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further allusion to 'Dover Beach'. Arnold's poem begins 'The sea is calm tonight. The tide is full, the moon lies fair'. Larkin compresses these lines ('The moon is full tonight') and goes on to share Arnold's lament for the 'certitude' (both use this word) lost from the modern world:

The moon is full tonight
And hurts the eyes,
It is so definite and bright.
What if it has drawn up
All quietness and certitude of worth
Wherewith to fill its cup,
Or mint a second moon, a paradise?
—
For they are gone from earth.

'And hurts the eyes' is so colloquial as to sound like mockery, and from the point-of-view of Larkin's development this is the most interesting feature of the poem: it briefly hints at a Movement-like impatience with solemn Romantic postures. Similarly, when Larkin writes in Poem XXVII 'In the past/There has been too much moonlight and self-pity:/ Let us have done with it', there is briefly a hint of self-condemnation and a suggestion that new tones and attitudes will have to be adopted.

'Release', the penultimate poem in Bright November, suggests that Amis shared Larkin's hopes and ambitions. Written at the end of the Second World War, it pronounces the present 'a time for revision of thought' and gestures towards a future in which the poet will be famous: 'Now I must awake and speak. Now I must cause/Something that will want to remember me'. Such grandiose declarations are common among young poets, but Amis had already shown signs of a valuable change of direction. In his poem 'O Captain! My Captain!' (the title borrowed from Whitman) he had, like Larkin, subverted the pose of the Romantic dreamer. As in Henry Reed's 'Lessons of the War', to which the poem is almost certainly indebted, the voice of an experienced military officer is played off against that of a romantic young recruit:

Useless to fill the head with pointless abstractions.
About time; time is always expressed in hours;
And another thing, you; just come away from that window;
It isn't manly to be always staring at flowers.

I could talk about other things which you must not do,
Such as staying sober, or hating a dirty picture.
—
What's that? you wish you could fall in love?
Fetch the M.O., major; this fellow's got a stricture.

Amis has spoken of the army as an experience which toughened and matured him,10 and the poem seems partly to describe this process: the captain brusquely interrupts the recruit's vague meditations about 'music' and 'flowers' and 'love', insisting on the need to be 'manly'. In the years after 1947 Amis gave increasing attention to this 'second voice' and to the development of a dialogue in which the tough pragmatist would gradually win out.

The promise of a Movement manner is present in The North Ship and Bright November, then, but Amis and Larkin still required an outlet through which they could consolidate their development and clarify their aims. This purpose was partly served by Mandrake, an Oxford-based little magazine, edited from 1945 to 1947 by John Wain and Arthur Boyars (after that Boyars assumed sole control). The third issue (May 1946) contained two poems by Wain and two by Phillip (sic) Larkin. None of these was subsequently collected, but Larkin's 'Plymouth', at least, is revealing about his continuing struggle to find a distinctive manner. The poem betrays the influence of Dylan Thomas ("rivers of Eden, rivers of blood") and of Yeats ("The hands that chose them rust upon a stick"), but in its closing lines looks forward to a poetry that, by implication, would demand the rejection of such influences:

Let my hands find such symbols, that can be
Unnoticed in the casual light of day,
Lying in wait for half a century
Jennings liked the last line sufficiently to rework it in 'Black and White' as ‘But love is always moving off’. It owes a lot to the last line of Amis's 'Retrospect'—'and love is always moving somewhere else'—which she could have seen either in Bright November or in the fifth issue of Mandrake. Alternatively, the coincidence might mean only that Amis and Jennings were both indebted to Empson, whose poetry also makes much use of rather offhand and 'throwaway' last lines beginning with the word 'and': 'And stave off suffocation until winter', 'And pump the valley with the tunnel dry', 'And learn a style from despair'.

If Jennings in the early 1950s was imitating Empson, this would not be wholly surprising: in 1950 John Wain had written an article about Empson for Penguin New Writing, and the article was widely read and influential, particularly amongst young poets in Oxford. Wain's article, reprinted in his Preliminary Essays was far from adulatory (he expressed doubt as to whether it was 'worth trying to decipher' Empson's more obscure poems), but did serve to draw attention to a poet whose wit and erudition young intellectuals could readily admire. The article presented Empson as being at least as important as his more celebrated contemporaries (Auden, Day Lewis, MacNeice), and its final rhetorical flourish—'he has, after all, written at least a dozen poems which pass every known test of greatness: and who has done more?'—overrode all previous reservations. The impact of Wain's article can be seen in little Oxford magazines like Trio and Departure, and in the early issues of George Hartley's magazine Listen, which was founded in 1954: contributors like A. Alvarez, Bernard Bergonzi, George MacBeth, Anthony Hartley, Gordon Wharton, Jonathan Price and James Harrison all write Empsonian verse. One of the refrains from Empson's 'Aubade'—'It seemed the best thing to be up and go'—seems to have had special resonance for this generation of poets, for several of them produced variations on it:

Because these things take time, they had to go
(John Wain, 'Thoughts on Abandoning...')

You could not come, and yet you go
(Elizabeth Jennings, 'For a Child Born Dead')

A minute holds them, who have come to go
(Thom Gunn, 'On the Move')

When the alarm clock rang they had to go
(Gordon Wharton, 'This and That')

It is ourselves that are the first to go
(James Harrison, 'Villanelle')

Wain's championing of Empson was similar to Amis's championing of Auden in Oxford Poetry: both these poets could be held up as examples of writers unaffected by the neo-Romantic modes popular in the 1940s. Amis and Michie printed poems which were indebted to Auden, but excluded those adjudged to show the 'harmful influence' of Dylan Thomas; Wain recommended Empson as an antidote to 'punch-drunk random “romantic” scribblers', and cited his work as evidence that 'it is harder to produce an accurate statement than a careless rapture'. The Movement was now, by 1950, becoming more conscious of its aims, and anti-Romanticism became an increasingly important part of its programme. It began to define the texture of its own poetry by contrasting it with 'the poetry of the 1940s'. By this phrase it meant the poetry not of Roy Fuller, Alun Lewis, Keith Douglas and Henry Reed, poets who it on the whole admired, but of Dylan Thomas, David Gascoyne, Edith Sitwell, W. R. Rodgers and of the poets (notably Henry Treece and Tom Scott) who had appeared in the neo-Apocalyptic anthology The White Horseman (1941). By taking these figures to be 'the poets of the 1940s' the Movement inevitably produced a distorted picture of the decade, but it was one that allowed their own work to appear to be a radical departure, the 'new poetry'.

Wain's Mixed Feelings (1951) is perhaps the first real example of a Movement departure from 'the poetry of the 1940s'. Published by the University of Reading School of Fine Art, it...
the great Romantic poets, and his stance was an implicit rebuke
to the efforts of 1940s neo-Romantics. In this way, Leavis,
though not a poet himself, was able to influence the poetry
of the Movement. Gunn has said that Leavis’s famous Scrutiny
essay on Shelley was instrumental in ‘[helping one] to hold
in leash, or to a certain extent transform, one’s own self-pity’. Davie also owed much to Leavis’s example. The five poems
which he had published in an anthology in 1946, were imma-
ture, making archaic overtures to the heart in the way that
the early Larkin and Amis had done:

Turn, two-faced heart,
By mind caught out.
So heart and heart, and heart
That mind doth flout,
A keener compound smart
Will breed, and deeper doubt.

By the early 1950s, however, Davie had decided that, as he
puts it in ‘At Knaresborough’, ‘the heart is not to be solicited’. Poems like ‘Among Artisans’ Houses’, ‘Hypochondriac Logic’
and ‘Pushkin: A Didactic Poem’ (all of them completed by
October 1951) show Davie abandoning lyricism and feeling
for a poetry of reason and statement. The poems show a
general indebtedness to Leavis’s rigour, and the last of them
also has a specific debt to Leavisian ideas about the ‘Line of
Wit’ and lost ‘organic community’:

Self-consciousness is not at fault
In itself. It can be kept
Other than morbid, under laws
Of disciplined sensibility, such
As the seventeenth-century Wit.
But all such disciplines depend
On disciplines of social use,
Now widely lost.

It is a feature of Davie’s early poems that they read at times
like critical essays: he seems to be attempting to incorporate
into poetry certain qualities (fastidiousness, scepticism, care-
fully constructed argument) which, though not usually thought
of as ‘poetic’ qualities, can be found in Leavis’s criticism.
The impact of Leavis on Enright was made much earlier:
by 1942 Enright was already expressing opinions which bore
the mark of Leavis’s influence and which looked forward to
the Movement. His review ‘Ruins and Warnings’ took exception
to the latest collections of Spender and of the neo-Apocalyptic
poet Henry Treece:

Mr Spender has given us plenty of evidence from which to deduce his
inability to use his imagination in a truly poetic way. Like those of so
many of our contemporary poets, his imaginative faculties alternate
spasmodically between the bathetic ‘plain statement’ kind of thing and
that ghastly modern Homeric metaphor which fills one with regressive
yearnings for the good old Georgians of yesteryear . . Mr Henry Treece,
on the other hand, has imagination by the ton. But Treece (a member
of the not-so-new and not-so-apocalyptic New Apocalypse) is a semi-
surrealist poet and that kind of imagination has always been quite un-
rationed. It strikes me that the semi-surrealist poet occupies a highly
privileged position on Parnassus: when he can’t go on meaning any
longer he can always slip into a stanza or two of non-meaning (which
relieves him of the strain genuine poets must occasionally suffer under).

The insistence on the effort demanded by poetry; the com-
immitment to moderation implicit in the pejorative ‘unrationed’;
the suggestion that ‘imagination’ is not self-evidently desir-
able; and the esteem for clarity of meaning (if not of ‘bathetic
‘plain statement’’); these at once betray the influence of
Leavis and anticipate the Movement. Enright’s capacity to
put together such a comprehensive statement of Movement
belief as early as 1942 may suggest that he was precociously
certain of the direction which contemporary poetry should take;
much probably, though, it simply confirms the compa-
tibility of orthodox Leavisian judgment with what was even-
tually to be the Movement programme.

Enright’s first serious attempts to write poetry seem to have
begun when he went to Egypt in 1947. His little-known
Season Ticket was published in Alexandria in 1948 and was
well received by the Times Literary Supplement on 19 August
1949. Eight of these poems were retained in *The Laughing Hyena* (1953), and what is striking about them is Enright’s vigorous, debunking and familiarizing treatment of nature. A wave ‘tosses the nervous yellow crabs/And hurries away. Then returns a little later/To reclaim its busy passengers’; the palm tree is ‘volatile’ and ‘young dates hang from her cheeks like beads of sweat’; the willow tree has ‘long hair’ which ‘trails/Across the earth’s relaxed and hairy chest’. The rather jaunty images seem intended as a reaction against what Enright had called ‘modern Homeric metaphor’, and they prefigure the kind of imagery to be used by Enright himself, and by Amis, when the Movement was more firmly established.

Enright’s preoccupation with metaphor around this time is also evident in an attack, in 1947, on what he saw as the undiscriminating editorial policy of *Poetry London*, which was regarded in some quarters as the leading poetry magazine in England.29 ‘I have written this article,’ Enright claimed, ‘not merely because I consider *Poetry London* a rather uninspired collection of verse, but because I believe it has a positively harmful influence on contemporary writing.’ Enright exempted from his criticisms only one *Poetry London* contributor, Henry Reed, whose ‘Lessons of the War’ he admired because ‘too modest, or too wise, to attempt to deal directly with War’ (this approval of a modest and oblique approach to ‘big subjects’ is again indicative of an emerging Movement aesthetic). Otherwise Enright is unremittingly hostile to *Poetry London*, developing his earlier *Scrutiny* criticisms of the metaphorical excess of neo-Romanticism: ‘There really ought to be a society for the prevention of cruelty to metaphors. These *Poetry London* poets flog their overworked metaphors mercilessly, force them into the most unnatural postures, pour gallon upon gallon of obscure pathos into them, until they burst—into bathos,’ Enright was equally critical of an alternative school of social realists, arguing that the editor of *Poetry London*, Tambimuttu, had ‘confused intellect with the “I Spy” game of the Reporter poets’. This deploring of political reportage (‘1930s poetry’), on the one hand, and metaphorical lavishness (‘1940s poetry’) on the other, later became a common Movement theme. It was in very similar terms in the introduction to *New Lines* in 1956 that Conquest dismissed both ‘residual nuisances like the Social Realists’ and ‘the debilitating theory that poetry must be metaphorical’.

Enright’s disparaging view of *Poetry London* was shared by the Oxford contingent of the Movement: *Mandrake* in October 1947 called its special Tenth issue ‘disastrous’. *Poetry London* was identified as the chief purveyor of the ‘1940s poetry’ which the Movement wished to oppose. Apart from Keith Douglas and Henry Reed, the only *Poetry London* contributor to have earned respect seems to have been Allan Rodway, who published under the pseudonym Edwin Allan: when Amis met Rodway in 1954, he told him that he had been influenced by the example of Edwin Allan’s light verse. Otherwise, the Movement felt hostile to *Poetry London*: its title and its flamboyant editor Tambimuttu, nicknamed ‘Tamby-Pamby’ by Conquest,30 had Bohemian and metropolitan associations for which the Movement felt a Leavisite mistrust. There may also have been personal grievances against *Poetry London*: Tambimuttu has said that some of the Movement poets sent him their work, but were among those whom *Poetry London* rejected from 1939–51 as ‘not very interesting’.31 For those Movement poets who saw it, Enright’s attack must have sharpened and dignified their animosity.

There was, however, one Movement poet who appeared in *Poetry London*, and who helped destroy its values from within. Having had three poems accepted by the magazine in the previous couple of years, Donald Davie published one of his first critical articles there, ‘The Spoken Word’, in November 1950. This followed up a suggestion by S. L. Bethell in the previous issue that Anglo-American poetry was moving into a new but conservative phase. Davie found evidence to support Bethell’s suggestion in an American anthology, *Poets of the Pacific,
edited by Yvor Winters. The anthology, he said, would satisfy poets looking for 'a new perspective and a new departure', for Winter's Stanford group were of the view

that a poem is none the worse for being built around a structure of rational discourse, and that a poet's intelligence can be brought into play as effectively when he follows a rational argument as when he has recourse to witty metaphor or juxtaposition... They recognize the achievements of French symbolists, and of post-symbolists and experimentalists such as Eliot, Pound, Wallace Stevens and Hart Crane; but they think that this vein is now worked out and that healthy poetry today must find again a basis in rational philosophy. In general they eschew free verse and write in strict metre and in rhyme...

For the young English poet resentful of the tyranny of the 'image' in the restricted sense of 'metaphor' (whether inflated into symbols, worried into conceits, or compressed into 'striking' epithets), this American anthology points in a direction which may provide a wholesome alternative; i.e. it points to a renewed poetry of statement, openly didactic but saved by a sedulously noble diction, from prosiness...32

This is one of the earliest examples of a Movement manifesto, for while purporting to describe an American anthology, Davie is giving expression to a number of ideas central to the Movement programme. He addresses himself specifically to 'the young English poet', confident that like-minded contemporaries do exist.

Davie's confidence was justified. Some of the virtues which he found in the Winters anthology—'intelligence', rational argument, severity of design—John Wain had also been finding in contemporary American poetry. Ironically, as Wain explains, he owed his introduction to such poetry to the leading neo-Romantic of the day—a writer whom, as the result of the re-discovery of clarity and argument, the Movement would displace:

I well remember, in 1947, the excitement of a reading by Dylan Thomas in Oxford; as well as poems of his own, he read us American poems from an anthology some friend had sent him... Whoever it was who had the kind thought of sending Thomas that book, he started a great many budding poets reading John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate, Wallace Stevens,

That the Movement were able in the late 1940s and early 1950s to discover an increasing number of poets whose 'conscious craftsmanship' lent support to their own aesthetic, would seem to indicate a growing sureness of purpose. In 1949, Davie even managed to include Eliot in his design, arguing, in another manifesto-like essay, that Eliot's turning away from Corbière and reevaluation of Milton signified a conviction that contemporary poetry must 'be re-organized, by an emphasis not upon wealth and experiment, but upon order, severity, and correctness'.34 He also spoke of 'a new movement of spirit in society', and it was this idea—that of a new society or zeitgeist requiring a new poetry—that was to prove most crucial to the establishment of Movement poetry over the next few years.

In the late 1940s, then, Cambridge poets like Davie and Enright were reaching much the same conclusions about contemporary poetry as were their Oxford counterparts. There may indeed have been mutual influence, for it seems likely that Amis and Wain, for example, would have seen at least some of the work published by Davie and Enright in Scrutiny, The Critic, Poetry London, Cambridge Writing and Prospect, just as Davie and Enright might have seen Wain's contributions to Mandrake and Penguin New Writing. J. W. Saunders has pointed out that periodicals and magazines can often 'compensate the poet for lack of centres in which he can meet his colleagues',35 and around 1950—with Amis in Swansea, Davie in Dublin, Enright in Birmingham, Holloway in Aberdeen, Larkin in Belfast and Wain in Reading—such 'compensation' was undoubtedly essential to the formation of a Movement aesthetic. What is certain is that Davie's critical study, Purity
to paper things I have said or written to them privately, I have not felt that my jokes sounded unworthy of their reputations'.

2. This is reported to be Larkin's joke to Philip Oakes, 'The Unsung Gold Medallist', Sunday Times Magazine, 27 March 1966, p. 65.


4. Amis, 'Anglo-Saxon Platitudes', Spectator, 5 April 1957, p. 445. This seeks to discover 'the most boring long poem in English', and considers as candidates Troilus and Criseyde ('that footling rigmarole'), Piers Plowman, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Havelock the Dane and The Owl and the Nightingale ('nobody in full possession of their faculties could enjoy them'). See also I Like It Here, p. 72, which describes The Dream of the Rood as 'some piece of orang-utan's toilet-requisite from the dawn of England's literary heritage'.

5. Larkin, 'Four Conversations', p. 76.


9. Wain, Sprightly Running, p. 204. Amis, in What Became of Jane Austen?, p. 175 also refers to this undergraduate novel, which was never published and which was more serious in tone than Lucky Jim.


24. Coleman in Granta, 15 Nov. 1952, p. 81. The same issue contained Gunn's 'Carnal Knowledge', His 'A Village Edmund', 'The Beach Head' and 'A Mirror for Poets' also appeared in Granta around this time.


34. Davie, 'Towards a New Poetic Diction', Prospect, 2 (Summer 1949), 5.


42. Gunn, 'Four Conversations', pp. 69-70.

43. Davie, Purity of Diction in English Verse, p. 198.


46. In Springtime, ed. G. S. Fraser, for instance, we are told that 'Irish poets, like Mr Larkin, though writing in standard English, reflect another regional value, that of rootedness' (p. 12); and in the 'Notes on Contributors' section of Alan Brownjohn's magazine Departure, 3 (Spring 1955), 20, we are told that Larkin was 'born in Northern Ireland'.
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