans – ilka swattin serf,  
 Ah bid ye as faur nevoy of that ilk:  
 bit ye wad be dumfoonert, aye an derf  
 war Ah tae goam yer maisters, tae, as kin.  
 It wad tae ye be ferlie gin the sin  
 born in a castle, an yer coo-like weans  
 in tatterwallops wur tae contreebute  
 as weel, tae that bluid fleetin in ma veins.

(An trowth, ye wadna be alane tae wunner:  
 the castle's sin wad tae, an aiblens scunner.)

An ye, ma hairie, savage kin of auld  
 wha focht wi swurds and stanes, unbood and bauld,  
 Agricola's invading legioneers,  
 Ah bid ye *Ave*, rist ye weel, ma feres!

Aye, aa thae fowk  
 (or amaist aa) begat me, says the leet  
 shawin at aa the soum o thaim complete  
 wis somegate mair tae coont, ilk generation,  
 nor aa the ivnoo memmers of the nation  
 An syne amang the legions on the grund,  
 mair nor ane fader o ma line wis foond,  
 an whan barbarian an Roman focht  
 swurd at the thrapple, clashin as they docht,  
 twa men in hate, an yit the seed o baith  
 wis jined in me lang efter ilka's daith.

By bowst'rous blaw tane rives the tither's heid:  
ma bluid's provider kests ma bodie's bluid...

A kenning sweirt, Ah rax tae ye ma haund,  
dreich forebear o the Halie Wullie baund;  
an here's a shouther clap, ye actor fou;  
ma randie wey's inherited frae you;  
a kiss tae ye, Maria, ruckin strae;  
a hug tae Liz wha haed a bairn – bit wae!  
She cuidna tell ye wha the fader'd been;  
bit as a cuik or luver she wis queen.  
An ye, ma tyler forebear, Ah salute  
an ye...

an ye...

an ye forby...

bit noo the thochts confute,  
confuse, refuse tae nummer aa the pairts:  
links in a lang stent chyne frae monie airts  
that endit here in me, makkit me kin  
tae ilka gree an state at man is in:  
tae ilka thigger, doacter, limmer quine  
o ilka leid, frae yer land and frae mine...

Hail tae ye, brither, cadger o the crib –  
A faur-oot houghmagandie mad us sib!  
an ye, dour Laa Lord – a salute tae ye.  
We baith war gat be siclike frainesie!

Come tae ma airms, bleck brither wha the split  
o primal cell divides us ivven yit,  
an, Jesus, frae a land o brennin sin  
ye're sib tae me, maugre yer daurker skin.  
Yer fallowers misguidit dyed ye white;  
Bit langsyne we war baith like fush despite!

Frichtsomlie growes the leet wi'oot a brek,  
squerrin in multiples, tae rax an reck  
intae the past, a lang an endless chyne,  
thin an yit strang, thrawn, bruckle strind o mine  
that cam tae be whan primal element  
jined element by cosmic accident,  
kythed the first glent o life's primeval met;  
aye, in that unkent mament Ah wis gat!

Bit gin in ae blind oor Ah bum an blaw  
ma forebears whusper: time staps nae wi you!  
Ye'r nae the climax of oor blin advance;  
lang efter ye, wull ithers jine the dance.  
Fae primal cell tae you is bit a day:



Oor race hes barelie stertit on its way.

Ye're bit the first braith of a new-born wean:  
ye come, ye'll gang – ane in the endless chain!  
An hail, ye faders, yer brief oor is gane...  
Courage, ma kin, of ilka tribe and strain —  
fir time's mirage that damned by separation  
wull reunite us at the consummation!

An tween-haund, gropin, blin  
we come an gang, links in that chyne wha's end  
we neither mak nor see. Gang on an win!

## II

Whit has releegion, than, tae dae wi God?  
 — Aboot as muckle as the Gaelic Mòd!  
 Thair dogmas? – juist jalousin, aye, an blaw  
 bit they let on tae us they ken it aa.

Ye preach humilitie... wi pride.  
 God is a myst'rie undescried,  
 bit ye ken him, an aa alang  
 the priests of ither feths are wrang.

Prophets impose their fantasies;  
 Convince theirsels an pass decrees  
 fur aa. They moot: “Dae whit Ah say;  
 God has ordained – ye maun obey”.

Ye haud a creed steive as a rock,  
 Bit think a whiles: tae tell yer flock  
 that ma god's fause an yours is true  
 is gey unmannerfu o you.

The Greeks wur quite content tae hail  
 Yahweh as Zeus, Zeus as Baal,  
 An lea'd it tae ilk ane tae wale  
 his ain wey throu the hidlin veil.

Nae Greek wis heltered be a beuk:  
 tae Custom he haed bit tae leuk.  
 It's braid truths an its mythic stories  
 cuid compromise wi ither's nories.

Greeks wurna hauden-doon by priests;  
 they mensed releegion, kept the feasts.  
 Bit naebodie haed richt tae try  
 a man fur crime o heresie.

Tak Fahey, douce priest of oor time,  
 campaignin fur a cause sublime:  
 “The Social Richts o Christ the King  
 (an priests) afore aa ither thing”.

Forder: “The State awn as unique  
 an onlie trowth the Catholic”.  
 The polis cuid be yaised (gin needed)  
 Tae mak shair thae richts are conceded.

Shairlie extremes? Aye, that is true, man.  
 We maun awn up: tae err is human.  
 Bit, damn! Ma neibour haes nae brief  
 tae criticeese ma ain belief.

Daes God exist, or daesna he?  
 Whit reck? Man's weird is sair tae dree.  
 Threapin about an efter-life  
 isna an answer, solves nae strife.

Sic gab about "the saul" they yuise;  
 "The flesh" they bauchle an demean;  
 an hedge about wi dour taboos  
 joys they wad blecken as obscene.

Mind thon Orsipos wha kest aff  
 (rinnin) his hippins wi a waff,  
 ran on tae win the race an fame  
 lichtin a thoosan year-lang flame.

"The saul is fleshlie" (wi aa mense).  
 It can bit kythe itself as sense.  
 Wi'oot the sense it canna be.  
 Tae say aucht ense is glamerie.

Bit they threap at us: "Ruise God's pooer.  
 He's makkit us an that's fur shuir".  
 (Lawrence wis jeedged — it wisna fair!  
 — fur picters at shawed pubic hair.)

Until they aa wull awn the facks:  
 accep as hailsome sexual acks,  
 they wullna ken whit drames are for,  
 bit onlie scraible in the glaur.

"The saul" is thinking an emotions:  
 hairns, an the mind, wi'oot mere notions.  
 This youthfu race will bigg instead  
 Heaven on yird — whan God is deid.

## III

Ferlie primeval peetiless virr did dwang ye  
 till daith's daurk threshwart for this Purpose solelie  
 that here in jizzen, aa alane an thrang, ye  
 - wi nane tae help – maun warsle in this oor,  
 a warld o strainin nerve an muscle pooer.

Whit did ye think efter the brek o watter  
 an whan ye heard that first an dwaible cry?  
 Can ye still min it noo? Sin or a dochter?  
 Daes it seem bit a dwam, a gramerie?  
 Fur efter threttie year, e'en pyne wull dee.

Ye hae forged yer link an noo perfected  
 that unique pairt that wis frae ye expected,  
 an yit, Ah ken, fur ye 'twasna eneuch,  
 an that ye blinlie, wi baith drames an fears,  
 wissed tae devote yer bairn tae future years.

O Mither, it wis vain an menseless thinking  
 whan at the howdiein the cord wis cut.  
 They brak the mystic union, the linkin.  
 Hoo did ye hae sic drames, tae fin yer bairn's  
 wad be a heid wi complicated hairns?

Fish-mithers are mair cannie kis they aa  
 Lay eggs in thoosans an juist soom awa  
 wi'oot a thocht. Hoo wice the fishes are!  
 Gin we cuid semplie kest oor fry, an skail!  
 Hoo then, be Christ, did we evolve — an fail?

Nae wunner that the Purpose haes confused ye,  
 Mither, life did ye ill an sae misyused ye!  
 Wi yer ain mither deid, yer dad denied ye  
 An yer bairn jagged the bibble o yer drame,  
 – Whitreck, ye ayeweys loed us juist the same.

Ah nivver kent ye, Mither, as Ah'd wiss! —  
 Hoo cuid Ah ken ye? We ken nae-yin weel;  
 we leuk on ithers, hidlins spy on them,  
 bit canna see inower throu the sheel;  
 we're wrang, whuther we ruise them or condemn.

An aiven ye exist lik 'twere on Venus,  
fur we are stryngers, howanivver near.  
Whit dae ye ken o thochts o mine in leanness:  
feelins Ah hivna kythed – o howp or fear,  
things that Ah nivver telt tae ye, ma dear?  
A mament chynges aa. Whan ye conceived me  
this turned aroond the current o yer weird.  
Anerlie *noo* is rael – ilka event.  
Whuther the birth wis howped fur or wis feared  
wis it rewaird tae ye? Or punishment?

A mament chynges aa. Whan frae the wame  
ye kest me furth an set me on life's wey,  
whit wur yer thochts whan time o birthin came?  
Whit mament sent yer fondest drames agley?

## IV

The gomerall generals say that we need weirs —  
 induminouslie sae, fir skellums aa  
 git rich as Creeshus; ithers glaurie gain  
 while youse an me win onlie harm an payne  
 fir killin fowk a gong's pinned on the kist  
 o sodgers, whill the polite-ishyins rant;  
 they spek o "takin-oot", an "freendlie fire"  
 "damage (collateral)" – cheaterie clatteral –  
 "speeshul rendition", "nuclear fission".  
 They say that aa the warld is geckin at  
 oor ashperations, oor demuckrasie  
 an onlie oor brave airmie can proteck us  
 fae "axes of evil" an the like.  
 Rackets an booms an airieplanes an goons  
 save us fae enemas o capital,  
 demuckrasie, an freedom, an the flag.  
 "In Goad we trust". Oor pastors bless the bombs,  
 Cackolicks, Prostitants an Rabbits aa  
 Lift up their vices fir "Oor wey o life",  
 Butter an guns (an Goad kens gin the land  
 Maks weir, some fecht whill ithers profit fae the steer.)  
 (Bit sodgers, pesters an the parliament  
 fecht – that's fir shair – bit nae wi blithe intent.  
 A peetie, aye, bit necessar forby;  
 fir only hate, we think, can conquer hate.  
 Pooer, that's whit we wint! Micht bears the gree!  
 Wi'oot it we'll nae ding the enemie!  
 We jeedge it aa be stannards sic as these:  
 skin-colour, langage an releegion;  
 whit maks us *unlike* are stigma signs.

## V

aloo me till yer bed  
we sall fulfil the Purpose

we sall fulfil the Purpose  
gin yer airms unveet me  
an doucelie pou me till ye  
an gin ye in yer bed  
maist eidentlie wull loe me  
an wi the cravin sair  
aa ettlins we'll forleit

we sall fulfil the Purpose  
the Purpose wull pit ow'r us

an wi ma kiss  
apen untae ma graith  
that by oor luve  
oor bairnie may be got  
oor langin gryte  
nae contrafeit  
gin life lays wyte  
we dinna see 't  
(an throu yer clivvie an yer yett  
till the ba-cod tae penetrate)

*"Yer sang's erotic" they hae statit  
the trowth is faur mair complicatit":*

the nicht is smoorin me  
o luve o mine!  
an ye allurin me

the mament noo is tuim, is tuim!

war ye tae ligg here in ma airms  
a whitelie linn o licht  
upo yer shouther  
wad glent, an gramarie  
kep us as in a net  
o passion quate

stievelie saft lass  
 Ah haud ye sauf conter ma breist  
 an by yer bodie's set  
 rander released  
 acause ye cling tae me  
 Ah'm dookit in a sea sae patientfu  
 an throu yer hair  
 Ah fleet, lik ower tidless seas  
 till gloamin lans  
 an streak oot blithelie in a mossie brae  
 an, oh, yer hans  
 sall haud me up an Ah, still tremmelin  
 oh hushie-ba

a thoosan million sperm  
 tae mak ane man  
 a thoosan million men  
 tae mak ane Man.

*("millions o wimmen bring forth in pain  
 millions o bairns that are no worth haen")*

the nicht is smoorin me  
 o luve o mine!  
 this norie tempin me  
 fluther o skirts an taislin queet  
 lichtsme bunce o breisties neat  
 young twosome dand'rin han-in-han  
 here in the mirk Ah lang tae lie  
 ma han upon a fair firm thigh  
 — bit that thigh yours!

*Les Sylphides* on the gramophone  
 wearie, Ah switch it aff  
 wi'oot ye, muisic haes nae chairm  
 muisic fur me's a common joy  
 that jines us in a mutual plesure.  
 'ee day the muisic daesna lift  
 an poems are juist taiglesome,  
 wirds seem tae hae nae meanin.  
 whit wey is it that ye alane upsteer me?  
 whit wey Ah ken sic fainness syne yer near me?  
 the warld is fu o weemen at are wullint...  
 bit ma hert langs alane fur ye  
 an raxes oot tae ye in mauchtlessness!

an wi ma kiss  
 apen untae ma graith



we shall fulfil the Purpose

the Purpose will consume us

## VI

On aa this brawness these bleck eemoocks drite  
     An roon aa wunner they bigg up a waa  
 O glaur bricks. Hairie bogle airms  
     Sclavishlie polis still the auncient cants  
 Manipulatit by the skelet banes  
     O gracie pomp. An oor race-mind  
 They splore, acause mair fleshlie baists  
     Maist fear the flesh, maist prize  
 The gizzen testament o locusts.  
     Entrapment o the *logos*! How it airts  
 The hairns, aamaist afore the birth, acause  
     The faither airts it gin the curse obtains,  
 An rottenness beirs rot an fausitie.  
     Oot o the wuid in croose upgangin flicht  
 A capernicious sherp-cleuk't gled snokes roon,  
     An here a saurian heid breks throu the scrogs  
 An shaws the blads an stimes the lownie grun,  
     The fossil baist busk't oot wi priestlie stole.  
 Nae fit can haillie ding the eemoocks pooer  
     An grush their moond, bit scrimpit they can be;  
 An shairlie we can fauld the ugsome bruit  
     Wi'in the mythic clift as in a buik.  
 Whit wey? — till yince the seilie rose  
     Can blume whaur noo the snaw blaws whinnerin;  
 Till corn can growe whaur yit is mirkie scrog  
     An foost, an gullion, an rottenness.  
 Freit's haun is ivver present, aye, an strang  
     An ilka seed, kirk-reckit may tak ruit  
 It saws its tares abreed in aa oor perks.  
     Hoo muckle hert-scaud fae the mairriage-bed  
 Is gart by thae wi beams wi'in thair een.  
     In name o the eternal, hoo oor hauns  
 Are bund by the victorious sleekit gland!  
     Gin we bit read the tempin blads o pooer  
 Aefauld, athoot faut o forgettin,  
     A twafauld stannert of its focusin,  
 Arreddies forewird til yince seelent planet.  
     We are puir fetuses awaitin birth,  
 In idleset afore the wrack of aa.  
     Lik forkie-tails an shaddaes of the daw,  
 We wait alane fir whit is knackie new.

Yit ivver brichtlie burns an glints the sperk.

## VII

langsyne Ah wis sae blithe tae leuk  
doon ow'r the Mars-lik Persian bens  
(ah, whence the ecstatic joy that lens  
sic inspiration tae life's beuk?)

— e'en Galileo Galilei  
haed tae renunce it an gainsay  
bit the thrawn licht o trowth aye burns  
*eppur si muove*: still it turns!

soor saftness o the gloaming-fa  
a nicht club there in Kermanshah  
it passed — whit like? — like meltin sna —  
Ah didna syne tak tent o't, ah!

youthfu Ah nivver raelie wis  
— or ower late Ah fund in truth  
ma kin o life noo as it is  
has nocht ava tae dae wi youth

— it's stryng a genius suid strive  
unwicelike, thrawnlie, step by step  
wi thochts (afore thair times arrive)  
the warld wull onlie late accep —

accordion, *Plaisir d'Amour*  
terrace café, mock alabaster  
a fleetin oor o pleasure, fur  
Ah wis ow'r slaw an she wis faster...

an suid Ah rue sic oors o madness  
whan time, that pauchlin warlock chiel  
wi his cicada chirp an dreel  
brings tae aa joy a shade o sadness?

bit juist whan aa seems rael

— comes crabbit auld authoritie  
an pits its ain offeecial seal  
upon the accepit veritie

an sae the saicants rin,  
a transitorie blink  
atween-hans dees the Sin;  
we canna see a link

eithlie auld billies meet  
 fur *Noo* alane is rael  
 oor-efter-oor gaes past  
 an draws a kivv'rin veil

ma mental album syne  
 hauds picters auld an new  
 dis yours compare wi mine  
 Reb, Hilda, Clare or Hugh?

— whit airlier wis descried  
 disna aye bide the same  
 yit some are deified —

an aa these passin oors o luve  
 gang on their wey as yince they cam:  
 ilk unalike, itsel complete;  
 a thoosan perish in a dwam  
 an ane abides, a contrafeit.

aa the five senses i the morn  
 hae little memorie ye'll find  
 chance rules the lives of aa that's born  
 chance is the censor o the mind

waffs o saun an petrol-savour —  
 gie's mair muisic! frae the tap!  
 haddie gusts an brandy flavour  
 Betelgeuse an ettercap.

## VIII

It's lanesome tae loe a norie  
 at the boddam o the ocean  
 the wechtie kirk o the mirkie watter  
 cauld  
 stieve  
 Whit wey dae fowk nae return ma luve  
 whit wey dae ye no tak tae me?  
 tae trew alane  
 agin the feck —  
 this is eith  
 bit e'en agin yer luved anes?  
 Shalled onbeasts o the deeps

## Forbeirs

hunger disna fash ye  
 bit this warld seelent an unkent  
 caas me pechin, feshin, wuid

t  
 r  
 a  
 w  
 p  
 u

till the fremmit weet craigs  
 an the deein cluds  
 an a seilie quatelik bairn

blin blin

lees!

Ah disremember the cactus clud o Hiroshima  
 Ah wiss anerlie fur wark, weemen an ploys  
 Ah lairn juist auntern facks, foryet a lump,  
 Ah chuse anerlie whit's eith  
 an hantie  
 chosen by ithers fur ma wittin  
 bit dinna swither tae decide, jeedge an doom  
 gin this is dwangit by the circumstance  
 Ah am, afore aathing, maist cannie.

oor hairns are ower sma  
 whit wey dae Ah need these sabre teeth?  
 fur Ah nae langer wiss tae snack ma fae  
 In the wuid oor  
 whan the muckle fit  
 derns the mirkie lift  
 syne Ah sall keep mind o't  
 bit ower late  
 an efterwairds  
 agane the lift enteecees

blin hunger, blin sawin-o-seed blinlie

the shallie onbeast murtherouslie shaks  
 seelentlie  
 a ginnled victim straiks aff instinctivelie, lichtlesslie  
 an the timeless primal track o the sea deeps  
 bides  
 the Purpose noo consumes us

bit yince a nivver isolatin norie  
 pumped the sap  
 an whiles

it bides

gin Ah dinna feel the weet upo ma chaffs  
 it isna there  
 we ken anerlie ane chiel an dinna unnerstaun

aa by a perr o een, aa  
 fur aye by ten finger-ens anerlie  
 an yer howe loins  
 wur born fur ma tig  
 they deed  
 whan the nicht stecked ma een

c u s    s a    j w    w n    m n  
 l d    w w    o e    u d    a

(clud)    (swaw)    (jowe)    (wund)    (man)

cry 'hap!' an Ah lowp  
 wi'oot doot Ah am wice  
 wice an, afore aa, cannie  
 fur Ah wis telt Ah wis  
 an Ah'm siccar at the warld is flet  
 wi ma ain een Ah hae seen that,

an gin it birlid Ah wad shairlie faa aff intae space  
 The leevin skin hoatches wi sma wirms  
     We are the unquate baist  
 The yella an bleck warld o the giants  
 Daws soondlesslie — an e'en the atom bomb  
     disna chynge the contours o the yird  
 They canna gie's the wyte fur oor sins of failzie  
     oor hairns haud nocht bit us  
 an we are ower smaa, ower smaa  
 In the hindermaist wuid oor  
     whan skelfs o gless rive breists  
     whan bauks are fed tae Fire  
     whan wirms stert tae cowl  
 Ah am the warld. Anerlie ma hairns torment  
 The Sin terrs apairt the nerves  
     whan daith steeks  
     ma een  
 the warld dees  
     bit the Purpose

bides

an lochs lichlie slaik the sheddowie banks  
 an are nae mair whan human lugs are wintin  
     the wechtie stoon o watter  
     caud  
     unmuvin  
 bit a blin Purpose

## IX

*“...the time-lenth atween Sargon the First  
 an Alexander the Gret  
 is as lang as that atween Alexander the Gret  
 an noo, an juist as lang  
 afore Sargon the First  
 men bode in tents  
 aneath a Sumerian king  
 practeesin releegion  
 an tillin the sile*

*as eftercast:*

*ye can threap  
 that hauf as lang as ceevilisation haes lastit  
 an the checks tae aa its grettest institutions  
 are tae be fund afore Sargon the First”.*

*“Whan a certaint nummer of units  
 o hydrogen an oxygen  
 jine thegither  
 they enteece yin anither wi’oot infit fae outside  
 an watter is makkit. Ye needna jalouse  
 there’s onie ‘watter-sel’  
 that wisses tae combine the twa elements  
 an tae mak itsel oot o thaim”.*

*“...a when paradoxicallie, the daith penaltie aiblins,  
 insteid o frichtenin ithers  
 gars them gang the siclike wey.”*

Wong Su-Ling: *“Whan Ah began tae lairn the Inglis leid  
 Ah wis taucht  
 ‘the cat saw the rat’.  
 Ah mindit the rames that Ah lairt  
 on ma first day at oor faimilie scuil:  
 ‘human naitur is essentialie guid’.  
 Inglis education seems less philosophical’.*

An aboot the eliding o a Mormon neibourheid:  
*“In this clachan the bairns hae better scuilin  
 an are aye faur mair mensefu  
 nor maist American bairns. Maugre puirtith  
 they are strang an reid-chowkit.  
 Halth offeecials fairlie awn*



*at there is nae raison  
tae compleen about the bodilie or emotional tift o the fowk.  
They were thochtit anerlie about the moral question”.*

*“Naither the Catholic kirk  
nor the Sassenach incomers intae Ireland  
cuid hash the halthie haunts o the auld nobilitie  
in Ulster whaur  
in the reing of Elizabeth  
the gret O’Cane hissel  
wha spak Latin as weel as his ain leid  
welcomed a Bohemian thane  
tae the haa o his Muckle Hoose  
whaur he an his leddies war sittin in the scud  
an he bade the blate an sweirt ootrel  
tae tirr an mak hissel at hame”.*

*”Gin ane lichts on a doctrine, a norie, or onie ither  
daftness  
he suid tak tent  
that ye arnae aye lichtin on the chiel  
or lat us say ‘the foonder’  
tae wham it is evened  
or wham ye gie the wyte.  
It may weel be that ane is fechtin agin  
the same daftness  
that he wes fechtin agin  
an that his fallowers fell awa  
acause of idleset  
or daftness  
or juist acause they  
(an/ or he)  
tak mair tent o anither aim  
fir example, some ill o the time  
belyve wintin a cuir.  
Biggars o fleet dykes  
arnae aye agin watterin the craps”.*

*“A Christian  
wha peeties a freethinker  
fur his wint o releegion  
is lik a chiel  
wi a plouk on his craig  
wha wunners  
hoo anither can leeve wi ’oot feesick”.*

*“The studie o conic liths wis thocht oot by Menachmus*

*a collegianer o Plato  
 around 350 A.D.  
 an it wis perfittet  
 by Apollonius an Pappus.  
 For a thousand an echtie year it malmed.  
 Efterwards wis born Kepler whas laas about planetarie  
 muvement  
 led till Newton's theorie of gravitation  
 an the hail o heivenlie mechanics is expressit  
 by conic liths.  
 In this wey the lang-deid seekers o  
 yuiseless  
 wittins  
 war, in 1609, the kimmers at the howdiein  
 o modern cosmologie".*

*The lowe at cam oot o the tap o Ben Mosiklos  
 on the Isle of Lemnos  
 wis leetit by auld srievers  
 tae wham it wis a haithen ferlie  
 They kent fu weel at it cam frae a volcano  
 bit they wirshipped it as a goad  
 juist as fir monie a year some Parsees  
 wirshipped as a goad  
 the firie columns  
 on the muckle ile-fields o Baku..."*

*"...an the checks tae aa its institutions  
 are tae be fund afore Sargon the First".*

25

X

forming o the Yird

ootcome o Life

Sargon  
Alexander  
Zamenhof

## XI

Her wame noo kythes a braird an we salute  
a bairn! Oor strind is wintin a recruit!

Noo Ah hae forged a link an sae hae eiked  
a tait tae that waik chyne – that seam that steiked  
the strind thegither, leadin whence or whaur?

(Oor cuttie oor — we canna ken hoo faur.

Hail, peerie strynger! (Ah'm a strynger tae —  
Ye'll think me aivven strynger still some day,  
ma bairn Ah wait fur fondlie an sall set  
ye on life's pad wi joy an wi regret...)

We gat ye, bairnie, in blin passion's acks

(a saicant's seedin time: that's aa it taks)  
an blinlie ye'll gang on, whaur? Wha can tell?  
tae unkent deeds, tae hunker or rebel.

Ye'll forge yer ain chynes, trewin whit ye wull;  
mak o this fremmit life a kirk or mull.

An lat me, bairn, (fur efter ye'll refuse)  
draa fur ye noo the map ye'll hae tae yuise  
tae guide yer peerie fit — an sae tae gie  
some wechtie coonsels that wur gien tae me.

Ah'll yuise the tid Ah hae tae drag ma hairns  
fur wice advice that faithers gie tae bairns;  
tho nane lairn frae their dad's expairience  
an pawrents hae nae total claim tae mense,  
bit ilka faither wints tae help his sin  
an here's a twa-fauld kinch that aye concerns:  
Whit frae his elders is it that he lairns?

*Nivver think that ye are ayewise richt*

*Bit ithers' hairns, lik yours, are nae sae bricht.*

(An Ah masel? Unskeelie tae. Sae wha Ah'm Ah  
tae gie advice? Nor am Ah wice.

This gars me grue.) Maments chynge aa  
fur ilka chiel: raison fur grief?

Whit kinna warld is this? Ah'll nivver ken,  
an ow'r the bar o time Ah'll lairn ye, Lief,  
vainlie or nae; tae guide ye ilka wey,  
altho Ah fear Ah may guide ye agley.

Wull it help gin Ah tell aboot masel?

Wull ye lairn oniething frae whit Ah tell

o ma mischanters, sae ye'll nae repeat

whit Ah did wrang — bit ither pitfaas threit!

Ilka chiel maks his ain warld in his heid  
 an haes tae gang whaur his jalousins lead.  
 There's naethin we can haillie unnerstan.  
 Ah gied ye life an that's hoo it began.

(Did yer ain seismographs, Rab, Peter, Clare,  
 record this quake, an tell me, wur ye there?)  
 Forgie me, bairn. Ah'm nae shair whit tae say:  
 wirdless, unkennin — aiblins longsome tae —  
 come tae ma airms; Ah'll shiel ye aa Ah can  
 till ye can fin yer ain gate as a man.

(Throu the Neolithic wuids something gies an eldritch  
 cry  
 a *Daw Man* staps an swithers, an syne gaes on his wey.  
 There are nae mair muckle saurians, bit the speerits o  
 the wuid  
 are jeelous o man's owerance an aa the things he did.)

We hae fulfilled the Purpose. The lift is fou o reek.  
 Man's life is bit an instant, a glimmerin, a peek,  
 a strang bit bruckle link in a chyne whas final en  
 he disna see but kythes as a weird he canna ken.  
 Ootwale o cosmic accident, by chance an mischance fund  
 On this smaa Yird, an ess skailed by a freestie wund...  
 Whit wis a bud at morn is wede awa at een;  
 Ye an Ah maun dee, bit the human strind abides.  
 Tombstanes an cloacks can lee in whit they tell anent;  
 instinct mislears an hides

Instincts an airgument.

Newell wis wrang: e'en a strangazer's hairns  
 canna conteen the Universe entire  
 (a braw concept, ma freens, bit nae precise)  
 Life is a Golgotha. Twa corses  
 In trowth, ane is eneuch

*Plus ça change*

SAL BER YON ROSH  
 the mornin streeches oot on caller yird  
 an a fine veil upo the mairriage bed  
*plus c'est la même chose*

the craig waas tremmle an a flude breks throu  
 watter in scriddans rairin throu the nick  
 it thraws gret stanes an faems  
 an terrs up trees  
 gin ye are blindit by yer fear an flee  
 ye droon still sheetin at the waxin muin  
 bit gin ye staun an fecht wi caller heid  
 shin wull the scriddan bleck be calm  
 the watter quate  
 an the new yird guid an growthie be

in this glen ye sall fin fresh fields  
 smeddum an clair hairns  
 ye sall fin saut an berries

'an whusperin around the banes the saun  
 beds doon same as a deid-kist liggs'

fur thirteen year he grew an syne inheritit  
 a kinrick: Deligum Bulduk wis the steid, nar tae Onono  
 straucht he haed tae fecht agin his faes  
 aye bore the gree, aiven agin the michtie Wang  
 (efter a desert year, a towmond i the desert)  
 gaithered an airmie, bate the michtie Wang

an by the Turkish Uigurs he wis gien  
 an alphabet an nories o ceevilisation

efter he refused tribute tae the king of Kin  
 bleck tents an reek o reid fires  
 dancing an bressie soun o bells an cymbals  
 reek hides the lift  
 yowls, the drummin o pownies huifs, bluid  
 gells rive the lift dunts dunts

virgins mane in ootrel airms  
 guff o rancid creesh  
 an i the morning  
 they saidled the pownies o the steppes an walloped aff

Otrar surrendered an the fallowin year  
 Sikhnak, Khoyend, Bukhara, Samarkand

reek hides the lift

an frae the brennin toor upo the citadel  
 she slunged doon wi her bairns intill the oon  
 an aa wur brunt wi'in that hell fur aye  
 an still they brenn fur aye in the inferno  
*an ivverie saul sall brenn bit oor ain sect*

five million fowk deed in that weir  
 an virgins maned in ootrel airms  
 an yit they didna wiss tae gang till heiven  
 Three year lang the pest afflickit the lan  
 an hauf o the indwellers didna gang till heiven  
 acause the richt observancies wur wintin

(cowmon graffs)

a yalla fowk frae sooth o Loch Baikal

the win skails the brakkins o brave pownies  
 the saun skails the banes o gallus pownies  
 yalla sins o Adam frae sooth o Lock Baikal  
 acause o this the sinful amoeba split  
 a bleck panther litherlie slaiks her spyogg  
 a frainesie aneath a ledder tent begets  
 pyne, mane, bruitaltie an frainesie

an efterhin?

oh Mimi, Mimi  
 deid o consumption  
 pyne an dool purifies?

pyne an dool crucifies  
 twa corses

life is bit a glimmer

## XIII

God is unco,  
 sae we canna define him.  
 God is unco,  
 sae he disna loot tae dale personallie  
 wi atoms cried human chiels..  
 Tae lat growe oor genius an oor luve:  
 this alane is the true releegion.  
 Oor feth:  
 the perfectabilitie o human chiels.

God means king,  
 releegion is rule,  
 dogmas are a code,  
 priests are polis,  
 gaugers aa;  
 fowk kneel  
 an sing saums i the kirk  
 juist as savages  
 boo doon afore a throne.

...in the saicant centurie  
 the Christians i Judea,  
 wha leallie fallowed  
 the haunts an creed  
 o the twal apostles  
 wur telt that they wur  
 heretics.

There is bit ane God.  
 He is wraithfu wi human chiels  
 acause he creatit thaim.  
 He sent his ain bairn  
 til a cunye o Syria;  
 acause o the murther o his sin  
 his wraith wis slockit.  
 He wullna torment for aye  
 ilka saul he creatit,  
 he pardons ane  
 in ilka million.  
 Heivenlie King!  
 Tirran o the Heidmaist!

He is michtie in ilka wey,



he maks weir agin the tap-thrawn  
he is lenient in ivverie wey,

sae that he aloos sauls o men  
tae be led agley.

An he sayed:  
a fechter fur justice  
wha wints tae leeve a bittie  
maun bather hissell  
wi nocht bit private weys  
an nae tig poleetical maitters.  
Farder he says:  
gin ye think  
at murtherin fowk  
will pit a stap tae heckling  
acause o yer ill-daein,  
something is wintin in yer pooers o raisonin.

## XIV

We, padfinders o the spaceweys  
 Fin nae check. Oor atom-pooert ship  
 Speeds lik an arra at the raik o licht  
 Throu the vast cosmos till anither sin.  
 Fur us, day disna fallow nicht, an nicht  
 Fallows nae day, an ootby, nicht's unendin.  
 Inby, electric licht wad mimic day  
 Enless, wi'oot beginning. Calendars  
 Knocks an sleep tine thair meanin.  
 We sallna see the Purpose, we are mortal.  
 Whan oor bairns in anither orbit  
 Airt the ship that is noo the world  
 Fur us, orphants fae oor Sin's seestem.  
 Wuiddrim? It is. Bit we are drien  
 By torment of unanswered speirins whilk  
 Maun hae an answer. An the need aye caas us  
 The need o growein, hungry, gowstie Man  
 Gilravagin lik locusts planets haill.  
 We flicht an hunt, we caa an we are caad.  
 We socht fur heiven, bit we fin that heiven  
 Is haillie tuim, an yit it's fou forby.  
 By oor ain daith oor bairnies wull can leeve:  
 We sallna see the Purpose; we'll fulfil hit.

There wis a sea strand, lightsome croonin o the swaws  
 Same as faur aff. White grains o saun  
 Clang tae ma fit, smaa bairnie's fit  
 Saut barkened ma peerie shams.  
 Watter filled the steids o ma fit.  
 Naethin spiled ma aesome immunitie.  
 Lown happit the geo lik a mantie.  
 Ah played ma lane, a poochle lad.  
 Craigs hove heich inby the strand.  
 The white saun glintit till the easins  
 Lichtlie drumlie, whaur the sea is lyart:  
 Ayont liggs Canada, we war telt  
 Yince? Whan? Afore, or ense ahint the haun?  
 Ayont liggs Ithaca. Saft simmers  
 O ilk man's bairnheid, eternal gait's-hair cluds!  
 Still an on, shameful maments arna wintin:  
 'Whit', speirt a saft-vice Gael,  
 in the shap, on a quate efternuin,  
 'D'ye cry in English whit a wifie haes  
 doon here?' Bit chancie ma uncle cam along

An Ah mind hoo, on that hoaliday Ah smuikit  
Ma first cigarette. Whit gart me dae't?

Bit still the sea murmells, an the lad alane  
Plays quate an poochle by the watterside.

Ootby swither the starns. As swith an licht  
We erch athort the vastness, bit we kythe  
Unmuvin on a warld smaa as a mote o stour,  
Whaur time, a human norie is nae mair.

## XV

Wae! The toon yett has faan – rin, oh rin!  
 (Wha sall we rin? — oh, oniegate, bit rin!  
 Mirksome nicht, mous gaup dumfoonert,  
 dreid reings an ilka bodie's dounert.  
 Fowk creenge in wanhowp at the sicht:  
 Oor faes hae treden doon the moond,  
 an emocks flichtin aa aroond!

Noo by the faaen yett the faes abound  
 an cadgilie they stug, an rung, an wound  
 Owrehand! Roarie wi the steuch o bluid,  
 thair triumph can bit ser tae mak them wuid:  
 thair fae noo pit tae flicht — thair pooer  
 growes o itsel frae oor tae awfu oor.  
 Forrit! 'E-nicht yer lusts wull aa be sated,  
 wowfs o the warld, in ilka kintra hated!

Weemin fowk creenge, aa boakin in thair dreid,  
 men ban, noo hummled an wi'oot a Heid,  
 the mothers greet, thair bairnies tae in tears  
 in victorie the wile pursuer cheers.  
 Noo in the kirks they pray in vain,  
 they tremmle, yammer, murn the slain.  
 Caunles brenn oot; daith wull reenge wide  
 Sauf kittle fortoun turn the tide!

They broach the barrels, waucht lik swine,  
 frae ilka hogget teems the wine;  
 the ragin fire rairs an riles  
 lichtenin faces bleck coom fyles.  
 Ma feres, awa! Tak aa yer full!  
 Ye're free tae dae whit-e'er ye wull  
 Hoo suid we spare onfriend or fae?  
 Gin they haed wan, they'd hash us tae!

Weemin they hunt an sair abuisse,  
 the boukit abort that yince were croose,  
 they terr the bairnies frae their mothers;  
 some they impale an brenn the ithers.  
 Nane dee belyve, an torter rives,  
 In pyne they maun gie up their lives.  
 Faes fyle an drite inby the sanctuarie  
 (an i the morn, thank Goad for victorie).

Syne comes the daw an revelation  
 brolach an hellish desolation.  
 The victors snirt, thair lusts aa sated,  
 tae wauk mair sober, less elated.  
 Dae ye feel hit? Is it owre muckle?

Dae ye keep mind o't, fuil-like chiel?  
 An are ye scunnert at the ruckle?

*An aa o this a thoosan times, an in a  
 thoosan steids...*

Ah think about yon gate frae Nagasaki  
 whaur sprauchled feegurs, fleed o skin, reptilian,  
 nae langer tae be kent ava.  
 That mament didna chynge a thing fur guid.  
 Ah think o aa the fowk rife tae repeat it,  
 in name o trowth, or guid, or souch,  
 that awfu mament whan they wede awa  
 sae monie of oor brithers, falla-craiturs

Man is a bairn  
 an lik a bairn can see  
 anerlie that whilk liggs  
 afore his ee.

A younker he  
 an lik a bairn he unnerstauns  
 anerlie that whilk comes  
 frae oot his ain expairience.

Man is a bairn  
 Wrang-heided, fremmit, baffling  
 An whan at lenth he unnerstauns  
 he syne is bit a hafflin.

Dee than an damn thaim aa!

It's amaist frichtsomes hoo the thocht is seeded  
 afore mankind can see that it is needed,  
 that ane man's hairns can redd a human kinch  
 afore that ither chiels hae felt the pinch —  
 that, in a wurd, a graith is there tae hand  
 albeit they hivna thocht o hit or planned,  
 sae that juist at the mament whan it's winted,  
 belyve the warld can ken the answer's fand.

Is there a murlin, than, o howp in this?

SAL BER YON ROSH  
 the Purpose

rife

## XVI

*Dost thou think because thou art virtuous  
There shall be no more cakes and ale?*

*timor mortis tuae conturbat me*

The priests cam furth wi pomp an ceremonie,  
plumes fanfares, incense, prayers, sacrifice  
an afore the crood they carried oot the rites  
suitable fur that feast  
fur a halie day  
in the Tron they smatter  
the heids of a heretic wha didna trew  
that the yird wis flet  
the priests appruvit  
kennin weel that (still on) the yird wis roond  
ESPERANTO is semple, tongie an aa:  
*'Ah haed been gled syne Ah haed fund oot that it haed  
been owerset till Esperanto'*  
Aye, e'en the *kara lingvo* can be mogert  
Efter the weir, he cam back tae Warsaw,  
didna see his faimilie onie mair,  
fand easedom by owersettin the national epic,  
  
an likelie fell deid afore a buikshap winnock.

IT IS TO BE FUND AFORE SARGON THE FIRST

*(They wull licht on ye, o ma sangs  
e'en Catholings wull turn Protestangs!)*

The meenister speirt whit the buik cost.  
They telt him ten geenies:  
'Syne thon buik wulna steer up a revolution'.

*Noo Ah am grown manmuckle, Ah am throu wi aathing  
bairnlie —*  
— a richt fauseheid for that pairt o the scriever  
Twa thoosan towmond efter Christ  
(fower thoosan efter Sargon)  
twal million fowk wis murdered  
by gas in concentration camps

the warld is auld?

expairience teaches?  
 ...bit in anither universe anither neb  
 neezes frae the selsame caud.

Incest is gey awfu – WHIT WEY?  
 A corp is fyled. Plaints – WHIT WEY?  
 Siller becomes the ell-wand – WHIT WEY?

the rebrobates are kent by thair lood lauchter.

A licht win boos the whyte, the Sin is het,  
 ahint a caller wuid dovers ower  
 around a knowe, aside a wimplin watter  
 Starn, symbol o howp  
 Green as whyte!

O lown warld whaur man maks nae knack  
 O bonnie warld at Man wad wrack

pest o the universe  
 bacteria o the cosmic organism!

## XVII

Ah am baith ettercap an flee  
 hunt masel in ma hairns, ye see  
 bit Ah masel throu bootch absurd  
 hide ayont *nem-* an *daein-wird*

Ah brocht ye nocht bit shame an pyne  
                   ye maun forgie;  
 Ah loo ye, bit the faut wis mine  
                   Ah didna see.  
 Ye dramed o me, bit Ah didna fulfil  
                   Ah did ye ill  
 insteid o that Ah sat an typed ma verse  
 in an unkent an airtie-fairtie leid  
                   forgie the deed  
           Gin Ah cuid anerlie, afore ma daith,  
           kaim ma hair, sing a deein sang!  
 Bit lat us birl, fur savage is the dance:  
           Ah wiss tae leeve on till the en o weir...  
 Ah grumphit in the mirk o China's clifts.  
 Lang efter that —  
           Ah swattit 'neath the het Egyptian sin  
           Ah ett an dritit an Ah mowed  
           an sortit aa the mistaks o the goads  
           ...an whit wis afore that  
           afterwards, wis unkent...  
 leein a hairnpan on the desert saun.

*Thochts o a dug*, an Ah masel a hound;  
 it is owre late noo tae forthink the wound  
 the stickin wound that felled ye in a saicant.  
 Bit, ach, ye dinna ken, an yit Ah canna  
 tell ye, an noo Ah can bit trauchle on;  
 Ah am masel, juist as the saun is saun.

An aa ma life Ah haed tae shuil the coal  
 tae stoke a furnace in a laich-room ben  
 a biggin, bit whit aa the graith was fur  
 Ah dinna ken, an dinna wiss tae ken



banes  
 sea  
 gains  
 fee  
 pest  
 clowe  
 baist  
 lowe  
 mowe

Wi'oot ye, ilka day drags dreichlie on,  
*Orion* goams me whan the day is duin  
 seein at noo Ah'm scantlins hauf a mon:  
 oh, ma hert's lief, Ah loe ye wuidlie, blin  
*It is my lady; Oh it is my love* —  
 ow'r semple fur this puir cell combination:  
 oh, hoo an whaur can Ah fin consolation?  
 In yer airms onlie, 'neath the peetyin muin...

The roonaboot o life birls gytlie on  
 warkin tae aet, an aetin fur tae wark:  
 aim of oor mixer-maxter culture's strife —  
 race propagation, individual life.

## XVIII

It isna feth alane. The facks uphaud it.  
 A leid is a phenomenon of whit  
 we cry societie. Makin an audit  
 we see it chynges aa the sicht of it.

Oor age isna yit maumie, an the need  
 is felt by some, an need begets a plan  
 tae dale wi it, an this is whaur the leid  
 comes in. Fur he wha wisses shairlie can.

Sae, whill the need is there, there is a leem  
 (“nae juist in future time”) tae mak a lowp —  
 na, aiblins Ah’ll tak pairt in sic a scheme.  
 This is an augurie, mair nor a howp.

He kent, o coorse: “efter a thousand year” —  
*ars longa... aye, bit vita’s brevis*;  
 it lasts as lang’s a single tear  
 or simmer snaw on heich Ben Nevis.

The drame is aa. Smeddum forby  
 fur nane bit bauld chiels hae sic veesions.  
 Thoosans wull faa, tho, by the wey  
 by dailie thrang an indecisions.

He kent. By his persistent mind  
 An by his feth, he muved a ben.  
 A ferlie? Na, the facks combined:  
 the *noo* becam the future then.

“...efter it wis nae mair the same” —  
 maenin of orra chiels an cranks,  
 the last defiance kythed tae daith  
 (faur quack o deuks on river banks).

An in thae dreich daurk days in weirtime Warsaw  
 he didna ken this, nor gin it wad last  
 it’s ower late tae curse the corse ye foresaw  
 or murn yer weird whan yince the die is cast.

The factors coincided, fur example,  
 the *Proverbaro*. An by seilie chance,  
 detailed an shair, an maist of aa, sae semple  
 the saxteen rules alooin free advance

Maun *rigor vitae* aye be oor oppressor? —  
 Nae wi societie in need an fain.  
 Whitivver can bring seil tae a successor  
 isna a ploy tae pass the time yer lane.

That whilk inby a faimilie binds, an orders  
 a million tribes an clans tae function,  
 linkin an biggin brigs athort aa borders,  
 growein by dint o product an consumption

wull mak us ane; oor orphant leid empower  
 an nivver dee, despite miscaa or ban,  
 whuther or nae it win the hail warld ower,  
 whill man seeks unnerstaunin still wi man.

Human naitur...yuisseless knawin,  
 hauf jaloused, bit distantlie...  
*Alea iacta*, nae mair blawin,  
 On we gang persistentlie.

Syrian taverner's wife, hir hair bund up wi a trappin  
 skeelie an liltinlie birlin, lichtsomelie bleezit an randie  
 knickin a castanet stot, sweyin in rhythm hir hurdies.  
 See, in the tavern, reek-smoorit, she knacks wi her elbucks.  
 Whit daes it profit tae traipse throu the stour i the simmer,  
 whan ye can drouthily drink, upo yer *triclinium* liggin?  
 Glesses an tassies an stowps, aye, an roses an fluting,  
 here is a douth caller bour wi a ruif that is woven o rashes.  
 As in Pan's grotto is heard the soon of a chaunter played sweetlie,  
 trillin wi skeel an wi airt the muisic o kintraside custom.  
 Wines licht an caller are here, drawn frae the roset-lined barrel;  
 Nearaboot murmells a burn and splairges its wimplin watter.  
 An ye wull fin here as weel garlands o saffron an violet,  
 roses an melicot flooers, aa interwoven in chaplets,  
 white watter-lilies forby, poud frae the virginal river,  
 brocht in a green widdie basket, shairlie a gift frae Achelous.  
 Here, tae, are crowdie an kebbocks, dried oot in happers an murlins,  
 ploom that are maumie an sweet efter the hairst's leesome wather,  
 nits frae the heich chessie tree, an reid aipples, lightsome an gustie;  
 here is the kinrick o *Bacchus*, *Ceres* an yon younker *Cupid*.  
 Ye can hae bunches o grapes an mulberries, bluid-reid an juicie,  
 Yalla-green cucumbers hing, maumie i rash-plettit netting.  
 See here the gaird o the bour, airmed wi a willie-wuid sickle,  
 frichtenin naebodie here, in spite o the lenth o his pintle.  
 Come inby, traiveller, than! See hoo yer puir cuddie's swattin:  
 peetie him, man, fur the cuddies are loed by the goddess!  
 Noo in the daurk o the wuids, lug-smatterin sing the cicadas;  
 an seekin cuilness an scug, the heather-ask hides i the brammles.  
 Ye wad be wice tae slacken an droon yer drouth in a wine-gless —  
 onless ye're content juist tae leuk at the wine in a tassie o kirstal!  
 Trowth, it is couthie tae rist aneath the vine brainches an greenwuid,  
 binin a garland o roses roond yer sleep-hevvie heid noo,  
 an frae a reid-lippit lassie raep a hervest o douce scentit kisses!  
 (An dang tae the kirk-reekit bigot wi a froon on his daurk-loorin broo!)  
 Whit thinks wull cinnars an ess gie fur chaplets o flooers?  
 Or wad ye bedeck the lairstanes wi garlands o roses?  
 Sae rax me the wine an the dice! Perish the thocht o the morrow::  
 Daith pinches yer lug as he whuspers: "Leeve noo, till Ah come".

*HOC FECIT VERGILIUS.*

## XX

Frae aa ma sneist comes seil,  
 Fur what dreids whit he can miscaa?  
 (Ah mint at the seestem, the hail seestem.)  
 We maun hain it, wairn the hie heid yins —  
 An ye can ayeweys fin a better.  
 Ah'm, a guid an eydent ceetizen  
 (Ah leuk upon aa the warld as ma pairish)  
 Sae Ah hae a richt tae ilka privilege  
 Tae fill ma hame wi aa kin o guids  
 (Ah'm enteetled tae a hoose forby)  
 Fou stap. The en.  
 Ah dinna unnerstaun hoo tae splairge siller.  
 Tae splairge siller — oot the windae!  
 Ah'd mak a laa agin splairgin siller.

Atween-haund Ah misca aa an Ah'm cantie.

Siller, siller, anerlie a bogle  
*panem et circenses*, an the tribunes  
 o the fowk yince agane begunk.  
 Whit wey dae they nae studie historie?  
 Ongae is nae oncome  
 ongae is juist birlin roon  
 They dinna wiss tae leern the basic consaits.

He ettled tae convert me tae Zen-Buddhism,  
 bit he cudna pruiwe at Ah'd be better fur 't  
 (John wull belyve mind about the Indians:  
 'bit cudna pruiwe the superioritie o Christianitie')  
 Ah hae tae lauch.

Ma sang is nakit an aefault.

The goddess Aruru creatit Enkidu frae stour  
 Tae be the dooble o the weir-goad Ninurta.  
 Urizmag wis born at the boddam o the sea: a virginal  
 wumman in a heich toor bore Batradz.  
 In a steel sark stauns the sin o Sigmund,  
 he is hauf a day auld: the day daws  
 his een brenn, gleg as an eydent chiel  
 he is a freen o wowfs; he hoochs fur joy.  
 Enkidu stappit the door wi his fuit,  
 he didna alloo Gilgamesh tae come ben.  
 He snirtit lik a bull an warsled:

the threshwart smattered, the waas tremmled.

Alaman Bet i the hoose o Kanishaya...  
 Ma hert dwanged me, ma haund  
 An ma shairpest an brichtest swurd comploutered.

Batradz thocht deeplie:

“Ah hae strength, bit Ah wint mair,  
 mair nor a strang chiel cuid owercome.  
 Ah wad be better tae gae up intae the lift,  
 sae Ah’ll gang straucht tae Kurdalag  
 an Ah sall speir gin he wull temper me!”

He tuik the gate tae Kurdalag.

Batradz gaed tae the heivenlie smiddie.

“O heivenlie bruntie, Kurdalag.  
 kest me intae the furnace, temper me!”

“Na, dinna think it, dinna wiss it;  
 fire wull hash ye an Ah peetie ye;  
 ye hae gien pleasure monie a time tae me”.

“Na, bit Ah wint it, Kurdalag!  
 Ah ask ye, aye, Ah flecth ye, Kurdalag.  
 Temper me noo wi’ in the heivenlie oon!”

Yer fire wullna ivver mouten me!

Whit wey’re ye jamphin me, o Kurdalag?

Ach, it is longsome here inby the oon;  
 Gie me a hairp an Ah’ll divert masel”.

“Noo ye hae tempered me! It’s time tae stap!

Tak me oot swith, thraw me intil the sea!”

The heivenlie bruntie tak his turkas doon  
 an gresped the Nardakh clansman by the shank,  
 kest him belyve intil the daurk blae sea.

The sea it faemed an bibbled an it bizzed.

The watter o the sea aa stamed awa,

An on that day the sea dried up.

Thus in bodie Batradz was tempered,

His bodie chynged intae hard steel.

Anerlie his liver wasna tempered:

watter didna tig it, bit biled awa.

Whan Batradz cam oot frae the sea,  
 watter agane filled its bed..

Mind what thegither we drank mead an cleckit

Hoo we sat on a bink an blethered,

We the haa heroes of unaqual battles:

Syne we sall ken wha kythes true smeddum!

(Wha wad assess *Ogres an Pygmies* —

The thunnerin text, the ugsome comment —

Readin athin the kivers cuid

kythe misproportion aa unlauchinlie.)

La us consither the facks: a third warld weir  
in oor centurie canna be evited.

Fur tae evite it we need SOMETHIN NEW.

We hear auld parrot talk, auld *clichés*.

Ten year efter the execution, his sin cam back

An aa began agane.

Efter a weir o threttie year the tift i the lan  
steyed unchnged.

*...plus c'est la même chose*

(the CHECKS tae aa its institutions  
are tae be fund AFORE Sargon the First.)

IT CANNA BE EVITED fur they hae chynged naethin.

Wha sauf a gyte (na, aiven a bairn?)

wad pit his haund intae the same fire —

X, Y an Z, acause they trew

thair kintra's pooer tae be abuin aa.

Yit they arnae gyte.

Anerlie unkennin.

Stour, Persian stour. Aside the gate  
crulges a wifie happed in bleck, wi a wean  
aroon whas een the flees in thoosans swairm.

Tae git ocht wi'oot tyauvin

tae hae airt wi'oot warslin

that is the unweelness.

Stour an sair swither, birsle o the sin,

Ah tint a shae there, bit Ah saufed ma life.

Petrol ignited, bit the cartridges warn a set aff  
an ma billies drank ma beer.

Ah'm growein auld, fur Ah leuk back wi fondness  
tae the dry days an waff of African yird.

It hasna been pruiwed at growthe is tae be ruised.

A sculptor (as Ah hae areddie sayed) —

A sculptor gey respeckit

wis haiped wi ruise an honours:

They sayed his statues "amaist breathed"  
an "they kemp wi verra naitur"

Bit suin, mimlie an perjinklie

they damned him wi'oot mids, wi'oot quarter

acause he haed naiturallie

ootrigged a male stookie wi a pintle.



GIN there is a check, it is WHIT WEY  
 or simplie?  
 OWER NAITURAL.

He blaited: Whit reck; he is a genius,  
 aiblins he'll nivver scribe anither buik,  
 aiblins he wints siller fur booze an weemin  
 bit it is noo time tae gie tae geniuses:  
 fur we gie ower muckle tae gracie burgesses.

Lik Marduk he led a victorious onding  
 o the gods agin the goddess Tiamat  
 the Creator Goddess  
 whas emblem wis the Draigon o the Sea  
 or Columbus wha laid the Warld Egg  
 The cherubs roon the Throne o God (we dinna lairn  
 in Sawbath scuil) are warped  
 in realistically erotic lock.  
 Tae gar God kemp wi his creation  
 is blasphemous (as whan ye pray fur rain)  
 Rain?  
 — aye, an ye wad ken about rain, Nikolai!

The meenister (Conservative) ruised the rumgumption  
 o the tred-union heidsmen, tribunes o the fowk,  
 bit the warkers tuik nae tent  
 (Eternitie in a grain o saun, eh, William?)  
 the tred-union heidsmen arnae Communists  
 the tred-union heidsmen NA  
 the tred-union HEIDSmen  
 Whit wey sud Ah fash masel about poleetics?  
 Ah dinna bather masel about poleetics  
 Ah bather about the bairnheid o Man-kin.  
 Reader, the wunter turns tae hairst, blads  
 steek tae the weet causies, tae the syvers.  
 The nicht comes airtie, the warkers wark  
 till efter day-set, they canna goam the sin...  
 A smeekeit tarry-breeks sings aa oot o tuin  
 'Ah'm leukin fur  
 Ma luve...'  
 whill the bus wheeches, souchin throu the nicht.  
 ...puir begowked fowk!  
 Sindicatastrophe!  
*Thou salt hae nae ither gods afore me*  
 an at the en ye sall perish, pauchtie bairn.

Areadie the young fowk spek of a new weir,

whill the bluid's hardlins dry upon yer haunds:  
the age o God is fallowed by the age o gods,

Bombs turn the rain tae acid  
expairience lairns? —

upon yer puir grain o saun on the lip o the cosmos  
ye swairm, bacteria o the universe...

neither ye nor Ah wull leeve til manheid  
it'll tak a million year.

*Fur in muckle wit  
is muckle fasherie  
an he wha eiks wittins  
eiks dool.*

*Man disna bear the gree ower the baists  
an aiven tho a wice man awns tae ken  
he canna fin it oot.*

*Whitsomever yer haund fins tae dae  
dae it wi aa yer nicht;  
fur there is nae wark, or thocht  
or wittins or wit  
in Sheol whaur tae ye are gaein.*

***WIT IS BETTER NOR WAPPENS O WEIR  
BIT A SINNER HASHES MUCKLE GUID.***

## XXII

*le jour de gloire est arrivé*

— *pas encore, mes amis, pas encore*

An Ah wad sit aneath a chessie tree.

The white waa blinters blindinglie

ma fit stramp doon the white stour

on ma nakit rig whangs a whup,

an Ah wad sit aneath an almond tree

Ah'd drink some sherbet, hark tae muisic.

Dargin Ah sing a melodie

dowie an wi a gallous rhythm

an roupit fella-warkers sing forby

an Ah wad sit aneath a wattle tree

dautin the twa breists of an odalisque.

By nicht Ah sleep in airn chynes

an Ah wad daunder lang a blae-stane terrace.

Ah howk tin in the yird's thairms,

an ma paycocks wad parawd on the girse.

By day Ah gaird the pailace o the king

at nicht Ah'll git fou in the howff.

An ma skin is bleck, yours

kythes yalla. Bit bluid is reid,

an yer life, like mines, bleezes

fur a saicant, an a wee blaw whuffs it oot.

Hoo can the whuspers o yer luve

Even wi the wit o Plato? —

an yit ye harken tae luve's whuspers,

an ye steek yer buik wi a gant.

Ye leeve alane. An are dowie.

Ye loe. An ye pree muckle seil

Bit muckle seil is peyed fur wi muckle dool.

Ach, tae dee, tae dee alane. *Aamaist lik a dug.*

On seil wye a mither's tears

*Bit afore daith tae sing a coronach:*

They saw thair laist daw

they raise airlie, an a caller win

dautit thair flesh fur the laist time

afore the warld's en. They kaimed

thair hair, seein theirsels clairlie

in a seein-gless o quate watter,

an wi'oot a stound throu the morning lift

the Persians heard a dowie sang.

Fur thaim sic a daith haed meanin:  
 wha wadna wiss tae dee heid-heich?  
 Better it war tae leeve heid-heich.

Nor tae sit, young, e'en aneath an aik.

*Be there nae lauchlin, bours canna be minnie  
 Bee there, nae trauchlin, there can be nae hinnie*  
 (an a leid that canna play wi wirts is deid).

Reader, ma hert is hivvie:

Ah hae ma doots aboot the middle wey  
 Paycocks, flamingos an a phoenix,  
 murmellin of a burn, gowd an onyx,  
 lute-muisic played on saft-plucked ferns,  
 a quate nicht o jewelled sterns,  
 a tass o wine  
 a freend tae dine  
 an the baists snorkin in a smeekie staa.

An dinna forget the scuffie shaps,  
 thoosans o hooses, gray, alike  
 whaur win blaws throu  
 an freests besiege.

BRAIRD  
 WHYTE  
 FLOOR BRAIRD  
 BREID WHYTE  
 SHARN FLOOR BRAIRD  
 MAINNER BREID WHYTE  
 BRAIRD SHARN FLOOR BRAIRD  
 WHYTE MAINNER BREID WHYTE  
 FLOOR BRAIRD SHARN FLOOR BRAIRD  
 BREID WHYTE MAINNER BREID WHYTE  
 FLOOR BRAIRD SHARN FLOOR  
 WHYTE MANNER BREID  
 FLOOR BRAIRD SHARN  
 WHYTE MAINNER  
 BRAIRD

## XXIV

We canna see ayont the raik o licht  
 sae stentit is oor human sicht  
 Mercurie nar the Sin  
 fiery, scabbit  
 by the Sin, hard tae fin  
 blate in his habit  
 back an fore, back an fore  
 howpless an pale  
 tae gar popes plead theologie  
 oh anarchie, oh anarchie!  
 Venus clud-kivvered  
 starn o the daw  
 sister-warld swithered  
 deid as a craw  
 birlin aye birlin  
 face tae the Sin  
 cauld  
 ‘Wirds are lik blads; whaur they aboond  
 verra little fruit is foond.’  
 Yird, seeck baa!  
 Ah hae seen the Moun lowp an stot  
 Randie Muin, ye sneekit sot!  
 Deein Mars  
 (whit daes it mean?)  
 thin atmosphere  
 wurn-oot an sere;  
 wi failin hairns;  
 an slawlie the roost-reid baa  
 winks i the night  
 same as the Sin  
 war ower bricht  
 the god o weir  
 is his life duin?  
 An ayont, ayont  
 Unkensome aesomness:  
 Jupiter  
 a tenth o the Sin  
 ringed Saturn there  
 — an ayont, ayont  
 Neptune, Uranus  
 an whit afore  
 wis echt’s noo nine  
 The feenish. Or?

an ayont, ayont  
galaxie, galaxie

an God — whaur is he?

Wintin.

## XXV

Ilk an ivverie *-ologist* kens nocht bit his ain *-ologie*  
 he kens nae mair nor less o life, Goad or theologie  
 nor ithers. Gin he blaws, it's naethin bit a lee.

Oor findins are provisional, sae it haes tae be.

We are ower whippert, yit dinna reird ava  
 an lik a hirsle, rin tae whaur the sheep-dugs caa,

(an here a dug jalouses at he is sib tae man).

We are bit a symptom o whit we are tae be  
 yit we, Lairds o Creation, yince wur fushes in the sea  
 (oor forebears wicelie soomin, faur later gaed agley)  
 an the morn, or aiblins efter, wull lairn a wicer wey,  
 gin oor granchilders' childer are mair aefauld nor we...

Bit tween-haunds we jeedge aathing by oor puir shilpet  
 scale;

oor een are lik a winnock, or a showcase (or a veil?)  
 an we leuk oot, bit anerlie we see whit liggs tae haun,  
 about the things that ithers see we canna unnerstaun .

We ken hoo tae dern oor back, bit oor painch is reid an rife:  
 whan howdiein an mowin kythes mair nor cannie life.

We jig afore a lass an we boo the rig an bend  
 bit the forgin o the chyne threaps faur farder in the end  
 than the wull tae sauf oor sels (as a peesweet by her nest  
 lets on at she is cruikit whan she sees a nearhaund baist  
 that cuid reive her chucks or eggs; or a tod, inveeting daith  
 shaws hersel afore the dugs tae misguide them frae the lair  
 whaur the cubs at she has left tremmle till the danger's past.  
 Sae in his bairns alane daes the individual last.)

We leeve tae bring tae life bit, wae! It's gey upsettin  
 acause oor *Ego* feels life is mair nor mere begettin;  
 the weariness o life is a weird we hae tae dree —  
 nae answer we can fin tae the kinch onless tae flee  
 tae dogma, freit an threap, tae crueltie an  
 strouth

an slavishlie we sik – in *Christ* or *Labour*  
 – final truith

an thus, an thus, we fin a bield inby the hird,  
 we're feart tae staun alane, an we fear the mockin wird.

Ye wha'll be ma descendants — ye'll nae hae min o me  
 bit aareadie Ah maun greet fur yer weird an whit's tae be;  
 Ah ask ye tae forgie me fur gien ye existence —  
 fur Ah begat ye blinlie throu instinct's strang insistence,  
 the threapin o the Purpose at wyves the wab o life;  
 bit aye ye hae tae speir, whit purpose, hoo the strife?



(An sae, ma luve  
 here's ma puir Will  
 ma Testament  
 fur guid or ill  
 howp an torment:  
 an it's ma thocht  
 man's crueltie  
 wull come tae nocht  
 an cease tae be;  
 that raison's reing  
 wull come fur man  
 bit monie a tear  
 be shed till than:)

*Pu doon thy vanitie:* oh, wice wirds thae!  
 bit wirds can nivver sauf us; gin they cuid  
 an brave wirds free us, as trowth's pooer frees,  
 the chynes o fear, of error an baud bluid  
 nae langer thrapple us, bit aye contrair,  
 the *logos* girn aye hauds us pingelt sair  
 wi economic birse (the dailie darg)  
 wreth, dreid an sex, begettin an behove: —  
 dialectic, dia-antics —  
 we are droonin in semantics!  
 Wi'oot ye e'en a day is lone  
*Les Sylphides* on the gramophone...  
 (Muisic noo, mair muisic, please!)  
 Twa corses  
 Damnation tae the puritan  
 The *noo* is rael, the past is deid!

'E-day is  
 nae the en, bit a beginning  
 man is a bruit  
 bit maugre his hairns' leanin;  
 the drame taks ruit,  
 the rael is bit a day;  
 the trowth haes monie sides  
 a thoosanfauld, bit trowth abides  
 TROWTH an DRAME – VERitie an REVerie —  
 are rael, or kythe tae be  
 GOD an ID —  
 a matter o degree?  
 Cuid pace on the Yird  
 come tae be  
 we speir...  
 by human mense  
 a seegnal, a howp, a wird

Trow naethin wi'oot pruif. Lat raison reing  
bit a new generation will destroy us  
a tyauve o coonterwechts is aa  
oor hairns are ower smaa  
tae say whit is semple semplie

On a dry sea-grund girns a skull  
(we sall fulfil the Purpose  
the Purpose wull consume us)

## GLOSSARY

### Literary, Older and Uncommon Scots Words used in the text

*Words not included in this list can be found in Chamber's Scots Dictionary.*

- |                                                          |                                                           |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| aiblins - perhaps                                        | haunt – a custom, habit                                   |
| ba-cod - the scrotum                                     | heather-ask – a lizard                                    |
| bairnlie – childlike, infantile                          | hinnie -honey                                             |
| belyve – soon immediately                                | houghmagandie - fornication                               |
| braird – first sprouting                                 | howdiein – confinement, childbed                          |
| branderin - scaffolding                                  | jizzen - childbed                                         |
| bruntie – a blacksmith                                   | kemp – to rival, compete                                  |
| check – a key                                            | kinch – a problem                                         |
| chyne, chine – a chain                                   | knocks, cloacks - clocks                                  |
| clivvie - a cleft                                        | kythe – to show, appear                                   |
| cloak – a clock                                          | longsome - tedious                                        |
| corse- a cross                                           | leem – a means, instrument                                |
| cowmon - common                                          | lift – the sky                                            |
| daw - dawn                                               | loot, lootch – to stoop, deign                            |
| derf – bold, vigorous                                    | maen, mane – to console, complain                         |
| dern - hide                                              | mainer - manure                                           |
| deuk – a duck                                            | maugre – in spite of                                      |
| dorbie – a blacksmith                                    | mense – honour, respect, dignity                          |
| dree – to endure, suffer                                 | met - measure                                             |
| drite – to excrete                                       | minnie - many                                             |
| eemock – an ant                                          | Mòd – a Gaelic festival of song,<br>culture and festivity |
| etin – a giant                                           | Mowe – to copulate                                        |
| ettercap – a spider                                      | nem- an daein-wird – noun and verb                        |
| even – to compare                                        | nevoy – a grandson                                        |
| eydent - diligent                                        | norie – a whim, fancy                                     |
| fader (Shetland) – father                                | oncome - advance                                          |
| faither (Lowlands) - father                              | onding - attack                                           |
| fere – a companion                                       | ongae - progress                                          |
| ferlie – strange, wonderful                              | ootcome - emergence                                       |
| fern, ferm, thairm – gut string of<br>musical instrument | peerie (Shetland) - small                                 |
| flee – fly                                               | pintle – the penis                                        |
| freest - frost                                           | quine (NE, “Doric”) – a girl, young<br>woman              |
| freit - superstition                                     |                                                           |
| gate – a street                                          | reing, ring- reign                                        |
| goam – to greet                                          | ruise - praise                                            |
| gomerl – an idiot, blockhead                             | sauf - save                                               |
| graff, graft – a grave                                   | seil - happiness                                          |
| graith – an implement, tool                              | shae - shoe                                               |
| gramarie - magic                                         | shuil - shovel                                            |

Sin – the Sun  
 sin – a son  
 sneist - contempt  
 souch – opinion, attitude  
 strin, strind – lineage, stream,  
 strouth - violence  
 thairm – gut, entrails  
 threap – to assert, insist, urge  
 tift - condition  
 turkas – pincers, pliers  
 tyauve, chaave - struggle  
 virr – force, vigour, activity  
 weird - fate

whyte, white - wheat  
 wice - wise  
 wicht – a person  
 wittins - knowledge  
 wye - weigh  
 wyte – blame  
 yett – a gate  
 Yird – the Earth  
 yird – earth, soil

## AUTHOR'S NOTES

(Reprinted from the English translation, *The Infant Race*.)

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 any 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 second 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 on this occasion, 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; that one opinion is right and another wrong 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:

*a frainesie aneath a ledder tent begets  
pyne, mane, brutalitie an frainesie*

*oh Mimi, Mimi  
deid o consumption  
pyne an dool 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 can be 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.

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## NOTES TO THE INDIVIDUAL CHAPTERS

### I

This chapter deals with the more than mere 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, which points to his original oneness. 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 otherwise not require a great effort at understanding on the part of the reader.

*Line:*

- 1 *Dorbie* (Scots: a 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 51<sup>st</sup> (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 *a bluid's provider kest ma bodie's bluid*...: obviously only symbolical. Even I know that blood is not transmitted from father to son, and that genetically the chromosomic effects of one person is no longer apparent 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. What I mean is that any inclination towards dogmatism can too easily become lead to dictatorship; 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 *Beuk* 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!” (“oh, Socrates!) 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. Since Auld wrote these words the political situation in Northern Ireland has changed radically ( and for the better). (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. They did this, irrespective of the subject or meaning, or anything else: they would allow anything in a painting exhibition, these fastidious policemen, except for the representation of a small part of the human sexual organs. This was the criterion of the police. Sticking on a postage stamp — especially a green one which could be called a leaf — would be 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 — and still, as 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".

\* *celo*: The translator found this Esperanto word one of the most difficult to translate: "aim", "goal", "objective", "purpose"..He decided finally to use the word " purpose" but this too is hardly satisfactory.

Line:

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

### IV

The translator has taken considerable liberties with this chapter, updating the military language used. The word "finti" referred to under Line 13 below is not relevant to the present translation. (TN)

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 immediate 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* (1947) a prose work of the Scottish poet Sydney Goodsir Smith — which at that time Glasgow’s main library kept under seven seals, and which I could consult only in a private room under the watchful eye of a 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 æerastis la kungrason en Brunmerd (mi amludas, komparnoble, la banige anusan, mirinte sukcesan, kunvinon de la nespirantistoj, aŭ neŝparontristoj...” etc., etc.

*(For his English version the translator attempted something similar, 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, seems to me to be justifiable since when I was getting ready to compose my fourth chapter, the means had already been proved and approved.

\* rendered “polite-ishyins” in this translation. (TN)

Line:

- 13 *finti*: according to the *Plena Vortaro* (Complete Dictionary of Esperanto – TN) (4<sup>th</sup> 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 the ambition of which is to survey and deal with human existence, its past, its future and its motives, to devote less than a twentieth to the sexual side of human life, 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 UEA’s Board of Directors, but was accepted and praised by the “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. But monogamy suits my temperament — I see no moral justifications to support it. What results, however, is moral from a Christian point of view.

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

*V: Line: 20-21: an throu yer clivvie an yer yet/ till the ba-cod tae penetrate.* In the original Esperanto Auld is just as 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 feelings of an individual. From an early age such authority uses an education system based on conformity, in order to perpetuate its doctrine. In doing so it 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 the church's teachings on the sexual life of human beings. Here I continually compare the church with dinosaurs and fossils, i.e., outmoded or dead relics of primeval times.

*Line:*

4 *the auncient cant (English: the ancient custom):* i.e. sexual intercourse.

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

11 *airts the hairns::* the enforced indoctrination of children ensures the repetition of moral errors from generation to generation.

22 *fauld...wi'in the mythic clift as in a buik :* Esperanto: *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 condition and society itself.

*Line:*

- 8 *eppur si muove! still it turns!*: It is commonly know that the cosmological theories of Galileo displeased the church of his 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 phrase is a fine example of the obstinacy of man who cannot remain content with the primitive state of our human understanding.
- 9 *Kermanshah*: a town in Persia.
- 19 *the world wull onlie late accep*: 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 (See chapter 17.)

## VIII

The beginning and end of human life. Life began 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 3<sup>rd</sup>. chapter above),

*Line:*

- 67-68 This typographical whimsy is the only part of my poem which I now regret. The intention was 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 the earlier typographical arrangement of the word *upward* 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 flet*: Incidentally, there is a story told about two millionaires. One of them doggedly believes that the earth is flat; in vain the other tries to

- 74 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*: 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 A.C. Buke: *Comparative Religion*. Harmondsworth, 3<sup>rd</sup>. 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 Cohen, 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. Twa corses (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\*.  
\* The quotation reads: *Golgotas la vivo / Du krucoj, - Ŝi kaj mi* ("Life is a Golgotha / Twa corses / She an Ah." (TN)
- 5&10 *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*: French saying meaning: "The more things change, the more they remain the same".
- 5 *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* (2<sup>nd</sup> 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. In their reviews some rabid anticommunists almost triumphantly informed me publicly 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 he brilliantly succeeds.
- 6 *caller* (Esperanto: *friska*): Since Esperanto is a living language, living texts are to me a necessary and sufficient justification for our words. I first found

- 7 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 ‘*an whusperin around the banes the saun / beds doon*’ (‘*kaj sible æirkau l’ostoj la sablo æerke litas*’), English: “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. The Welsh term for this type of verse is *Cynghanned groes*. (TN)

- 26 *thirteen year*: here begins the passage about of Genghis Khan.
- 47-8 *an frae the brennin toor*: 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.
- \* It was, in fact, Hasdrubal. (TN)
- 65 *bleck 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 feline 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. (By the way, 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, are, or could be, aspects of the human condition; in both cases people act on dimly understood impulses.

*Line:*

- 8 *tyne aa thair meanin*: 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 *ayont liggs 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).\*

\* *There is a fine poem on this theme ("In Ithaca") by the Scottish poet Andrew Lang, preceded by a quotation from Luciani Vera Historia: 'And now am I greatly repenting that ever I left my life with thee, and the immortality thou didst promise me.' – Letter of Odysseus to Calypso. (TN)*

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

\* *Auld pessimistically and somewhat prematurely adds the words "which is gradually dying out". (TN)*

## 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 watch football matches in our stadiums instead of sadistic cruelty: this proves that the two thousand years of continuous existence of our race 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*. 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* ; 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 (Esperanto)*: "beloved language" (TN)
- 17-20 This refers to Antonio Grabowski (1857-1921); and the national epic is of course, *Pan Tadeusz*\*). 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.  
\* *The title of the Polish national epic is translated in English as "Sir Thaddeus".* (TN)
- 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.  
\**In William Laughton Lorimer's The New Testament in Scots: 'Nou at I am grown manmuckle, I am throu wi aathing bairnlie'.* (TN)
- 34-35 Quotation from William Auld: *Provizore (Unufingra melodio)*, p. 44.
- 40 *the reprobates are kent by thair lood lauchter*: allusion to the Calvinist form of Christianity which shackled Scotland in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> 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 merry-makers! — in *Holy Willie's Prayer*, a translation of which by Reto Rossetti appeared in “*Esperanto en Skotlando*” N<sup>o</sup>. 12 and “*Literatura Mondo*”, 1949, p. 111.

## 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 *dern ayont nem- an daein-wird:* (English: *(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 *Airtie-fairtie:* In the original *ardefarita 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. (TN)
- 15 *savage... dance:* Perhaps an allusion to an incident in the novel *Abismoj* by Jean Forge (Jan Fethke). (TN)
- 25 *Thochts of a dug* are late regrets according to a Hungarian proverb: *Kés* ⇒ *bánat eb gondolat* (“*Late regret is the thought of a dog*”).
- 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:*

- 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:*

- 1-15 *ars longa, vita brevis est:* Latin saying: ‘art lasts long, life is short’.

Line:

- 16 *Nevis*: Scotland's highest mountain (not mentioned in original).  
 ...or simmer snaw on heich Ben 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* ("Proverbs"): 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 *saxteen rules alooin 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 was 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 Esperanto word *rivereto* ("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

Scots word reflected in the infrequent but known English “bourn”. Probably my solution seemed suitable only to myself.. A more attractive alternative at

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13 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 – without excuses!

*lenth o his pintle*: 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*.)

39 *Hoc fecit Vergilius*: “Written by Virgil”.

## 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. “Ma sang is nakit an aefauld” (v. 30). Moreover, there is a generic commonality between the heroes, divided by time and space. This theme is introduced by 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 *Ah leuk upon aa the warld as ma pairish*:: 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 *Skazaniia o Nartakh*, Moscow, 1944.

*Line:*

68 *an grasped the Nardakh clansman by the shank: The translator was puzzled by the word “nardo” in this line (“Pinæile kaptis la nardon krure”) as in Esperanto “nardo” normally means “nard”, “spikenard”i. Dr. Verloren van Themaat, howeve , takes it that the reference is to the name of a tribe. Apparently this wording was approved by Auld himself. (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 knobbed 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 1<sup>st</sup> and Charles the 2<sup>nd</sup> of Britain.
- 31 *It hasna been pruived at growthe is tae be ruised:* 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 blated:* 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 *Aÿtuna elogio*.
- 64 *Vilhelmo:* English poet William Blake; a reference to his poem *Auguries of Innocence* (see *Angla Antologio*). 88
- 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 today. (?)

## 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.

12 *wattle:* the mimosa or Australian acacia. (TN).

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 different ingredients from that of plants. Thus they

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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*).
- 20-21 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, probably 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 *Pu doon thy vanitie (Pull down thy vanity)*: Keyword quotation from Ezra Pound's epic poem *The Cantos*.

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

*Line:*

-14: *God and Id*. (Esperanto: *Dio kaj IDo*) – Dr. Verloren van Themaat points out that here there is an untranslatable play on words. (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. One detail to prove this: 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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**ERRATA**

**For**

**Read**



