

# *The Shadow in the Garden: Auden's Jungian Quests*

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THE POETRY OF W. H. Auden's prolific transitional stage, the 1940's, is between landscapes — between the abandoned mine-shafts and slag heaps of the 1930's England and the limestone and sunny Mediterranean climate of the 1950's. Instead the poetry of the 1940's describes wholly imaginary landscapes which serve as the settings for mythic quests of composite heroes. The three long closet dramas of this period are inevitably compared, but only *The Sea and the Mirror: A Commentary on Shakespeare's "The Tempest"* seems to be held in much esteem. The Christmas Oratorio, *For the Time Being*, which was originally intended as a libretto for Benjamin Britten, was not generally regarded as a success; the Baroque Eclogue, *The Age of Anxiety*, with its consistent, almost numbing use of Anglo-Saxon alliteration, was called by Randall Jarrell "the worst thing Auden has written since *The Dance of Death*." However, the ironic, self-reflexive virtuosity of *The Sea and the Mirror* led several critics to agree "with Auden's judgement" that *The Sea and the Mirror* was "his best work yet." *The Sea and the Mirror* may be most appreciated because it uses Jungian images and the quest for individuation to articulate what Auden said was "the Christian conception of Art."<sup>1</sup> In fact, *The Sea and the Mirror* may be most admired because its unity depends, even within its multiplicity of verse and prose forms, upon Auden's successful orchestration of Jungian symbols and quest images to indicate the limitations of art; in particular, Auden's employment of the Jungian symbols of the shadow and the sacred locus create a consistently challenging but coherent work.

In coming to terms with Auden's three long poems of the 1940's, particularly *The Sea and the Mirror* and the diversity of theological and philosophical influences on Auden, the image of the quest occupies a central place.<sup>2</sup> However explicit Auden's exegesis of the forms of the quest in his prose, Auden's poetic quests remain quests for individuation: internal and psychologically oriented. Kierkegaard's influence on the Americanized Auden's quests in the long poems has been well documented by Auden and others, but Jung's impact on Auden's long poems is almost as significant. As Herbert Greenberg notes:

Considered from an existential point of view, the Logos or "necessary" which is the object of the quest is inseparable from individuality, for each individual "The nature of Necessity like grief / Exactly corresponding to his own." Informing this view is Kierkegaard's conception of truth as a subjective and inward relationship that the individual exists *in*, rather than as something knowable or known. Combining Kierkegaard and Jung, Auden sees this relationship as one with the unconscious, and, by placing the quest within a world of the pastebord surreal — peopled with archetypes drawn from fairy tale and childhood dream — and by using images which metamorphose and disorient, he assimilates this view into his fable technique.<sup>3</sup>

Auden's reliance on Jung for the foundation as well as some of the imagery in the subjective and internal quests helps to formulate a consistent interconnecting framework for the long poems of the 1940's.

Auden's demonstrated interest in psychology and psychoanalysis probably led him to explore Jung's theories, though there is no clear evidence of this until the *New Year Letter* in 1941. Auden did list Jung's *Psychology of the Unconscious* and *Two Essays in Analytical Psychology* as "Books to Read" at the end of his 1935 essay "Psychology and Art To-Day," and Edward Callan argues that Auden's first dramatic work, *Paid on Both Sides: A Charade*, relies on some of Jung's explanations of archetypal myths. Auden could also have found explanations of many of Jung's terms, especially the four functions (Feeling, Sensation, Intuition, Thought) in *Psychological Types*, which was translated by H. G. Baynes and published in London by Kegan Paul in 1923.<sup>4</sup> If Auden's initial interest in psychoanalysis as a means

of exposing the ills of a corrupt society correlated with Freud's analysis of various neuroses, Auden's later thoughts about the general condition of man in a fallen, corrupted world have a greater affinity for Jung's approach to psychology and Jung's emphasis on archetypes and the unconscious.

Evidence of Auden's persistent interest in Jung, after Auden's emigration to the United States, can be directly inferred from the incorporation of the Jungian vocabulary in his works. In a 1940 essay Auden defined himself as a "thinking-intuitive," like his mother, rather than one possessing feeling and sensation like his father. Furthermore, Edward Mendelson notes that when Auden reworked *The Ascent of F6* while at Swarthmore in 1945, the final scene became "the climax of a Jungian quest for self-realization."<sup>5</sup> More explicitly, the Jungian animus appears in line 692 of *New Year Letter*, and a verse note, which Auden later published as a separate poem, "Blessed Event," refers to Jung's four faculties or functions. In fact, these four functions are given parts in the "Annunciation" section of *For the Time Being*, which in turn, probably foreshadows *The Age of Anxiety*.<sup>6</sup>

Two other significantly uncommon words in the *New Year Letter* also appear in Jung's *The Integration of the Personality*, an unusual collection of essays by Jung that cover the theory and process of individuation, the symbolic interpretations of one patient's dreams, and a discussion of the "Idea of Redemption in Alchemy." In the essay on alchemy, Jung discusses the alchemical significance of the tincture or divine water and refers to Mercury as having "the Hermetic double significance of redeeming psychopomp and quicksilver."<sup>7</sup> This psychopomp, or conductor of souls to the afterworld, shows up within the framework of a quest in Auden's work:

Yet truth, like love and sleep, resents  
Approaches that are too intense,  
And often when the searcher stood  
Before the Oracle, it would  
Ignore his grown-up earnestness  
But not the child of his distress,  
For through the Janus of a joke  
The candid psychopompos spoke. (ll. 299-306; p. 166)

The second word occurs in the ending tribute to Elizabeth Mayer, to whom the *New Year Letter* is dedicated, when Auden refers to her ability to throw on the lives about her a "calm *solificatio*" (l. 1964; p. 193). In explaining the symbolic interpretation of a patient's dream about a veiled woman, Jung defined *solificatio* as "a *lightening of the unconscious*" and stated that it was accomplished by the anima (pp. 108-09).

Although as Edward Callan has shown in his essay, Auden later created four Jungian function-characters to wander through an allegorical landscape of *The Age of Anxiety*, Auden's first explicitly used Jung's quaternity in *For the Time Being*, when the four functions reveal the fallen state of man, the rebellious, fragmented psyche that seeks its own control:

We who are four were  
Once but one  
Before his act of  
Rebellion. . . . (p. 275)

The reunification of the four fragmented elements of the psyche will restore man to his proper relationship with the Unconditional, and the correct reunification of these four functions is the process of individuation, which is, as Jung says, practically the same as the development of consciousness out of the original state of *identity*. It is thus an extension of the sphere of consciousness, an enriching of the conscious psychological life" (*Psychological Types*, pp. 449-50, see also Jacobi, p. 106). In Auden's terms, the search for the way to unify the four functions is a quest: "human 'nature' is a nature continually in quest of itself, obliged at every moment to transcend what it was a moment before" ("The Quest Hero," p. 40). Thus when man overcomes his fragmented psyche by the process of individuation, he transcends himself and develops a greater consciousness. This quest for greater consciousness is exactly what distinguishes man; it is the Kierkegaardian process of becoming, the conscious choices man makes which create history, rather than the state of being, in which no deliberate choices are made, as a tree. Consequently, this is not the conventional quest for a specific sacred object that will benefit the hero's society; rather, this is an internal, subjec-

tive quest which results in a restored, healthy individual. For Auden, at this point, the wasteland is more individual and internal than general and cultural.

Because Auden fabricates a subjective, internal quest, such as in *The Age of Anxiety*, the recognized goal of the quest is subjective, the individuation of the personality or the growth of the hero. In typically Adenesque fashion, the poet as critic provides no concise or consistent summary of his thoughts about the hero. Still, helpfully, Auden classified heroes according to Kierkegaard's three categories by the type of authority the heroes possessed: Aesthetic (power), Ethical (knowledge), and Religious (passion) (*Enchafed Flood*, pp. 90-95; *Forewords and Afterwords*, pp. 172-77; "Purely Subjective," pp. 3-4). On the other hand, Auden seems to categorize heroes by the kinds of quests or genres in which they occur: detective stories, adventure stories, *Moby Dick*, the fairy tale, the Holy Grail quest, the dream quest (*The Divine Comedy*), Pilgrim's Progress, the quest for necessity (*Faust*, *Peer Gynt*), and the Kafka quest (*New Year Letter*, ll. 1543-64, p. 190; "The Quest Hero," p. 47; "K's Quest," pp. 47-50). This catalogue of quests results in a wide ranging list of heroes, especially when characters are included: the Homeric hero, the erotic hero, the contemplative hero, the epic hero, the tragic hero, the comic hero, and the Christian saint (*Forewords and Afterwords*, pp. 16-31; "The Ironic Hero," pp. 86-89). In this broad spectrum of heroes and quests, Auden proffers no consistency in his interpretation of the character of the hero.

However many different kinds of quests Auden can define, he does insist fairly often on one principle for the hero who, as representative for man, cannot be represented by a single character. Because man changes and modifies himself, there is an "impossibility of expressing his kind of existence in a single image" ("The Quest Hero," p. 40). Hence, the four characters who jointly participate in the quest in *The Age of Anxiety* are the composite "hero" of that story. However, Auden's typical division of the image of the hero results in only two characters, usually a master and a servant. The pair Auden establishes as the ideal or norm are Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, for they can represent the

Ego and the Self respectively (*Dyer's Hand*, pp. 96, 135-38; "The Ironic Hero," pp. 86-94). Auden stresses this dualistic image as the only really accurate presentation of anyone: "Subjectively, I am a unique ego set over against a self; my body, desires, feelings, and thoughts seem distinct from the *I* that is aware of them" ("The Quest Hero," p. 41). Auden represents the whole hero by a combination of parts in his quest works, ranging from the four characters in *The Age of Anxiety* to the "He" and "They" which "should be regarded as both objective and subjective," in the sonnet sequence called "The Quest."<sup>8</sup>

Auden's dualistic conception of man's nature correlates precisely with the Jungian process of individuation. Jung explained the experience of the shadow as the first stage or first half of the process of individuation: the development of the shadow mirrors the development of the ego and the shadow must eventually be encountered or correlated with the ego. As Jacobi notes, "Encounter with the shadow often coincides with the individual's conscious realization of the functional or attitudinal type to which he belongs." Furthermore, "to confront the shadow thus means to take a mercilessly critical attitude toward one's own nature" (pp. 109-14). According to Jung in *Psychology and Religion*, "Everyone carries a shadow, and the less it is embodied in the individual's conscious life, the blacker and denser it is." However, the shadow is not "decidedly evil"; it is "merely somewhat inferior, primitive, unadapted, and awkward; not wholly bad" (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1938, pp. 93-95).

Jung argues that this "inferior and less commendable part of a person" often gets presented as a symbolic character in literature: "for instance, Faust and his shadow Mephistopheles" (*Integration of the Personality*, p. 20). Jacobi goes further, saying that "Shakespeare's Caliban, Mrs. Shelley's *Frankenstein*, . . . Stevenson's Mr. Hyde, . . . Hesse's Steppenwolf, . . . [and] Mephisto, Faust's dark tempter, are examples of the artistic use of this motif" (p. 110). While Spears says *The Sea and the Mirror* bears "some resemblance to Goethe's Faust" (p. 219), Auden's explicit discussion of Mephistopheles and the shadow appears in the *New Year Letter*:

But who, though, is the Prince of Lies  
 If not the Spirit-that-denies,  
 The shadow just behind the shoulder  
 Claiming it's wicked to grow older,  
 Though we are damned if we turn round  
 Thinking salvation has been found?  
 Yet in his very effort to  
 Prevent the actions we could do,  
 He has to make the here and now  
 As marvellous as he knows how  
 And so engrossing we forget  
 To drop attention for regret;  
 Defending relaxation, he  
 Must show impassioned energy,  
 And all through tempting us to doubt  
 Point us the way to find truth out.  
 Poor cheated Mephistopheles,  
 Who think you're doing as you please  
 In telling us by doing ill  
 To prove that we possess free will. . . .  
 Lame fallen shadow, *retro me*,  
*Retro* but do not go away:  
 Although, for all your fond insistence,  
 You have no positive existence,  
 Are only a recurring state  
 Of fear and faithlessness and hate,  
 That takes on from becoming me  
 A legal personality,  
 Assuming your existence is  
 A rule-of-thumb hypostasis,  
 For, though no person, you can damn,  
 So, *credo ut intelligam*.  
 For how could we get on without you  
 Who give the *savoir-faire* to doubt you  
 And keep you in your proper place,  
 Which is, to push us into grace? (ll. 383-426, pp. 168-69)

Auden affixed some of the shadow's qualities to the character of Nick Shadow, a Mephistophelean character in *The Rake's Progress*, an opera for which Igor Stravinsky provided the score while Auden and Chester Kallman produced the libretto. As a Mephistopheles, Nick Shadow follows the prescription Auden sets forth in the *New Year Letter*, for he is engaged in making the

“here and now” both “marvellous” and “engrossing,” when tempting Tom Rakewell into the life of a rake.

Perhaps more importantly, Auden clearly demonstrates that Nick has “no positive existence” and is not a “legal personality,” except in the company of Tom:

Be thanked, for masterless should I abide  
Too long, I soon would die.<sup>9</sup>

The appeal of such a character for Auden depends on the character’s relationship with another character, such as the servant or slave to a master or hero figure, as a kind of darker Sancho Panza to a non-comic Don Quixote. In a discussion of *The Tempest*, Auden writes that Don Quixote and Sancho Panza represented a “spirit-nature pair,” but he also writes that, in terms of an autobiography, Don Quixote is the Ego to Sancho Panza’s Self (*Dyer’s Hand*, pp. 135, 96). However, in his consideration of Shakespeare’s *Tempest*, Auden views Ariel as “spirit” to Caliban’s “nature” (*Dyer’s Hand*, pp. 130-32); furthermore, Auden’s diagram for *The Sea and the Mirror* sets the Ariel/spirit and Caliban/nature poles on either side of the central figure, Prospero as Ego (Spears, p. 247).

Prospero, as the central, powerful figure enjoys two different kinds of relationships with Ariel and Caliban. As Auden points out, Ariel is released at the end of *The Tempest* because his relationship with Prospero is a contractual master-servant relationship. However, the relationship between Prospero and Caliban has a darker tinge, more of a master-slave relationship. Auden explains in *The Dyer’s Hand* that “Caliban was once innocent but has been corrupted; his initial love for Prospero has turned into hatred” (pp. 133-34). Auden describes the process of civilizing Caliban:

Before Prospero’s arrival, Caliban had the island to himself, living there in a state of savage innocence. Prospero attempts to educate him, in return for which Caliban shows him all the qualities of the isle. The experiment is brought to a halt when Caliban tries to rape Miranda, and Prospero abandons any hope of educating him further. He does not, however, sever their relation and turn Caliban back to the forest; he changes its nature and, instead of trying to treat Caliban as a son, makes him a slave



whom he rules by fear. . . . [Caliban] has lost his savage freedom . . . and he has lost his savage innocence. . . . (*Dyer's Hand*, pp. 129-30)

If Shakespeare's Caliban represents the shadow, as Jacobi states, then Auden's Caliban figuratively represents the shadow of Prospero. The mirror imagery of *The Sea and the Mirror* takes on added significance, for Auden's Prospero, in his quest for individuation, confronts his shadow, and sees, objectively, all that he is not, his inferior self.

In a quest the hero must confront not only his inferior self, but he must confront a landscape, perhaps a landscape which would convince the inferior self of the vicissitudes of a quest (as Sancho Panza) or to seek the wrong goal (as Mephistopheles). For instance, the composite hero of Auden's sonnet sequence called "The Quest" (pp. 224-31) experiences some of the standard quest landscape and elements: "The Crossroads," "The City," "The Lucky," three "Temptations," and "The Waters." However, "The Quest," which follows the *New Year Letter*, and which continued Auden's work in the sonnet form of the late 1930's (see the "Sonnets from China" as well as the brief elegies for various artists), is more than merely a catalogue of quest motifs. Spears suggests that "The Quest" merges Freudian psychology with Kierkegaardian "religious analysis," and believes that Auden comes "very close to a religious point of view" (pp. 138-40).

The framing sonnets of "The Quest" reveal Auden's use of literary sources for "The Quest" as well as Jung's symbols. The first sonnet, "The Door," which refers to Alice in Wonderland, suggests, as Spears says on page 138, "the threshold between the conscious and the unconscious mind." Although some of the adventure of "The Quest" (Sonnets XVII-XIX) foreshadows the imagery of the "Seven Stages" quest in *The Age of Anxiety*, the last sonnet, "The Garden" cannot help but be set in comparison to the "hermetic gardens" of *The Age of Anxiety*. ("The Garden," where "all journeys die," may also be Auden's response to the rose garden of Eliot's *Four Quartets*.) The garden, where travellers, questers, feel "their centre of volition shifted," seems to be a sacred, consecrated spot, a *temenos*.

Clearly taken from Jung, the *temenos* is one of the most important images Auden consistently uses in his long poetic quests for individuation in the 1940's. Auden first employs this part of an allegorical landscape in line 863 of the *New Year Letter*:

O but it happens every day  
 To someone. Suddenly the way  
 Leads straight into their native lands  
 The *temenos*' small wicket stands  
 Wide open, shining at the centre  
 The well of life, and they may enter. (p. 177)

Auden glosses this with a footnote referring to passages from Jung's *The Integration of the Personality*:

. . . the region of taboo, the *temenos*, which in ancient times signified a piece of land or a grove consecrated to the God. . . . The image of the *temenos* with the well-spring developed in Islamic architecture, under early Christian influence, into the court of the mosque and the ritualistic washing place located in the centre. We have the same thing in the Occidental cloister with the well in the garden.

The image of the *temenos*, the garden, oasis, or renewing locus in the wasteland appears throughout Auden's major and minor works during the 1940's. Auden indicates the potentially sacramental quality of the garden in *For the Time Being*, when the "Four Faculties" discuss the portions of the body they separately inhabit, but conclude that together:

We alone may look over  
 The wall of that hidden  
 Garden whose entrance  
 To him is forbidden;  
 Must truthfully tell him  
 What happens inside,  
 But what it may mean he  
 Alone must decide. (p. 276)

In the second part of the "Annunciation" section of *For the Time Being*, the "Four Faculties" wander through a landscape that seems to be geographically situated between Eliot's *Waste Land* and the *Age of Anxiety* country, while, at the same time, recalling the distressed landscape of the early Auden's England

with "engines and furnaces / At rust in rotting sheds" (p. 277). However, they (or at least Feeling) perceive the Miracle of the Incarnation as taking place in the "garden of Being" (p. 274), the unchanged, silent garden, where Mary walks in "her sleep of childhood" (p. 278).

The "hermetic gardens" of *The Age of Anxiety* recall the sacred garden in *For the Time Being* as well as the *temenos* of the *New Year Letter*. In describing a "ruined rebel" when in the "hermetic gardens," Malin says:

he takes the hero's  
Leap into love; then unlatching the wicket  
Gate he goes. . . . (p. 386)

This wicket stands "wide open" in the *temenos* of the *New Year Letter* (l. 863, p. 178). While the "garden of Being" promises a miracle beyond the power of man, the "hermetic gardens" first impress the four anxious questers with "extraordinary charm," then make the visitors "uneasy and unwell" (p. 387). As Spears posits, the "hermetic gardens" represent sexual love (p. 236), and the four travellers respond inadequately: by refusing to "leap into love," they turn away from the opportunity to experience a greater love in the "stillness" of the gardens and narcissistically worry about their own aches and pains. Consequently, they experience no shifted centre of volition, rather they continue separately and solitarily on their quests.

Thus Auden's gardens represent only an opportunity for the individual to reach his potential personality in the quest for individuation; the attainment of the transformed personality requires further growth. As Greenberg says in discussing the implications of reaching the *temenos*:

During such moments, the split in consciousness is healed: immersed in "free rejoicing energy," we have regained the garden where freedom and law are one. Our problem is that we cannot live there. . . . (p. 107)

Auden presents the *temenos*, then, as only a step, albeit a major one, in the quest for individuation. However, Auden offers other images for the *temenos* in addition to the garden:

[The happy island of the sea or the oasis or rose garden of the desert each] is like the city in that it is an enclosed place of safety and like the sea-desert in that it is a solitary or private place from which the general public are excluded and where the writ of the law does not run. The primary idea with which the garden-island image is associated is, therefore, neither justice nor chastity but innocence; it is the earthly paradise where there is no conflict between natural desire and moral duty. (*The Enchafed Flood*, p. 20)

Auden clearly indicates that the island, as an image, is only to be visited, not inhabited:

This image, in its turn, has two possibilities. Either it is the real earthly paradise, in which case it is a place of temporary refreshment for the exhausted hero, a foretaste of rewards to come or the final goal and reward itself, where the beloved and the blessed society are waiting to receive him into their select company; or it is a magical garden, an illusion caused by black magic to tempt the hero to abandon his quest, and which, when the spell is broken, is seen to be really the desert of barren rock, or a place of horror like Calypso's island, Klingsor's garden, or the isle of Venus. (*The Enchafed Flood*, p. 21)

Auden used the image of the dangerously enchanting island several times in his poetry of the 1940's. In "Pleasure Island" (pp. 265-66), a visitor to the island "where nothing is wicked / But to be sorry or sick" gradually becomes entrapped by the sunny hedonism of the island and "stops stopping / To think." And, at sunset on this island's beach, "some decaying spirit" excuses itself "for having failed the test." In "Atlantis" (pp. 245-46), the illusionary isle can end the quest:

Unless you are capable  
Of forgetting completely  
About Atlantis, you will  
Never finish your journey.

However, all of Auden's images of the garden-island-oasis, the most fully developed and most complex is the imaginary island of *The Sea and the Mirror*. Moreover, if the admittedly symbolic characters on Auden's island are placed in the context of the Jungian quest for individuation, the potentially dangerous enchantment of the island, the necessity of leaving the island to

continue the quest for individuation, and the renunciation of art for religion are significantly indicated.

Auden's conception of Prospero's island as a significant, perhaps penultimate, stage in the quest for individuation is presented most directly in Alonso's speech to his son about the burdens of the crown. Alonso warns Ferdinand that "the Way of Justice is a tightrope" (p. 321), and he announces that deviation from the Way of Justice will lead to the tortures of the sea and the desert:

Where thought accuses and feeling mocks,  
Believe your pain: praise the scorching rocks  
For their dessication of your lust,  
Thank the bitter treatment of the tide  
For its dissolution of your pride. . . . (p. 322)

Auden presented both these deviations from the Way as final sections in a tripartite chart which ranged from this world to paradise. The "Quest" in the "HELL of the Pure Deed." Power without purpose is "the voluntary journey of the corrupt mind through the sea. Purgation of pride by dissolution." On the other hand, "the voluntary journey of the corrupt body through the desert. Purgation of lust by dessication" is the "Quest" in the section of the "HELL of Pure Word. Knowledge without power." However, Auden neatly sandwiches between these two debilitating extremes a purgatory, which leads to forgiveness and Paradise, that is, the "island" or the "oasis."<sup>10</sup> The middle way, the Way of Justice, leads, as Alonso reports, to:

The spring in the desert, the fruitful  
Island in the sea, where flesh and mind  
Are delivered from mistrust.

The island in the sea may be the dominant image of *The Sea and the Mirror*, but the image of the narrow middle way of the quest proves to be an important motif in this closet drama. Caliban discourses on the figurative "journey of life," the quest for individuation, as a train trip that everyone must begin from the "Grandly Average Place" (p. 335). However, Caliban divides the travellers into two groups, followers of himself and followers of Ariel, and baroque presents their "alternative routes, the

facile glad-handed highway or the virtuous averted track, by which the human effort to make its own fortune arrives all eager at its abruptly dreadful end" (p. 339). Moreover, the pre-eminence of the narrow way for the quest is reflected in the first image of the poem:

The aged catch their breath,  
 For the nonchalant couple go  
 Waltzing across the tightrope  
 As if there were no death  
 Or hope of falling down;  
 The wounded cry as the clown  
 Doubles his meaning, and O  
 How the dear little children laugh  
 When the drums roll and the lovely  
 Lady is sawn in half. (p. 311)

The first stanza of *The Sea and the Mirror*, spoken by the Stage Manager to the Critics, also brilliantly incorporates a major theme of the poem: the nature and effect of artifice, which, of course, coincide with the image of the magic garden-island. The very setting of this decidedly unnaturalistic drama confronts the issue of artifice; as a "Commentary on Shakespeare's *The Tempest*," *The Sea and the Mirror* consists of speeches delivered by actors (still, presumably, somewhat in character) after a performance of *The Tempest*. Thus the very status of the personae as Auden's characters or Shakespeare's characters or some curious admixture of the two persistently forces the reader to be aware of the artifice of creation. Furthermore, in addition to commenting on *The Tempest*, *The Sea and the Mirror* comments on itself for much of the poem is self-reflexive.

In a fine, ironic touch, Auden chose for most of the self-conscious commentary the character of Caliban, who delivers his critique in ornate, involuted sentences, imitating or parodying the style of Henry James. As the McDiarmids point out, "in its third section *The Sea and the Mirror* is so self-conscious that it refers almost exclusively to itself, but that self-reference is part of the poem's development."<sup>11</sup> As the most self-conscious, Caliban is also the most artificial: not only is Auden's Caliban the antithesis of Shakespeare's Caliban, but he also takes on three roles.

Caliban first crosses the boundary of the proscenium when he addresses Shakespeare for the audience, wondering how Shakespeare, who enjoys such a close relationship with the Muse, could introduce a character such as Caliban into *The Tempest*. In an elaborate trope, Caliban complains about the presence of Shakespeare's Caliban, "the unrectored chaos" (p. 327), at the Muse's mansion, but Auden's Caliban argues that the audience is equally worried about the abolition of the division between art and life:

Is it possible that, not content with inveigling Caliban into Ariel's kingdom, you have also let loose Ariel in Caliban's? We note with alarm that when the other members of the final tableau were dismissed, He was not returned to His arboreal confinement as He should have been. Where is He now? For if the intrusion of the real has disconcerted and incommoded the poetic, that is a mere bagatelle compared to the damage which the poetic would inflict if it ever succeeded in intruding upon the real. We want no Ariel here. . . . (pp. 330-31)

Secondly, Caliban, speaking on Shakespeare's behalf, addresses those who have decided to enter the "conjurer's profession," beginning poets. In discussing the successes and vicissitudes of the "partnership" the artist enjoys with Ariel, Auden's Caliban concludes that too often the artist acknowledges Caliban only after he tries to set the recalcitrant Ariel free; only when Ariel leaves does the artist come "face to face" with Caliban and realize that Caliban is "not a dream amenable to magic but the all too solid flesh you must acknowledge as your own" (p. 333). Finally, Auden's Caliban announces he is dropping his persona and speaking on "behalf of Ariel and myself" (p. 334). (Of course, the persona of this speaker is still an open question because this is Auden's Caliban who is speaking after a performance of *The Tempest*.) This Caliban outlines a journey of life, and describes two itineraries: the route through immediacy for the followers of Caliban and the route through possibility for the followers of Ariel. Regardless of which route is chosen, Caliban argues, we must realize that we are actors in a performance:

There is no way out. There never was, — it is at this moment that for the first time in our lives we hear, not the sounds which, as born actors, we have hitherto condescended to use as an excel-

lent vehicle for displaying our personalities and looks, but the real Word which is our only *raison d'être*. . . . [W]e are blessed by that Wholly Other Life from which we are separated by an essential emphatic gulf of which our contrived fissures of mirror and proscenium arch — we understand them at last — are feebly figurative signs, so that all our meanings are reversed and it is precisely in its negative image of Judgment that we can positively envisage Mercy; it is just here, among the ruins and the bones, that we may rejoice in the perfected Work which is not ours.  
(p. 340)

The alternative routes, the quest for the immediacy of Caliban through the "HELL of the Pure Deed" and the quest for the possibility of Ariel through the "HELL of the Pure Word," pale before the revelation of being "born actors" who are separated from a "Wholly Other Life."

Furthermore, in terms of the consistent landscape symbols of Auden's quests, the alternative routes of Ariel and Caliban are rejected. Prospero chooses the narrow way, renounces his magic, and leaves the island-garden to Caliban and Ariel. As the Ego in Auden's diagram of characters, Prospero continues his quest for individuation and progresses beyond the garden, but the enormous, self-conscious, and artificial presence of Caliban, the Jungian shadow, will not easily be forgotten.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, the artifice and style of Caliban dominate Auden's island, so much so that the master-servant relationship is called into question. Moreover, the very dominant presence of the stylish Caliban leads to the question: why did Auden choose to populate this garden-island, this *temenos* (unlike the others) with inhabitants, such as Caliban?

The departure from the island of *The Tempest* figuratively represents the process of individuation, and the departure without Ariel or Caliban represents a decisive step in the individual's growth. As Prospero remarks to Ariel about his feeling upon leaving the magical island:

Now our relationship is dissolved, I feel so peculiar:  
As if I had been on a drunk since I was born  
And suddenly now, and for the first time, am cold  
sober. . . . (p. 315)

Or as the McDiarmids suggest on page 354: "*The Sea and the*



*Mirror* is unusual among Auden's poems because it begins with disenchantment. Some 'therapeutic act' has preceded the poem." The therapeutic act connected with the quest for individuation in *The Sea and the Mirror* is the confrontation with and the decision to exorcise the powerful influence of Caliban, the Jungian shadow.

Caliban must remain behind because the quest for individuation continues beyond the garden-island or artifice of *The Tempest*. But Auden has succeeded in synthesizing religious and aesthetic implications with the Jungian quest for individuation by establishing almost pure artifice as the setting for *The Sea and the Mirror*. Moreover, Auden's Caliban as a shadow figure is not the representation of the dark unconscious, neither is he strictly a Mephistophelean persona, but rather he tempts through the appeal of art or illusion. Caliban must tempt eloquently, so he can be renounced firmly, and Spears says *The Sea and the Mirror* is Auden's "definitive renunciation or art as magic" (p. 230). Thus Auden proclaims art as a false goal in the quest for individuation: the path of the healed psyche leads to the island-garden but goes through and beyond it.

When Prospero, who had a gift for "dealing with shadows" (p. 312), departs from the island to become the restored individual, he will also depart from the garden of artifice, which is a safe, albeit temporary, refuge in the sea of life. Prospero can sail across the sea again because he has confronted Caliban, his shadow, in the garden. Caliban is, paradoxically, the "nature" Prospero sees in the mirror of art: Prospero, who is now "cold sober" for the first time, and who knows "all we are not stares back at what we are" (p. 312), saw what Malin sees when he looks in the mirror at the end of *The Age of Anxiety*:

For the others, like me, there is only the flash  
Of negative knowledge, the night when, drunk, one  
Staggers to the bathroom and stares in the glass  
To meet one's madness. . . . (p. 408)

Thus, parabolically and therapeutically, the self-reflective quality of art should produce disenchantment. The figurative confrontation with Caliban, the Jungian shadow, in the quest for individuation, produces the realization of the nature of artifice and will

help to "push us into grace." Ironically, Auden uses artifice to present his Christian conception of art, in which art should disenchant:

The religious function of art is the destruction of auto-idolatry. . . . The offensive truth for me is "[The] hero is either what I am or what in self-reflection I would like to be, and here I am told that as long as I am or would like to be such a man, I am really, without knowing it, dying in disgrace." ("Purely Subjective," pp. 11-13)

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Jarrell's review of *The Age of Anxiety* appeared in *The Nation*, 18 October 1947; rpt. in *Kipling, Auden & Co.: Essays and Reviews, 1935-1964* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1980), p. 145. The quotations about *The Sea and the Mirror* are from Humphrey Carpenter's *W. H. Auden: A Biography* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1981), pp. 332 and 325 respectively. For concurring critical judgements about *The Sea and the Mirror*, see Monroe K. Spears, *The Poetry of W. H. Auden: The Disenchanted Island* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1963), p. 217 and Justin Replogle, *Auden's Poetry* (Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 1969), pp. 70-71, 149, 156.
- <sup>2</sup> Consider the following creative and critical works which comment directly or indirectly on the quest: "The Quest" [series of twenty sonnets], *New Republic*, 103 (25 November 1940), 716-19. "The Christian Tragic Hero," *New York Times*, 16 December 1945, Sec. 7, pp. 1, 21. "K's Quest," in *The Kafka Problem*, ed. Angel Flores (New York: New Directions, 1946), pp. 47-52. "The Ironic Hero: Some Reflections on Don Quixote," *Third Hour*, 4 (1949), pp. 43-50; rpt. in *Horizon*, 20 (August 1949), pp. 86-94. "The Quest Hero," *Texas Quarterly*, 4 (Winter 1961), pp. 81-93; rpt. in *Tolkien and the Critics: Essays on J. R. R. Tolkien's "The Lord of the Rings,"* ed. Neil D. Issacs and Rose A. Zimbaro (Notre Dame Univ. Press, 1968), pp. 40-61. Also major sections of Auden's *The Enchafed Flood or the Romantic Iconography of the Sea* (New York: Vintage Books, 1967) discuss the quest hero and symbols in the quest. Some passages in Auden's *The Dyer's Hand and Other Essays* (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), particularly in the "Well of Narcissus" section, amplify and refine some of Auden's statements about the quest hero. One often neglected but very revealing essay by Auden arranges heroes in the three Kierkegaardian categories of the Aesthetic, the Ethical, and the Religious: "Purely Subjective," *The Chimera*, 2 (Summer 1943), pp. 3-22.
- <sup>3</sup> *Quest for the Necessary: W. H. Auden and the Dilemma of the Divided Consciousness* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1968), p. 111. Although Auden's evaluation of Jung does not appear in a critical article, Auden's appreciation of Kierkegaard can be determined from several sources: "A Preface to Kierkegaard," *New Republic*, 110 (15 May 1944), 683-84, 686. "A Knight of Doleful Countenance" [rev. of Kierkegaard's *Journals and Papers*], *New Yorker*, 44 (25 May 1968), pp. 141-42, 146-48, 151-54, 157-58; rpt. in Auden's *Forewords & Afterwords* (New York: Random House, 1972), pp. 182-97. "Introduction" to *The Living Thoughts of Kierkegaard* (New York: David McKay, 1952); rpt. in *Forewords & Afterwords*, pp. 168-81.

- 4 "Psychology and Art To-Day," *The Arts To-Day*, ed. Geoffrey Grigson (London: John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1935), p. 21; Edward Callan, "W. H. Auden's First Dramatization of Jung: The Charade of the Loving and Terrible Mothers," *Comparative Drama*, 11 (1977), 287-302. Callan also persuasively argues that the four characters in *The Age of Anxiety* represent Jung's four functions in "Allegory in Auden's *The Age of Anxiety*," *Twentieth Century Literature*, 10 (January 1965), 155-65. In the same essay, Callan suggests that the third part of *The Age of Anxiety*, "The Seven Stages," may be derived from Jung's essay, "The Seven Stages of Life." Also Jung, according to Jolande Jacobi, posited seven stages in the "course taken by the contents of the unconscious." See Jacobi's *The Psychology of C. G. Jung*, Foreword by C. G. Jung, trans. Ralph Manheim (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1968), p. 82. The most recent edition of *Psychological Types*, and the one the following quotations are from, is *Psychological Types*, trans. H. G. Baynes, rev. R. F. C. Hull, Vol VI of *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, Bollingen Series, 20 (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1976).
- 5 "A Literary Transference," *Southern Review*, 6 (Summer 1940), p. 80. Mendelson, *Early Auden* (New York: Viking Press, 1981), p. 286 n.
- 6 *Collected Poems*, ed. Edward Mendelson (New York: Random House, 1976), pp. 164, 238, and 275-78, respectively. Unless specified, all further references to Auden's poems are to this edition and will be cited parenthetically in the text. Unfortunately, this edition, as most of the later editions of Auden's poetry, deletes the "Notes" from the *New Year Letter*.
- 7 *The Integration of the Personality*, trans. Stanley Dell (Farrar and Rinehart, 1939), p. 229, see also p. 109.
- 8 Auden defined man as "a copulative relation between a subject ego and a predicate self." See *The Enchafed Flood*, pp. 117-18. Auden also presents this in "The Prolific and the Devourer," an unpublished notebook which is printed in *Antaeus*, 42 (Summer 1981), pp. 7-8. The last quotation and the following titles of the sonnets are from the first published version of "The Quest" in the *New Republic*.
- 9 Igor Stravinsky, W. H. Auden, and Chester Kallman, *The Rake's Progress* (Boosey & Hawkes, 1951; rpt. Columbia Records, 1964), p. 12.
- 10 Auden's triptych and some of its implications are presented in Kenneth Lewars' article, "Auden's Swarthmore Chart," *Connecticut Review*, 1 (April 1968), pp. 45-56.
- 11 Lucy S. McDiarmid and John McDiarmid, "Artifice and Self-Consciousness in Auden's *The Sea and the Mirror*," *Contemporary Literature*, 16 (Summer 1975), p. 364.
- 12 The opposing dialectical terms ascribed to Caliban and Ariel are taken from Auden's manuscript diagram for *The Sea and the Mirror*. In the diagram, Caliban and the sea are linked on the left of Prospero by "Immediacy"; on the right of Prospero, "Possibility" links Ariel and the mirror. The chart is reproduced by Spears, p. 247. Several Shakespearean critics have produced mythic or symbolic readings of *The Tempest*: G. Wilson Knight's *Myth and Miracle* (1929), D. G. James's *Scepticism and Poetry* (1937), E. M. W. Tillyard's *Shakespeare's Last Plays* (1938), and Theodore Spencer's *Shakespeare and the Nature of Man* (1942). Frank Kermode also suggests in a note that *The Tempest* provides rich material for a Jungian interpretation: "Introduction," *The Tempest*, Arden Shakespeare (London: Methuen & Co., 1964), p. lxxxiii.