C H A P T E R S~~E C O N D~~ TWO

LOOK, STRANGER !

Look, Stranger ! represents the high point of Auden's achievement. It remains superior both to Poems (1930) and to the subsequent volume Another Time (1940). There is harmony of thought and feeling in this volume and there is ample evidence of Auden's unified vision. Probably, in this volume alone Auden has a definite audience before him and a common theme prevails throughout. He is speaking personally, that is to say, he is speaking as a person to other persons on an urgent subject. He does not take the pose of a preacher. His doubts and uncertainties spring directly from the doubts and uncertainties of his historical position. Auden was going through a socialistic intellectual living and he was conscious of the bourgeoise tradition in which he was born and brought up.

The obscurity and the ambiguity of political reference of Auden's early poetry disappears largely in Look, Stranger ! Although much of the poetry still comes from private sources, there is least obscurity and ambiguity in it. So there is definite room to believe that with the publication of Look, Stranger! Auden's poetry began to express political ideas. There are certain prominent social, political and historical reasons which brought about this ideological change in Auden's poetry of the thirties. Auden was being immensely influenced by the ideas of Marx and Freud during these years. Thus, he wrote the political and social poems based on the ideas of

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Marx and Freud. He thought of the decaying capitalist England in terms of Marxism. This intellectual climate of Marxism shaped Auden's poetry particularly during the period from 1933 to 1938.

references ?.

The early private-group called "Mortmere" no longer remained private in nature. The early private group refers to the Auden-group. The intellectuals and the revolutionary poets such as Stephen Spender, MacNeice Louis, Cecil Day-Lewis, and Christopher Isherwood belonged to this group. The group took a great deal of interest in private fantasies and the self-enclosed school-boy world. They were obsessed by excessive individualism. But their interest in the ideas of Freud can be certainly related to the historical atmosphere of the decade. They made an attempt to find out the diagnostic solutions for the sick, diseased and decaying capitalist society through their poetry. However, they soon found that the ideas of Freud alone cannot provide them the desirable answers. Thus, the group began to think in terms of the larger social context than in terms of excessive individualism. As a result, the school-boy fantasy and rebelliousness of "Mortmere world" slowly became thin. The group developed and got associated with the left-wing ideas and movements. The group was pseudo-revolutionary but the various spirited cultural activities, including poetry writings provided them supplimentary Marxist revolutionary agitation. As a result, they began to take part in a number of revolutionary activities. They made an attempt to bring revolution in poetry. They aimed at

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cultivating a new literary-political audience. The major purpose of creating a literary-political audience was to create an intense interest in communism, and to consider and to act upon the concrete political issues like the Spanish Civil War and the struggle against fascism in general and to protest against the economic crisis. The development of The Left Book Club was such an attempt. The club contributed in creating a united front of Socialists, Communists and Liberals in England. Besides, The Left Book Club and the periodicals such as New Writing, New Verse and Left View took a hand in spreading out left-literature. This general intellectual atmosphere of the thirties certainly created an active interest in left ideology and movements among the people. The Auden group was the product of this typical atmosphere of the decade.

Auden had visited Berlin in 1928. He met Bertolt Brecht and was immensely impressed by him. He also saw the psychologist John Lay in Berlin. The effect of a Berlin atmosphere of political and artistic ferment created in Auden a sense of acute interest in politics. In Berlin, he encountered a new dramatic form, the Brechtian epic-theatre and Brecht's handling of political themes in his plays. This was the specific literary influence on Auden's poetry and dramatic-writings of the thirties. There is a remarkable correspondence between the themes of Auden's poetry, including the dramatic writings and the Brechtian ideas about art and politics in general. The conscious cultivation of novelty in form and material in a number of poems of the thirties and in a play like The Dance of Death was the vital effect of

Auden's Berlin-visit. Probably it was due to Brecht's influence that Auden realized the relationship between art and politics. This enhanced him to make an excellant attempt throughout the thirties to find out an appropriate relationship between art and politics. His poems and plays written during the thirties try to express this relationship. The poetry of the thirties by Auden therefore, should be described as a political poetry. C.M.Bowra remarks, "Auden would seem to have the right qualifications for a political poet in time of crisis".[31] Some poems from Poems (1930) such as "Doom is dark than any sea-dingle", and a poem like "Spain 1937" from Another Time (1940) and many poems from Look, Stranger! undoubtedly make Auden a political poet of the thirties.

Auden's poetry began to express political themes prominently from the year 1933. These themes are recurrently found in the poetry of Auden till 1940. The volume Another Time (1940) consists of some poems, expressing political ideas. However from 1940 onwards, Auden's poetry takes different ideological form. Probably, leftist solutions of political-cultural change did not provide any answers to Auden, so he turned towards religion. Whereas his early poetry is under the tremendous impact of Freudian ideas. It is from the year 1933 that the intellectual content of Auden's poetry began to change. Of course, this did not take place suddenly. It was rather a transitional stage. The first thing that can be noticed is

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that the psychological atmosphere of his early poetry began to thin out. Men and society still appear but their illness is not psychological, it is rather social and political. The change in indivuduals cannot cure society, the very economic and political system should be changed. The conviction that something is basically wrong outside the individual, became firm and constant in Auden since the year 1933. The western culture seemed to be collapsing. The democratic government got bewildered and became ineffectual and apparently they could not stop the decline of the society. So the Marxist recommendation of a social and political revolution took the place of psychological doctrines of Freud. Look, Stranger! reflects the Marxist idea that the environment rather than an individual, needs to be changed. The very social machinary should be transformed. So the immediate and urgent action became the very soul of Auden's poetry. There was, therefore, a call for social and political action, an action outside the landscape of psychological allegory.

"Brothers, who when the sirens roar" (LS, XIV; New Country, entitled "A communist To Others" 1933; E.A.,Part II,VIII) is the major political poem of Auden. The speaker of this ballad ?!! is a liberal intellectual who is the Marxist. The very title of the poem suggests that the speaker is a communist and he is addressing the proletariat. In the original version of the poem, that appeared in New Country in 1933, the poet bears the address in the first line, "instead of 'brothers', the unmistakably

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Marxian form of address, as 'comrades'"[32] confirms that the speaker of the poem is unmistakably a Marxist speaker. It is a self-conscious address of an intellectual revolutionary to the proletariat.

The opening of this poem has an eventful history. Edward Mendelson has provided some textual notes. According to him in Auden's notebook the poem reads "All you who the sirens roar". When Auden sent the poem to Isherwood, and when he published a month after composition with the title, "A communist to Others" the first line became, "Comrades who when the sirens roar". The present version appeared in Look, Stranger!. Edward Mendelson provides earlier published texts of the poem. There are three stanzas which are presently found in the poem in the revised form, and there are three more stanzas which are not included in the present poem, appear in The English Auden. The last unpublished stanza is important from the point view of its political content. It assures the proletariat the hopes of revolution,

> "Comrades, to whom our thoughts return,
> Brothers for whom our bowels yearn
> when words are over,
> Remember that in each direction
> Love outside our own election
> Holds us in unseen connection:
> O trust that ever".

(EA, p.422.)

"Brothers who when the sirens roar" is a topical poem of

the thirties. It prominently deals with the theme of revolution, as prophesised by Marx and Engels in Manifesto of the Communist Party.

> "Brothers, who when the sirens roar
> From office, shop and factory pour
> 'Neath evening sky;
> By cops directed to the fug
> of talkie-houses for a drug,
> Or down canals to find a hug
> Until you die:".

(EA, p.120.)

The proletariat are from various offices, shops and factories. They are weakened, made inactive and passive by their authorities. The speaker promises them that he has not come to express mere sympathy for them. He would rather share their fears and dreads as their humble comrade:

> "We cannot put on airs with you
> The fears that hurt you hurt us too".

And further:

> "On you our interests are set
> your sorrow we shall not forget".

(EA, p.121.)

The speaker is confident that the capitalist class is facing a speedy downfall:

> "While we consider
> Those who in every country town

For centuries have done you brown
But you shall see them tumble down
Both horse and rider".

(EA, p.121.)

The phrases such as, 'horse and rider' and the line, 'For centuries have done you brown' suggest the relationship between the capitalists and proletariat and the expliotation of the proletariat class by the capitalists. He describes the capitalist youth as the "splendid person" with their beautiful figures. They "stand/In spotless flannels or with hand/Expert on trigger". He further assures them that they are not really the favourites of the Lady, (the future) they are wooing. In fact, the future of the proletariat is about to be shaped as prophesised by Marx. (It is the proletariat who are very soon going to acquire power.)

"Your beauty's a completed thing
The future kissed you, called you king,"

He then addresses the "dare-devil mystic". They "bear the scars/Of many spiritual wars" and they smoothly tell,

"The starving and their one salvation
Is personal regeneration
By fasting, prayer and contemplation".

(EA, p.122.)

These spiritual war-makers are obviously the religious preachers who have been the obstructors in the progress of the

proletariat class and in human society in general. They try to mystify everything. He calls this dare-devil mystic, coward.

Then there is a wise man, a typical bourgeoisie intellectual. He thinks of the misery of the proletariat as "a rumour and slightly funny". The intellectuals that Auden is referring to are perhaps Cambridge intellectuals:

> "Cambridge ulcer
> That army intellectual
> Of every kind of liberal"

(EA, p.122.)

The "Cambridge ulcer" consists of the army of intellectuals from Cambridge University. They are liberals and come from mathematical science. They insist on to prove by figures, "that wealth and power are merely/Mental pictures". This class consists of the splendid persons like: "Professors, agents, magic-makers/Their poets and apostles,/Their bankers and their brokers too". This is Auden's bitter criticism of middle-class culture.

On the whole, the ballad expresses Marxist political ideas. Marx and Engels declared in Manifesto of the Communist Party that "the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles."[33] In a capitalist society, the class-struggle exists between capitalists and proletariat. "Brothers who when the sirens roar" expresses the Marxist idea

of the class-struggle. For J.W.Beach, the ballad is Marxian propoganda based on the concept of class-struggle. But Auden himself believes that poetry cannot be a medium of propoganda. For him the function of poetry does not lie in the propogation of some ideology in which the poet passionately believes, but it lies in projecting some urgent and immediate questions. It helps them to make a moral choice. He writes regarding the function of poetry:

> "Poetry is not concerned with telling people what to do, but with extending our knowledge of good and evil, perhaps making the necessity of action more urgent and its nature clear; but only leading us to the point where it is possible for us to make rational or moral choice."[34]

Auden's interest in Marxism is primarily the moral interest. Auden always believed that the political values and the moral values should be coalesced to bring up a social change. Regarding the interests that he took in Marxism, he wrote in 1955:

> "Looking back, it seems to me that the interest in Marx taken by me and my friends... was more psychological than political; we were interested in Marx in the same way we were interested in Freud, as a technique of unmasking middle-class ideologies, not with the intention of repudiating our class."[35]

So Auden's Marxism was rather "psychological than political." In other words, Auden never worked as a political activist of Communist Party. But as a poet, he played a role of Marxist

activist in the thirties' world, but primarily this was Auden's moral action. Though Auden underwent different ideological transformations in his later poetry, a demand for social change, and the urge of moral action are constantly seen in Auden.

"The chimneys are smoking, the crocus is out in the border;" (LS,XV, New Country, 1933; entitled "Two Worlds"; EA,Part IV, V) gives an account of the two worlds of bourgeoise class, the Right World and the Left World. According to J.W.Beach, in the original version of the poem the line in the third stanza of the poem is "contest of the Whites with our Reds" instead of "contest of the Whites with Reds".[36] The phrase "our Reds" clearly shows Auden's sympathies for leftist revolutionaries. It also expresses Auden's ideology.

The speaker of the poem says that the society is divided into two worlds. The separation of the lovers is symbolic of the division of society into two worlds. It seems for the time being their natural and decided unity is ~~destributed~~ disturbed by ideological strife. The speaker feels lonely: "I stand on our world alone." "The white death" in the form of "a hawk" is looking down on the lovers as well as on the whole community. A hawk sometimes symbolizes fascism in Auden. Probably, Auden is expressing fear and anxiety caused by fascism through the images like hawk and white death.

The enemy of both the Whites and the Reds is Fascism. Therefore, it is necessary, for the time being that the

Whites and the Reds should come together. In fact, they made a unity some days before, but the doubt about the unity haunts the poet:

> "Now lakes and holes in the mountains remind
> us of error,
> Strolling in the valleys we are uncertain of
> the trees:
> Their shadow falls upon us;
> Are they spies on human heart"
>
> (EA, p.117.)

"The white death" which is "friendless, has his own idea of us"; "us" includes both the Whites and Reds. Fascism has its own private saga that tells at night the estrangement of the handsome couple and how it ends with "their death-bed kisses". In other words, the hawk is finding an opportunity to see the people destroyed by themselves. It is gleefully watching on the larger scale the contest of the White's with the Reds. Therefore the speaker advises his "darling" to walk off lightly so as not to attract the attention of the hawk:

> "Then lightly, my darling leave me and slip away
> Playful, betraying him nothing, allaying Suspicion:
> His eye is on all these people about us, leading
> Their quite horrified lives"
>
> (EA, p.118.)

The speaker intends to seek social unity. He tells those who do not want to seek social unity to take the route which is straightest. He calls upon those who want to bring social

peace and harmony, to choose even the crooked way. It seems to him that the millions of people are restless and looking for immediate action to establish social and political peace:

> "These millions in whom already the wish to be one
> Like a burglar is stealthily moving"

Since the millions wish to be one, the speaker calls all of them to join in a dance:

> "Then dance, the boatman, virgins, cameramen and us
> Round goal-post, wind-gauge, pylon or bobbing buoy;
> For our joy abounding is, though it hides underground,
> As insect or camouflaged cruiser".

(EA, p.118.)

On the whole, the poem explores the political tensions and the social crisis of the period. It also presents the strong desire of urgent and immediate action. It reveals the idea of revolution. It is one of the finest representative poems of the thirties by Auden.

The remarkable point about Auden's revolutionary zeal is that its power of appeal lies in his emphasis on the urgency of immediate action. Being one of bourgeoisise himself, he warns the members of his class to guard against an immediate doom of fascism. This doom is sure to overtake them in case if they fail to rise equal to the claims of revolutionary principles.

The Marxist idea that the collapse of capitalism is inevitable historically is expressed in, "Here on the cropped grass of narrow ridge I stand" (LS,XVII; New Oxford Outlook, Nov.1933, entitled "The Malverns", EA,Part IV,XVI.) The speaker recalls the time when the Malvern hills were the innocent setting for private happiness. But now this place and Britain, as a whole have no innocence at all. He finds himself in the mood of isolation and fear. There has been a "boom in the sorrow". Escapist people seek distraction and comfort in Gaumount theatre to see their noble robber, as "ideal of boys". In the cathedrals, "luxury liners laden with souls", one hears "the high thin rare continous worship/ Of the self-absorbed".

The speaker now reviews the European history, the period of "empires stiff in their glory." The monasticism was thriving in "ages of disorder" when the noblest were assailed by "angel assassins". There is a reference to fascism, the idea of the central state symbolized by the hawk:

> "The hawk is the symbol of the rule by thirst,
> The central state controlling the canals;
> And the blank sky".

He hears the totalitarian propoganda spread abroad in every dialect of "the common language of collective lying". He states boldly that "the major cause of our collapse/Was distortion of the human plastic by luxury products." What is lacking is the disciplined love. We have been "denying the liberty we

know to be our destiny." The speaker finally talks of the need to keep his will effective and his nerves in order. He concludes that no one today is justified in being idle.

> "For men are changed by what they do;
> And through loss and anger the hands of the unlucky
> Love one another."
>
> (EA, p.144.)

"Now from my window-sill I watch the night" (LS,X; New Country, 1933, entitled "The Watchers"; EA, Part IV, IV) is a topical, historical and political as well as a personal poem of Auden. The poem was written during the period when Auden was working as a school-teacher in the Scottish school. The poem is addressed to these school-boys. The speaker of the poem is watching the night from the window-sills. He feels that he is surrounded by a world of silence and darkness. Research in laboratories is hastened and cameras are prohibited to be used. Symbolically, this is a typical historical and political climate of the thirties.

He further comments on the class-distinction made on the economic basis. There are people possessing property and wealth; in fact, all property begins from them and there are others who are without property:

> "The influencial quiet twins
> From whom all property begins,
> Look leniently upon us all to-night"
>
> (EA, p.115.)

In the following stanzas, Auden convinces the school-boys that "we have fallen apart/Into the isolated personal life". We have become sick. With "rat's desperate courage", we are able to pass you (the students) in the examination, and that too by trick. So it is high time we should be no longer sick and isolated. In the final stanza, Auden calls upon the boys and asks them to be ready and well-prepared to offer their support to the revolutionary. Revolution is the only remedy to overcome the sickness of the community during the thirties. The Marxist revolutionary is described as "the starving visionary":

> "And what if the starving visionary have seen
> The carnival within our gates,
> Your bodies kicked about the streets,
> We need your power still ..."
>
> (EA, p.116.)

"Out on the lawn I lie in bed" (LS,II; Listener, 7 March 1934; entitled "A Summer Night 1933"; EA, Part IV, XIV) is another example of Auden's political poem. Auden is not here an outsider and he does not look at things "as the hawk sees at it or the helmeted airman".[37] But he is inside the situation he is describing:

> "Equal with colleagues in a ring
> I sit on each calm evening,
> Enchanted as the flowers
> The opening light draws out of hiding
> From leaves with all its dove-like pleading
> Its logic and its powers."
>
> (EA, p.136.)

The moon rises over the European sky, but she can notice nothing here, that is, England:

> "Whom hunger cannot move,
> From gardens where we feel secure
> Look up, and with a sigh endure
> The tyranies of love."

(EA, p.137.)

For Europe is full of tyrannies and violence. Auden has been successful in describing the situation of the thirties. In the following three stanzas, Auden analyses the predicament in which he and his friends are caught:

> "For what by nature and training
> We loved, has little strength remaining:
> Though we would gladly give
> The Oxford colleges, Big Ben,
> And all the birds in Wicken Fen,
> It has no wish to live."

(EA, p.138.)

"We" refers to the middle-class intellectuals and the predicament is the obvious regret that the middle class has no wish to live. They are ready to sacrifice "the Oxford colleges, Big Ben/And all the birds in Wicken Fen," if there is any chance of reviving it. ?

The subject of the poem is Socialism and the attitudes of middle-class intellectuals to it; and socialism is seen in

terms of revolution:

> "Soon through the dykes of our content
> The crumpling flood will force a rent,
> And, taller than a tree,
> Hold sudden death before our eyes
> Whose river-dreams long hid the size
> And vigours of the sea."

(EA, p.138.)

The old forms will die and new forms will emerge from the wreck of the old life. All old values cannot be rejected, rather the new life will gather up the older values into itself. These older values will be given better shapes and solid basis:

> "May this for which we dread to lose
> Our privacy, need no excuse
> But to that strength belong;
> As through a child's rash happy cries
> The drowned voices of his parents rise
> In unlamenting song."

(EA, p.138.)

History is a dialectical process. It destroys old forms and gives birth to new forms. This is the Marxist idea. This historical process gives rise to new living values of socialism and this new socialistic state will release the millions from their miseries and agonies. These positive hopes are expressed in the final stanza of the poem. In conclusion, the poem expresses an idea of social revolution.

"Hearing of harvests rotting in the valleys" (LS,VII; The Criterian, July 1933; entitled "Paysage Moralise"; EA, Part IV, XIII.) is the best model of symbolic poem in Auden. The poem embodies the best of natural symbolism and landscape imagery ever found in Auden. The landscape imagery in Auden plays a significant role and 'Paysage Moralise' is an ideal landscape poem by Auden. M.K.Spears has pointed out the allegorical significance of landscape imagery in Auden. According to him the natural symbolism of landscape represents emotional states or situations. For example, "Islands stand for escape, selfish isolation; cities for society and civilization; water for belief, potentiality; valleys for passiveness, innocence and mountains for efforts and decision."[38]

The speaker of the poem is extremely sorry to know about the "rotting harvests in the valleys". The mountains have become barren, and knowing the people who are shipwrecked, the other people have "launched for islands." Through these images Auden is expressing a very powerful idea that in time of social and political crisis, many people are seeking refuge in their own islands. However, the speaker remembers the founders of these starving cities honourably; the honour of these founders "is the image of our sorrow". The constant efforts and works of these founders brought people to the mountains. "They reigned their violent horses on the mountains" to find out their "visions of green" and all the "trees blossomed on the mountains". But the people did not follow these founders

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"No marvellous creature rose from the water", this is the great anxiety of the speaker. So though "there was enough gold and silver in the mountains", "hunger was the immediate sorrow". The typical middle-class attitude of a bourgeoisie to the social revolution is either an escapist or an opportunitist; this idea is symbolically described in the following lines:

> "So many, doubtful perished in the mountains
> Climbing up crags to get a view of islands;"
>
> and
>
> "So many, careless, dived and drowned in water;
> So many, wretched, would not leave their valley"

(EA, p.136.)

The middle-class escapist attitude towards the cause of social revolution is the principal idea of the poem. In other words, it is an expression of the analysis of both the social and personal ills as a result of the failure of 'love'. But the poem ends with a tremendous hopeful note:

> "... Ah, water
> Would gush, flush, green these mountains
> and these valleys
> And we rebuild our cities, not dream of islands".

(EA, p.136)

The speaker aims to rebuild the human civilization and not "dream of islands". This will be achieved by political and social revolution.

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" O what is that sound which so thrills the ear" (LS,VI; New Verse, Dec.1934; EA,Part IV,X) uses a question and answer pattern which is usually found in ballad. The speaker of the poem is a beloved. She is asking some questions to her love.

> "O what is that sound so thrills the ear
> Down in the valley drumming, drumming?
> Only the scarlet soldiers, dear,
> The soldiers coming."
>
> (EA, p.125)

Probably the last two lines of every stanza are spoken by the second speaker who is a lover. He is engaged in a love-affair. The picture of a rebellian army, approaching the lovers, creates a sense of threatening horror; the result is we have a situation of action. In the final stanza, the second speaker declares his departure from the sweet company of his beloeved to be inevitable:

> "O where are you going? Stay with
> me here !
> Were the vows you swore me
> deceiving, deceiving?
> No, I promised to love you, dear,
> But I must be leaving."
>
> (EA, p.126.)

The second speaker is a honest rebel. For he desires to leave the sweet company of his beloved for the great cause of revolution to which he seems to be wedded. In other words, his love is revolution and not the actual beloved.

"The ballad presents the conflict between the forces of repression and rebellion."[39] The first speaker prefers romantic-love and private life as a refuge or escape from public life. Thus the first speaker is a repressed one and the other is rebellious. Taking into consideration the rebellious honesty and consistent resistance of the second speaker, John Fuller remarks, "the poem is an important political comment appropriate to his developing emphasis on love and individual values. The contemporary application is obvious".[40] The contemporary application is political upheaval of the period and the social unrest created by the Nazi and Fascist forces.

"O Love, the interest itself in thoughtless Heaven" (LS,I, New Country, 1933; entitled "Perhaps"; EA,Part IV,VI) is a prologue to this volume, Look, Stranger!. It is addressed to "love"; it is disciplined love. It calls for social coherence and political stability. It invokes some possible dream of a better world for man. It begins with an appeal to Love :

> "O Love, the interest itself in thoughtless Heaven
> Make simpler daily the beating of man's heart; within,
> There in the ring where name and image meet,
> Inspire them with such a longing as will make his thought
> Alive like patterns murmuration of starlings
> Rising in joy over words unwittingly weave;"

(EA, p.118.)

The poem gives an account of the socio-political crisis in England. It describes the condition of England. England is described as a fortess "perched on the edge of the Atlantic scrap. /The mole between all Europe and the exil-crowed sea." However, there has been a long standing dream to transform the old values into new splendid ones: "For now that dream which so contented our will, I mean, of uniting the deal into a splendid empire".

The common people have undergone great transformations. They have become visionary and "far-sighted as falcons". The bird "falcon" symbolizes a flight of a revolutionary. These far-sighted visionaries are looking for a bright future:

> "... they looked down another future;
> For the seed in their lions were hostile,
> though afraid of their pride,
> And, tall with a shadow now, inertly wait",

(EA, p.119)

They are inertly waiting for some possible dream. On the whole, the poem is an expression of the poet's tremendous hopes and aspirations for social and political change. The intellectual background of the poem is Marxist but the observations and the feelings are Auden's own.

Love is life force that guides Evolution and History to proper goals. History of man is seen as an evolutionary process:

> "Consider the years of the measured world begun,
> The barren spiritual marriage of stone and water."

The phrases such as "out of the future into actual History", "Star-concealing dawn" express the prospect of Marxist revolution.

In "Our hunting fathers told the story" (LS,III;Listener, June 1934; EA,Part IV,XX), there are two contrasting stanzas, the first describing our fathers and grandfathers with some nostalgia. They pitied the beasts for the lack of the faculty of reason, for their inability to progress. The second stanza presents a modern situation, the tradition of middle-class. The men are reasonable, liberal and capable of "southern gestures". Richard Hoggart interprets that "the condition of the beasts is hightened by contrast, a specific moral conflict in a bourgeois, intellectual".[41] Discarding Hoggart's interpretation, John Mander argues that the poem does not present any moral conflict. According to him,"the poem is about the goal of evolution and the goal of love".[42] By "Love", he means Life-force. Auden himself has been "natured in that fine tradition" (animal tradition). But now he has come to see that individualism (of animals) is not the end of Evolution at all. Love is, rather "by nature suited" to the complexities of collective political action in human society; this may involve us in "intricate ways of guilt." Thus the two stanzas show a contrast between individualism and collectivism. But individualism leading to collectivism is a natural act of evolution. It is the dialectical process of history.

The same idea of evolutionarily principle of history is reflected in the sonnet, "Love had him fast, but though he fought for breath" (LS,XXIV; New Verse, Oct.1933; EA, Part IV, XVIII, 12; entitled "Meisos"), Love is here again a life-force. The speaker of the poem is inspired by this life-force, he is probably liberated from miseries and he is prepared to undertake difficult journey for the betterment of the world:

> ... through Love was free,
> While he within his arms a world was holding,
> To take all night journey under sea.

(EA, p.150.)

The poem concludes with a hopeful note that the evolution works continually to improve the human society. This is accomplished by "life-force": "The flood on which all move and wish to move". "August for the people and their favourite islands" (LS,XXX; New Verse, Oct.Nov.1935, entitled "Birthday Poem" and "To A Writer On His Birthday"; EA, Part IV XXIV) is addressed to Christopher Isherwood on the eve of his birthday. Auden recalls the various ideas that they shared earlier and he points out that all those ideas were without social awareness, and they were flabby fancies like the Spies' career.

> Our hopes were set still on the spies' career
> Prizing the glasses and the old felt hat
> And all the secrets we discovered were
> Extraordinary and false, ...

(EA, p.156.)

So for a writer like Auden or Christopher Isherwood, fantasy and false things no longer serve as they have responded to the urgency of social and political reality of the period. Adding a number of details about what they did in their past-life, Auden concludes the letter with an appeal for an urgent action in such an hour of crisis and dismay:

> So in this hour of crisis and dismay,
> What better than your strict and adult pen
> Can warn us from the colours and the consolations,
> The showy arid works, reveal
> The squalid shadow of academy and garden,
> Make action urgent and its nature clear?"

(EA, p.157.)

Hence his birthday wish to his friend is that they both should give up the false ideas they believed in their adolescent period and they should prepare to face the crisis in the form of urgent action.

It is an important poem of Auden's developmental stage. It expresses the idea about how Auden's approach gradually changed from fantasy world to political and social reality, and how he became a political poet, taking part in the issues of the time. The poem is remarkable from this point of view.

The recurrent political idea in Auden, the urgent and immediate action for social revolution, constitute the subject of the following two songs. "Underneath object willow" (LS, XXII, Two Songs:2; EA, Part IV XXX) is addressed to Benjamin

Britten. The song is an appeal to him to prepare for action so that "you will conquer." The speaker knows his "unique and moping station". So an appeal is made to him to further the action and go ahead:

> "Geese in flocks above you flying
> Their direction know;
> Brooks beneath the thin ice flowing
> To their oceans go;
> Coldest love will warm to action,
> Walk then, come,
> No longer numb,
> Into your satisfaction"
>
> (EA, p.161.)

Similarly "To settle in this village of the heart" (LS, XXIII, EA, Part IV, XIX) is an address to a beloved. The speaker convinces his love that "the grand old couple/Who loved us all so equally are dead" and the place has turned into "a house licensed for tourists." However he asks his love if she could serve and love the "neighbour's strongest wish". The strongest wish of the neighbour "to serve and love" others, expresses the recurrent theme in Auden: the idea of bringing up social and political change for human progress and betterment.

"The sun shines down on the ships at sea" (LS,XVIII; EA, Part IV,VII) expresses the poet's passions for a dawn of revolution. The speaker believes strongly that whatever we may be doing, the "to-morrow" is "another day" and sun is

going to shine on everybody:

"The sun shines down on the ships at sea,
It shines on you and it shines on me,
Whatever we are or are going to be"

(EA, p.120)

As to-morrow is going to be a shining day, his passions to see the day make him restless and his strong wishes have become as violent as horses:

"To-morrow if everything goes to plan;
To-morrow morning you'll be a man:
Let wishes be horses as fast as they can"

In the rest of the poem, the speaker accounts for the middle-class routine life of falsehood and hypocricy

"The teacher setting examinations,
The journalist writing his Falsifications",

and

"The judge enforcing the obsolete law
The banker making the loan for the war,"

But now, this middle-class culture of falsehood is decayed and it will be revived by revolution; it is the long-standing wish of the poet which will be fulfilled by tomorrow.

"In your house to-night you are
flushed and gay;
Twenty-one years have passed away
To-morrow morning's another day."

This poem can be called, what Auden termed as "light verse" but in fact it possesses authenticity of poetry. Auden is indeed a master of such light-verse

"Certainly our city-with the byres of poverty down to" (LS XXI, "Epilogue"; EA, Part IV, XXXVII) is an epilogue to Look, Stranger! The speaker gives an account of England, Poverty, wretchedness, unemployment in England are found every where. This is certainly our city:

> "Certainly our city - with the byres of
> poverty down to
> The river's edge; the cathedral, the engines,
> the dogs;"

(EA, p.166.)

The time is critical and we are busy in weapon-making. Our conscience is stirred. We spread rumours to terrify the crowd. The various writers like Gorki, Groddeck, Lawrence, Kafka and Proust have "blackmailed" us. They have misled us. They are our betrayers. These middle-class intellectuals have flasified truth:

> "The betrayers thunder at, blackmail
> Us. But where now are They?"

So there is "the plague on the ignorant town." However the poem ends with a hopeful note that the dark days are going to be over and a new bright "to-morrow" is going to arise. This is a recurrent idea in Auden that the evolutionary principle cannot block the progressive socio-political change; it is

inevitable:

> "And the wish to wound has the power,
> And to-morrow
> Comes. It's a world. It's a way."

(EA, p.166.)

The rest of the poems from the volume deal with various themes. There are some poems which deal with marginal political themes, whereas the others deal with psychological and personal themes and the themes of love and family. "The earth turns over, our side feels the cold" (LS, IX, entitled "Looking Through Glass") is a moving nostalgia for home and family. The speaker is uncertain about where to go and what to do. The title poem of the volume, "Look, stranger, at this island now" (LS,V) is one of the most moving lyrics. The poet is asking the stranger, an outsider to look at his own country. The leaping light has come to standstill and it has become stable and silent. The sea-birds lodge for a moment on the sea-shore, "where the chalk-wall falls to the foam". The poem portrays the tensed and gasping time of the period. So the poet says that the ships have diverted "on urgent voluntary errands". The poet is hopeful of "the full view" which will move through the memory of the poet as the clouds are moving. The poem lyrically portrays the mood of the period and expresses hopes and aspirations to improve the society. The ships that have diverged on urgent and voluntary works manifest the idea that the people have gone on the frontier to bring back the human society that is collapsing.

"Now the leaves are falling fast" (LS, VIII) is a simple song. The poem employes landscape imagery. The poet is extremely hopeful about future. The Hundreds of people have followed the track that reproves "the false attitudes of love". But the mountain's lovely head, though it is cold and impossible, the white waterfall of the mountain is blessing the travellers. The travellers are the simple and innocent people who are walking consistently in search of mountains. "Just as his dream foretold, he met them all" (LS,XI, entitled "A Misunderstanding") deals with psychological theme. "As it is plenty" (LS,XII, entitled "His Excellancy") is an excellent example of Auden's technical skill in poetic composition.

"A shilling life will give you all the facts" (LS,XIII, entitled "Who's Who") examines the nature and desire of a popular hero. This popular hero had run away from his father's house, as his father beat him. He "fought, fished, hunted, worked all night". These were the struggles of his youth. Though he was giddy, he climbed new mountains and he named a sea. He sighed for those who lived at home. "May with its light behaving" (LS, XVI, entitled "May") is a symbolic poem which portrays the time and the tense of the period. The drab bourgeoise world is withering and impotent. The careless picnics come at the "delighting rivers". These are bourgeoise picnics. It is only we, who have broken from the "vague woods" could do something. The poem, deals with the idea of social change. "Fleeing the short-haired mad executives" (LS, XX, entitled, "Climbers" and "Two climbers") represent both an

escape from the drab bourgeoise world of petty authority and an attempt to discover and face a greater reality. The bourgeoise mad executives are fleeing from drab reality. Their faces are subtle and useless. They are climbing "upon the mountains of our fear". They made an attempt to reach the top of the mountain, but they could not see anything. When they returned to their shore "Love" gave them the power but it took the will in its place. Yet the attempts of the bourgeoise to face the greater reality are praiseworthy.

"O for doors to be open and an invite with gilded edges" (LS, XXIV) discusses, art as wish-fulfilment. "Only the hands are living; to the wheel attracted" (LS,XXV, entitled "Casino") uses the metaphor of gamblers to represent a lost generation. "Night covers up the rigid land" (LS, XXII-I); "Underneath the object willow" (LS,XXII-2); "That hight when joy began" (LS, XXVI); and "Fish in the unruffled lakes" (LS,XXVII) - all are symbolic and representative songs from Look, Stranger!."Fish in the unruffled lakes" celebrates an act of love in terms of a union of human attributes with animals. "Dear, though the night is gone" (LS,XXVIII) presents a dream capable of Freudian interpretation, "Easily, my dear, you move, easily your head" (LS, XXI, entitled, "A Bride in the Thirties") deals with homely, psychological and personal themes. The poem deals with the political theme partially. The poem is addressed to the bride of the thirties. She is the representative person of the thirties. The poet asks her to move through the period as

easily as the leaves of a photograph album. She is living on the terrifying lands, where ten thousand soldiers are marching desperately. Hitler and Mussolini are in their natural poses. Churchill is engaged in acknowledging the voters' greetings. Roosevelt is at the microphone and Van der Lubbe is laughing at the whole scene. This is certainly the pre-war situation. Auden has correctly phrophesised the impending doom of the war. The perilious growth of fascism was exploding in the Second World War.

> "The power that corrupts, that power to excess
> The beautiful quite naturally possess
> To them the fathers and the children turn:
> And all who long for their destruction,
> The arrogant and self-insulted, wait
> The looked instruction"

(EA, p.154.)

The poem portrays the confused and frightening political world of the thirties. The wind is shaking the tree; the mountains are darkened and the heart is repeating the call for choice, the call that is sprung from the language of learning and the language of love. Thus, the present poem deals with the political situation of the thirties.

On the whole, it can be said that Auden's poetry became prominently political in nature with the publication of the volume, Look, Stranger!. The poems such as, "Brothers, who when the sirens roar"; "The chimneys are smoking, the corcus is out in the border"; "Here on the cropped grass of the narrow

ridge I stand"; "August for the people and their favourite islands"; "Certainly our city - with the byres of poetry" etc. are mainly political poems. They express the social and political issues and pressures of the period. As a poet, Auden contemplated over these issues and pressures, with a view to find out solutions. The political ideas that Auden expressed in a number of poems of this volume, in order to rebuild and reform the society, were basically related to the revolutionary reformation of society. Thus, Auden's preoccupations were the reformation of ~~the~~ society and the reformation of individuals. In other words, he wants to build a "Just City" and "Just Men". For him a "Just Man" is a revolutionary and the creation of "Just City" is revolution. So Auden had to turn to some political ideology. His political ideology, at least in this volume, is Marxist ideology. The speaker, for example in the poem "Brothers, who when the sirens roar" is the Marxist revolutionary.

For Auden, there are two kinds of political issues: one is the Party issue and the other is the revolutionary issue. In a Party issue, all Parties are agreed as to the nature and justice of the social goal to be reached, but differ in their policies for reaching it. Auden's political ideas did not belong to the "Party issues" but they belong to the "revolutionary issues". According to him, "a revolutionary issue is one in which different groups within a society hold different views as to what is just."[43] Auden's revolutionary issues

sprung up in his poetry from his own group. They also sprung up from the private world, created by them, the world of 'Mortmere'. As compared to the other poets of his group, such as Stephen Spender, Louis MacNeice, C.D. Lewis, Auden's poetic achievement is excellent. His poems from Look, Stranger! portray the political and social ideas of the thirties. He is still remembered today as the representative poet of the thirties. Thus, taking into consideration Auden's poetry from the volume, Look, Stranger!, Auden stands as a representative political poet of the thirties.