MYSTERY AND REALISM IN THE
POETRY OF WALTER DE LA MARE

ABSTRACT
THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF
Doctor of Philosophy
IN
ENGLISH

BY
RAHATULLAH KHAN
M.A., M.Phil. (Alig.)
Lecturer in English

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH &
MODERN EUROPEAN LANGUAGES
ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY
ALIGARH (INDIA)
1997
ABSTRACT

Walter John de la Mare (1873-1956) is generally estimated as a children’s poet of nursery rhymes, which are characterised by an eerie and mysterious atmosphere full of supernatural creatures and other mysterious presences. At most he has been branded as a poet of mystery and dream, with reluctance to confront reality, and hence an escapist. Majority of critics, notable among whom are R.L. Megroz, H.C. Duffin, Forrest Reid, C.B. Cox, A.E. Dyson, etc., have laid emphasis on this element of mystery and dream to the extent as, if no other element of de la Mare’s poetic artistry exists in his poetry. I have made no attempt to refute these critics but a balanced and comprehensive appraisal of de la Mare’s poetic genius can hardly ignore the other relatively neglected significant element in his poetry, i.e. realism. My study does acknowledge the perceptive critical stance on de la Mare by critics like D.R. McCrosson but emphatically proposes to disagree with their conclusion contained in the evaluative statement of McCrosson: “to claim that de la Mare’s poetry is realistic in the accepted sense of the word would be to do a disservice. . . .” By highlighting the realistic elements in de la Mare’s poetry the present study aims at supplementing the existing scholarship on the poet.
The study is divided into seven sections. In the Introductory Chapter relevant biographical and literary information, which has a bearing on de la Mare's poetic genius, has been given. Chapters 2 - 6 deal with a detailed analysis of the poems of de la Mare, including his own points of view on poetry. The final chapter is by way of recapitulation of the conclusions emerging from the preceeding chapters.

In the analysis of the poems an attempt has been made to prove two things: first a reconfirmation, with convincing textual documentation of what major critics on de la Mare have determined, i.e. that de la Mare's poetry dealt with the mysteries and the fascination for the created world, especially flora, fauna and the ethereal creatures. There is no conflicting the fact that de la Mare's fascination for this world of phenomena is strongly tinged with the sense of mystery, wonder and mysticism. His poems on dream, child, Nature and the supernatural beings have, however, been considered as an escapist creative endeavour by de la Mare. This tinted view of de la Mare's poetry has been counter-pointed by the presence of the poet's faculty of close observation and focussing on the minutiae of details. The humble submission has been that these two aspects of de la Mare's poetic genius will
yield a richer interpretative dividence than the truncated approach discernable in the considerable bulk of de la Mare scholarship up to date.

The other aspect of de la Mare's artistry, ignored hitherto, that he was reluctant to confront realities of life has been dealt with in some detail in the later half of the study. There are critics who are of the opinion that de la Mare was totally detached from his times and that he sought refuge in the world of dream and fantasy and hence is an "escapist" which I have attempted to refute in the present study. He did write about fairy land, dreams, magic, and supernatural being but he was always rooted in actualities. How a sensitive mind, like that of de la Mare, could have remained aloof when the two World Wars burst on his head, leaving behind a trail of suffering. He was certainly aware of these two Wars and the condition of humanity at that time as is clear from some of his poems written either at the time of the Wars or between the inter-War period. They clearly have a bearing upon the mental agony that the poet had suffered. In these poems "the lyrical sadness" of Walter de la Mare becomes more explicit. Man is presented as a pathetic figure, meeting life with a sigh, troubled by the past and afraid of the future. Out of this despondent view of man's earthly lot
arises a personal melancholy which prompts these poems in which one finds an unaccustomed note of anger at callousness, militarism and cold hearts unmoved by the call of humanity.

The poets of the period passed through traumatic war experiences. Spender in the thirties conveyed the communist manifesto while Auden in the new socio-political upsurge wrote “Spain”. All these poets wrote of modern life, internal as well as external: “Smokeless chimneys, damaged bridges, rotting wharves and choked canals.” Some of de la Mare’s best poems about the World War I are found in the volume Motley (1918); the title-poem is important in this regard. Other poems which need mention are “The Marionettes,” “The Hospital” and “News,” etc.

After the World War I was over there began the post-war social crisis. The two volumes which deal with this aspect of the post-war conditions are the The Veil (1921), and The Fleeting (1933). In “The Veil” de la Mare writes of the underdog and their sufferings. “In The Dock” he describes the criminals: “Pallid, misshapen be stands,” “mute as fish close-netted”. In “The Hospital” de la Mare thinks of the hospital where the war afflicted persons were admitted as an “Inn with Death” while in “The Slum Child” he writes about the homeless and the hungry.
During the World War II poets were shaken out of their being. In the midst of the holocaust de la Mare wrote in September 1940, the great poem of futility, "The Unutterable".

These few instances from Walter de la Mare's poetry written either at the time of the Wars or between the inter-war period show a clear period-perceptiveness. Like other war poets, de la Mare was also undergoing the same traumatic experience of war. He has, in his poems, not only recorded the happenings of the time but has also shown the reactions of the sensitive mind of a poet. These poems alone are a clear testimony to the fact that de la Mare was not an "escapist" as some of his eminent critics have alleged. These war poems, along with his attitude to Nature and humanity at large, confirm Walter de la Mare as a thorough realist who knew his times very well.
MYSTERY AND REALISM IN THE
POETRY OF WALTER DE LA MARE

THESIS
SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF
Doctor of Philosophy
IN
ENGLISH

BY
RAHATULLAH KHAN
M.A., M.Phil. (Alig.)
Lecturer in English

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH &
MODERN EUROPEAN LANGUAGES
ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY
ALIGARH (INDIA)
1997
PREFACE

Walter John de la Mare (1873-1956) is generally estimated as a children's poet of nursery rhymes, which are characterised by an eerie and mysterious atmosphere full of supernatural creatures, like fairies, ghosts and other mysterious presences. At most he has been branded as a poet of mystery and dream, with reluctance to confront reality, and hence an escapist. Majority of critics, notable among whom are R.L. Megroz, H.C. Duffin, Forrest Reid, C.B. Cox, A.E. Dyson, etc., have laid emphasis on this element of mystery and dream to the extent as if no other element of de la Mare's poetic artistry exists in his poetry. I have made no attempt to refute these critics but have rather argued that a balanced and comprehensive appraisal of de la Mare's poetic genius can hardly ignore the other relatively neglected significant element in his poetry, i.e. realism. My study does acknowledge the perceptive critical stance on de la Mare by critics like D.R. McCrosson but emphatically proposes to disagree with their conclusion contained in the evaluative statement of McCrosson: “to claim that de la Mare's poetry is realistic in the accepted sense of the word would be to do a disservice . . . .” By highlighting the realistic elements in de la Mare's poetry the present study
aims at supplementing the existing scholarship on the poet. The study has made use of the relevant information from my M.Phil dissertation as well.

The study is divided into seven sections. In the Introductory chapter relevant biographical and literary information, which has a bearing upon the development of de la Mare's poetic genius, has been given. Chapters 2-6 deal with a detailed analysis of the poems of de la Mare, including his own points of view on poetry. The final chapter is by way of the recapitulation of the general conclusions emerging from the preceding chapters. A select bibliography has been appended at the end.

I wish to acknowledge my gratitude for the valuable assistance, guidance, inspiration and encouragement which I have received from Professors Masoodul Hasan, S.M. Jafar Zaki, M.H. Khan and K. S. Misra, of the Department of English, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh. Thanks are due to the staff of the Maulana Azad Library, AMU, Banaras Hindu University Library, Varanasi, Mysore University Library, Mysore, Kerala University Library, Trivandrum and National Library, Calcutta, for helping me in a variety of ways in
collecting material for my present study. Thanks are also due to all those friends of mine, especially to Dr. A.R. Kidwai, Dept. of English, AMU, who have encouraged and helped me in the completion of the present study.

Aligarh

February 1997

(Rahatullah Khan)
# Table of Contents

**Preface**  
{i - iii}

**Chapter I**  
Introduction : Biographical and Literary Background  
2 - 41

**Chapter II**  
Elements of Mystery : The World of Dream and Imagination  
42 - 80

**Chapter III**  
Elements of Mystery : The Haunted World  
81-118

**Chapter IV**  
Elements of Realism : The Phenomenal World  
119-175

**Chapter V**  
Elements of Realism : Animal and the Aviary World  
176-199

**Chapter VI**  
Elements of Realism : Man and the Society  
200-235

**Conclusion**  
236-252

**Select Bibliography**  
253-277
Chapter I

Introduction: Biographical and Literary Background

WALTER JOHN DE LA MARE was born on 25th April 1873 at the little Kentish village of Charlton. His father, James Edward de la Mare, was a church warden and brother to the Rev. Abraham de la Mare, rector of St. Thomas’s Woolwich. Walter de la Mare’s mother, Lucy Sophi, was the daughter of Dr. Colin Arrot Browning, naval surgeon at Woolwich Dockyard, contemporaneously with the presence in Woolwich of the de la Mares.

Dr. Browning was closely associated with the Naval Captain, a Mr. James Conolly. Mr. Conolly’s daughter, Jane, was a bridesmaid at the wedding of Walter de la Mare’s mother and father. Dr. Browning was some distant relation of the Brownings at Hatcham, who came occasionally on Sundays to see them. With the changes of time, one family had slipped away, while the family of Robert Browning will always be
remembered. It is therefore possible to feel a certain mental affinity as well as an opposition in the work of Walter de la Mare and Robert Browning. Walter de la Mare's mother's family who lived at Seven-oaks in the later part of the nineteenth century, besides a connection with Robert Browning, were able to trace an old Scottish ancestry. His father's family, the de la Mare's, were of Huguenot descent.

Walter de la Mare was sent to St. Pauls' Cathedral School, London for his education, there he founded, at the age of sixteen, in September 1889, the School magazine, *The Choristers' Journal*. He was editor of nine issues to which he probably contributed most of the materials. He left the school at Easter 1890, unable to go to College, de la Mare became a book-keeper in the London Office of the Anglo-American (Standard) Oil Company, a job which he kept for eighteen years.

Walter de la Mare's first book to be published was his *Songs of Childhood*. It appeared in 1901 under the
pseudonym, "Walter Ramal". Andrew Lang reviewed the book generously in his "At the Sign of the Ship" monthly causerine in *Longman's Magazine* for March 1902 in the following words:

"New verses which don't find me all of stone are Mr. Walter Ramal's *Songs of Childhood* (longman). The Book is not exactly aimed at the nursery, though a few of the pieces, 'The Fly', 'The Silver-Penny', 'Bunches of Grapes', 'The Hare', and several others, seem to me almost as likely to please even little children as the old favourites, the traditional nursery rhymes, 'Try'. 'The Buckle'; it is like the vague reverie of our childhood long ago. When we possessed the secret that we have lost, and shall never find again, 'the key of the happy golden land'". .... Mr. Ramal, with some technical defects easily remedied, has what Charles Lamb

---

1. Megroz, R.L. *Walter de la Mare: A Biographical and Critical Study* (London: Hodder and Stoughton Ltd., 1928), p.44. But majority of de la Mare's critics and biographers are of the opinion that this very first collection of Poem came out in 1902.
calls 'a fairy way of writing'.

It was in 1908 that Walter de la Mare was granted a Civil List pension of a hundred pounds annually by the Asquith government and he retired from business to devote himself entirely to writings. In 1948 Walter de la Mare was made a Companion of Honour while in 1953 he received the Order of Merit. Other honours accorded during his later life include: Hon. D.Litt., from Oxford; Hon. Litt. D. from Cambridge; Hon. L.L.D., from St. Andrews; Hon. D.Litt., from Bristol and London; Hon. Fellow, Keble College, Oxford. On June 22, 1956 Walter John de la Mare died at home in Twickenham.

Walter John de la Mare (1873 -1956) was a prolific writer. His first collection of poems Songs of Childhood came out in 1902, and the last one entitled O’Lovely England was published in 1953 shortly before his death. In this way his writing career spans fifty years, from the Victorian, the Georgian and the contemporary of the

---

twenties, to the fifties. During this period of over fifty year de la Mare published novels, one drama, several collections of short stories and several well known anthologies with very valuable critical introductions and notes. These works reveal the multi-dimensional genius and varied interest of the poet. Inspite of his individual personality and inclinations he was also a product of his times and therefore, must have been deeply influenced by his age and the changes which were taking place. It is therefore appropriate to present, in the following pages a brief account of the major events and literary movements which were the reigning influences on Walter de la Mare as a poet.

In 1888 Matthew Arnold died; in 1889 Robert Browning. As poets they had represented the two extremes of the Victorian thought. Browning with the robust philosophy of "Rabbi Ben Ezra", with his trust in God and Love, was the poet of faith. Arnold, "chartered by some unknown Powers" was led to a world of strife, of confused alarms, a world where there is "no certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain," "where ignorant armies clash by night." In 1892 Tennyson passed away. He had known the conflict and the strife that Arnold knew — known once but his voice, when it was audible, was a voice of reconciliation, of hope, of good that shall fall, "at last, far off---- at last to all." The entire trend in the Victorian

3. "Dower Beach."
4. In "Two Voices", Break, Break, Break and some lyrics in In Memoriam.
literature had been humanitarian. There had been great discontent in the ‘hungry forties.’ Old values of God and religion had been challenged. The repercussions of the Chartist and the Oxford Movement lasted for many years. But gradually science and ethics began to move on utilitarian lines. With the widening of the franchise, politics and economics became more and more concerned with society as such.

In poetry there were reactionary forces working subterraneously, against the spirit of the times. The Pre-Raphaelite Movement, for instance, was a mild revolt against the pre-occupation of the major Victorian poets with the affairs and institutions of men. The poets of this ‘Brotherhood’ turned from the current problems to the spirit and temper of the Middle Ages. Their aestheticism, their exploitation of foreign sources, French, Italian and Greek; their concentration on details ---- all these signified a detachment from contemporary affairs and life. According to A.C. Ward the key note of the twentieth century literature is 'Interrogation', that is a sceptical examination and exposure of those values and conventions which were dear to the hearts of the Victorians. But this is only the culmination of a process which may be traced as far back as the 70's of the last century, when the Pre-Raphaelites simply ignored the social life and its values. The young romantics of the 90's lived and wrote as free intellectual aristocrats, whose talk, dress, behavior and
writings were deliberately designed to outrage the sensibilities of the decorous society.

On the other hand Victorianism did not end with the reign of Queen Victoria, because the Edwardian period, when much of the early poetry of the present century was written ---- poetry which technically came to be known as "Georgian" ---- was simply an Indian summer of Victorian optimism," a brief flash of its sun-set glow before it was swallowed in the World War I.

B.tfor Evans has commented pertinently on the spirit of the pre-war period of the present century:

The opening years of the century, particularly from 1906 to 1914, had been full of hope. They formed a period of economic prosperity, of expanding opportunity, and, in many minds, an increased faith in humanity, and in its capacity for progress. England was not without self-criticism in those years, but it was allied to a generous belief that the 'Island Pharisees' were capable of improvement, that social injustice could be eliminated by a process of gradualism, and that Imperialism could in time and without violence be assimilated to democratic ideals. Above all, it was to be
a world where man would have increasing opportunities of exercising his attainments to the full.\(^5\)

We may, therefore, fix the commencement of the first World War, as the point when the spirit of modern literature, under many influences, old and new, started shaping itself. So when we speak of the modern (or 'modernist' to be precise) poetry we have in mind mostly the poetry which was developed, in various stages, between the two world wars. The pre-war or Georgian poetry belongs to this century only chronologically. It was, in spirit, backward-looking, not a revolt so much as a revival or, we may say, a survival of a purged and diluted sort of romanticism, a moon to the sun of its vigorous parent-stock of the early nineteenth century. The new poetry, which followed in its wake, as a deliberate reaction against romanticism, was evolved under the pressure of the social and intellectual conditions which were shaping the complex modern sensibility, which the makers of the new poetry were anxious to articulate in appropriate style and technique. It is relevant, therefore, to briefly explain these conditions and the shaping forces in order to have a clear insight into the nature and spirit of the poetry of the time.

\(^5\). English Literature Between the Wars, p.1-2.
The most obvious feature of this age is its chaotic nature, and the chaos is many-sided and almost all-embracing; it covers political, economic, cultural, moral, religious, literary and domestic spheres of life. In politics nationalism and democracy were on trial during the War, the end of which saw the rise of totalitarianism on the one hand and Internationalism, on the other. While attempts were under way to make the world secure for peace, the dictators were busy, organizing and running up the national psychology for the next war. In the economic field the faith in British prosperity was shattered completely and the whole economy was thrown out of the gear.

The world war came as a shattering climax of the processes of disintegration which had started in the previous age. Take, for example, the effect of the Industrial revolution which led to the multiplication of factories and the inordinate expansion of cities. The flow of labour from the rural areas to the urban industrial centers meant the breakup of the communal life in the villages. The men and women who became the factory hands had no roots in the cities and the ties binding the crowd of labourers were the artificial links forged by common profession and cash nexus. Carlyle and other social prophets had already spoken of the city population as the conglomeration of human atoms governed by economic interest
merely. But the urban nature of our civilization had perforce to be accepted by the poets and they drew upon the urban life of the industrial civilization with the same zeal and concentration of purpose as the Romantics had shown in their preoccupation with the world of nature, 'the mighty world of eye and ear', to which they were prone to retreat to avoid the contagion of the hectic life in towns with 'its weariness, fever and fret'.

Religious chaos was already present in the Victorian age, when the conventional Christian faith and the biblical view of the universe and nature of man were gradually and quite effectively undermined by the scientific discoveries and higher criticism, so much so that the sensitive soul of Arnold clearly heard 'the melancholy, long, withdrawing roar' of the tide of faith receding from the shores of the earth, leaving man in darkness and in isolation, blindly to struggle for survival:

And we are here as on a darkling plain,
Swept with the confused alarms of struggle and flight.
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

The theme of isolation of the modern man, from God, from nature and from family and society predominates in modern poetry. The consciousness of religious chaos accounts
for the frantic search for substitute religion, for the unprecedented multiplication of spiritual bodies and sets in Europe and also for the ultimate retreat of many tortured souls into the fold of Christianity, and the readiness with which other eager souls clutched at the philosophical and religious doctrines of India and China, at Buddhism and Vedant.

The moral chaos resulted from the collapse of old values and conventions, the growing freedom of women and frequent opportunities for mixing together of the members of the opposite sexes. The union between man and woman became purely sexual, a momentary coupling of animals for the gratification of the natural, sexual appetite and it found a scientific sanction in the psychological discoveries of Freud. Sex became a principal preoccupation of literature, which treated its various forms, its perversions and abnormal developments with a pagan frankness which more than matches the ridiculous prudery of the Victorians to taboo it or disguise its nakedness with decorous euphemisms.

This was the condition of society when the war burst upon Europe as an active and powerful volcano, consigning the flowers of nations into a living inferno. The broken heads and dismembered bodies, the ruined cities and shattered hearts were the eloquent external symbols of the total disintegration of the old cultural structure, and
Lawrence rightly recorded in his Kangaroo (1915) that old London was dead. This chaos was a dark reality which literature was called upon to diagnose, to fathom, to reduce to a momentary order, and, if possible, to transcend. It was felt that the mode, style, and technique, a new mode of expression, of poetic organization were needed. The Innovations in style, technique and structure were governed by the revolutionary discoveries of the contemporary philosophers, scientists, psychologists and anthropologists, which the poets accepted and adapted with alacrity.

The years during and after the first World War were marked by many radical and revolutionary discoveries and developments which were bound to affect the outlook and style of literature. We may catalogue some of the important ones:

In the political field the most significant event was the emergence of Marxism, with its economic interpretation of history, emphasis on class-struggle, on the subordination of art and artist to its ideology, which aimed at liquidating capitalism to set up communism and classless society. This ideology favoured the cultivation of socialist realism to sharpen the sense of class conflict at the heart of the society. During the years of economic depression and unemployment many poets and writers turned to Marxism for the panacea of the economic malaise and exploitation of the poem. The poets of the 30's especially, Auden and his friends, invoked the
principles of Marx for ensuring social and economic justice. But the attraction did not prove lasting.

More revolutionary still was the scientific change brought about by the New Physics in the hand, prominently, of Einstein, propounder of the theory of Relativity. The highlights of the new discovery are, that there is no continuity, solidity or causality in nature, that matter has no substance in the final analysis, and time and space are not distinct entities. This gave rise to a concept of time which has been adapted by many a poet and novelist. It simply means that the division of time into Past, Present and Future is artificial, because it is the present moment itself which is real, and in it all the moments past and all the moments called future meet, blend and have their being. This is known as the 'Isness' of time, which has found support in the theory of 'duree' or duration propounded by the French philosopher, Bergson, the essence of which is contained in the words of Bruno:

In every point of duration is beginning without end and end without beginning. It is the centre of two infinities. Therefore the whole of duration is one infinite instant, both beginning and end as immeasurable space is an infinite minimum as centre.\(^6\)

---

\(^6\) Quoted by Lawrence Durrell. *Key to Modern Poetry*, p.32
This idea of time is as old as Plato’s philosophy and has been a staple of religious and mystic speculation. But it was for the first time that science joined hands with philosophy to set the seal of approval upon this ‘time-space continuum’. Its impact on literature, especially on the structure of novels or poems, was deep and pervasive. Poets and novelists alike discarded the old concept of plot as the progress of the narrative in a straight line towards a definite end or destination. In Eliot, Proust and Joyce the straight-line structure has yielded place to a circular motion, where the parts are ‘coiling and uncoiling upon themselves, embedded in the stagnant flux and reflux of a medium which is always changing yet always the same’.

Two more concepts were given currency to by the Theory of Relativity, which were quickly absorbed into literature. The first was the concept of ‘relativity’ itself, which implies that nothing has a permanent value, that the opposites are identical and that an absolute judgement or valuation of reality is possible no more.

The second concept is a re-affirmation of the old idea of the German transcendentalists that is perception.

---

7. Ibid., p.29.
'subject', the perceiver and the perceived are identical. Coleridge put the idea, in a nut-shell, in the following well-known lines:

O Lady! we receive but what we give
And in our life alone does nature live,
Ours is her wedding garment and ours her shroud.

The landscapes in modern poetry are, consequently psychological, character and setting are identical, the dramatic persona, a Prufrock or Gerontion, is embodied in the natural scene under observation, 'the light reflected is the light bestowed'.

Thus the style of assertion peculiar to the romantic poets has been replaced by a style of tentative, non-committal statement, and their single-dimensional poetry, dominated by serious conviction and solemn affirmation has been discarded in favour of what I.A. Richards has described as 'synthetical poetry'. 'Synthetical poetry' is better suited to the complexity and scepticism of modern consciousness, because here opposite and discordant elements are united and gravity mingles with levity, leaving little room for a parody of the poem.
If the New Physics made the external universe mysterious, discontinuous and unpredictable, the new psychology of Freud or psychoanalysis made the human individual himself equally Protean and self-contradictory. One recalls here the significant remark of Virginia Woolf that in the year 1910 human nature changed completely and literature turned from the reality external to man, to the reality within him, the reality of his inner consciousness. In *The Principles of Psychology*, 1890, William James, the philosopher, had used the phrase 'stream of consciousness' to describe this reality. He visualized human consciousness as a swift-moving stream, 'an amalgam of all that we have experienced and continue to experience... 'the rush of thought is so head-long that it almost always brings us to the conclusions before we can arrest it', which is as difficult as 'the seizing of a spinning top to catch its motion'.

This concept of consciousness led to the creation of a new kind of fiction during the years of War, by Proust, Joyce and Virginia Woolf, which came to be known as 'the stream of consciousness' fiction. In this fiction a single character plunges itself into the stream of its consciousness and shores up a set of significant bits, out of 'a myriad impressions' which constitute the inner life, a blended unity of past and present. The technique was subjective and sounded the death-knell of plot, character, description etc. which had
been integral to the structure of the orthodox fiction. The technique proved handy to poetry as well.

Then came the revolutionary theory of 'depth psychology' at the hands of Freud, who, promoted by the pioneering work of poets and philosophers, undertook a clinical examination of the human psyche and a systematic, scientific analysis of the nature and operation of the human subconscious and unconscious. Freud approached man biologically and made eroticism or sex-instinct the central fact of human psyche. Human consciousness became a thin layer over a vast sea of a primitive region known as 'unconscious, or 'id' to which all the repressed instincts are relegated. But these repressed instincts are never defunct, but lie in wait for the opportunity to rush up from their hiding places. This they generally do in dreams, when they assume strange disguises to evade the 'censor' of the moral consciousness of the dreamer. The interpretation of dreams, therefore, became the necessary tool for the scientific probe into the patient's inner life and nature. Freud's description of the dream-language is very interesting and underlines many traits which are shared by the style and technique of modern poetry. Freud arrived at the conclusion that: (a) The dream always turns temporal relations into spatial ones. (b) The laws of logic do not operate in the process of Id. Contradictory impulses exist in it side by side without neutralizing each other. (c) In the Id time and the
changes wrought by it are negated. (d) Concerning its language Freud observes, "All the verbal apparatus by means of which the more subtle thoughts are expressed, the conjunction and prepositions etc. are lacking. The language consists of pictures and images. The dream-thoughts are condensed into few unities; and they are marked by displacement'. There is a logic in the apparent illogicality of the dream. Its images are united by the law of free-association which often defy rational analysis.\footnote{Durrell, \textit{Op.Cit.}, pp. 50-51.}

Freud declared human personality to be a strange mixture of rationality and irrationality, so that man was no more a rational, consistent and harmonious whole, but a bundle of contradictions, a compound of half a dozen different selves.

Freud's discoveries proved very influential, the dream-logic became part of the literary technique, and 'free association' of ideas the main principle in the expression of mental processes. Under such circumstances Browning's dramatic monologue was changed into 'the interior monologue' to externalise or dissect the subconscious. It gave rise to expressionistic technique and cinematographic presentation of several operations simultaneously.
But artistically more significant were the discoveries of Jung who broke away from Freud in the conception of the unconscious as the lumber-room of all repressed instincts. For him the unconscious is the creative mother of the conscious self and has two divisions, the Personal Unconscious and the Collective Unconscious. The Personal unconscious is the mansion of personal memories and impressions, while the more primitive part, the Collective Unconscious, is the region of racial memories which unite the sophisticated and the primitive parts of man, and it is the activisation of this part which brings about 'the union mystique' of the individual and the race, leading to the production of a great work of art. The Collective Unconscious is the repository of archetypal symbols, present alike in myth, religion and art, each representing the psychological crises and experiences through which the race has passed. The most universal among these 'archetypes' are the symbols representing the law of birth-death-rebirth, operative alike in the life of nature and the spiritual life of man.

This emphasis on myth was supported by the researches of the anthropologists, like Frazer, whose monumental work, the *Golden Bough*, has proved to be the most seminal work for the modern poets and novelists. Commenting upon the significance of the anthropological and Jungian interpretations of the old myths Elizabeth Drew has observed:
Modern scholarship now recognizes that myth is no dead form, a relic of antiquity, an empty survival. It is true that the ancient stories we call 'myths' are primitive legends expressing man's first response to his world, but the manner of that response springs from a faculty alive in all ages of man's existence. The mythical method is the presentation of experience in symbolic form of human expression. Long before man developed the power of logical discourse and intellectual interpretation, the material transmitted to his mind through his senses moulded itself into meaning in myth. The outer world of physical nature, of human character, action and endeavour, and the inner world of his own conscious and unconscious response, formed themselves in him, and were in turn formed and developed by him, into symbolic configurations, into metaphorical conceptions and expressions. It was the first step of the primitive man towards 'order and form'; giving of imaginative shape and significance to the totality of his experience... primitive myth always creates a pattern in which man beings himself into significant relationship with the mysterious forces outside the actualities of his daily life.9

Eliot's comment upon the significance of 'the mythical method' appeared in his review of Joyce's *Ulysses* in *The Dial*, November, 1923:

Psychology...ethnology and the Golden Bough have concurred to make possible what was impossible even a few years ago. Instead of narrative method, we may now use the mythical method. It is, I seriously believe, a step towards making the modern world possible for art, towards order and form.

Man in relation to the universe of nature was the subject of myth, and man in relation to the past ages of humanity has been the theme of history. Consequently the philosophy of history and speculations about its inner meaning or rhythm have engaged the attention of man in all ages, though interpretations of history have differed from one age to another, or even from one thinker to another. The Romantic movement itself was based upon the reverence of the past, a nostalgia for the days when life was more spacious, certain and single-minded in its aim. But this glorification of the past did not hamper the belief that history was a progress, a linear advance either towards 'some far off event to which the whole creation moves' or, scientifically speaking, to some golden age of international amity, peace and prosperity. Even Marxist
interpretation of history tacitly accepts the idea of progress in its assumption that the class conflict present at the heart of society will advance in its sharpness and tension till the climax is reached in the victory of the proletariat and the eventual establishment of a classless society.

The experiences of the first World War, however, almost shattered the romantic concept of history, the concept of progress, and prepared the ground for the favourable reception of the cyclical conception of history, propounded by Vico, a 17th-century Italian scholar. History, according to Vico, was not a progression, but a recurrence. Civilization develops, declines and dies in one phase and upon its collapse the second stage starts along the same pattern of growth, decline and death. The post-war years brought into prominence the theory that the cycle of the Christian civilization was coming to an end and the next cycle was about to commence. The very title of Spengler's popular book, The Decline of the West is fraught with significance. No wonder, therefore, that 'wheel' is as important a symbol in modern literature as 'pattern'.

The Christian Hulme and Eliot may place the source of the meaning of history outside the temporal and secular sequences, yet their preoccupation with history and its
meaning is a confirmation of the universal interest aroused by the subject in our confused age.

The awareness of the growing complexity, confusion and anxiety during the years of war intensified the desire of the poets to effect a complete break with the romantic past and develop a style and technique more appropriate to the spirit of the new age. The inter-War years, therefore, have been marked by many technical 'isms' which have cumulatively tended to transform the structure and texture of modern poetry.

The first important attempt to initiate a new technique in poetry was made by the Imagists led by T.E. Hulme and Ezra Pound. Imagism rested upon three basic tenets: (a) Direct statement of thing, whether subjective or objective, which implies absolute economy of expression, and as close a resemblance of the word to the real object-as art can achieve. Hulme insisted upon accurate, precise and concrete description, each word being a definite image. (b) To use absolutely no word that is not essential and ceaselessly endeavour to discover and employ fresh metaphors and forceful phrases. (c) As regards rhythm, says Pound, 'to compose in the sequence of the musical phrase, not in the sequence of the metronome'. It was a plea for a verse, free and more flexible as contrasted with the formal structure and rhythm which the
altered conditions in the modern age had rendered obsolete and ineffective.

This emphasis on economy, directness and concentration upon the essential, concrete and vivid word meant that an imagist poem will be as brief and static as a Japanese lyric. Pound defined image as 'that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time'. It is the presentation of such a complex instantaneously which give that sense of sudden liberation, that sense of freedom from time-limits and space-limits, that sense of sudden growth, which we experience in the presence of the greatest work of art. This idea is elaborated by William Pratt in the preface to the Imagist Poem: What is the Imagist poem? Essentially it is a moment of revealed truth, rather than a structure of constructive events or thoughts. The plot or argument of older poetry is replaced by a single dominant image, or a quick succession of related images; its effect is meant to be instantaneous rather than cumulative. The following is a good example of an imagist poem:

A touch of cold in Autumn night--
    I walked abroad
    I saw the ruddy moon lean over a hedge like a red-faced farmer.
Imagism, in its later American phase, degenerated into 'Amyism' (after Amy Lowell, its leader) and lost much of its hardness and vigour of precision. Pound and his pupil, Wyndham Lewis, therefore, reacted against it and pleaded for its more vigorous and dynamic variety, which Lewis Christened as Vorticism. Pound and Lewis, however, are different in their conceptions of the image. For Pound, who was influenced by the Chinese 'ideogram', the idea of an image was three-dimensional, like a piece of sculpture, vivid, static and foursquare like pictures on the surface of Keat's Grecian Urn or in his ode 'To Autumn', though more abstract, hard and dry in nature, almost geometrical. Wyndham Lewis, on the other hand, stood for violence and primitive energy in art so that dynamic images may flow, the one into another, making a strong and exhilarating confusion as the swirling currents of water in a whirlpool or like the tidal waves in the verses of Whitman. Imagism was short lived; it gradually merged into the wider and more complex current of Symbolism, the most pervasive movement in modern literature.

Symbolism is a principal strand in the complex fabric of the modern poetic style and is derived originally from France. In the late 19th century, while English poetry was moving towards decadence, France was bubbling with new creative and critical activities so much so that in the first decade of the present century young Eliot was convinced that
the decadent English literature must be crossed by its vigorous French counterpart in order to regain a fresh lease of life. Eliot's opinion was supported by Pound also, who described the influence of Paris as indispensable for the health of arts:

Paris is the laboratory of ideas; it is there that poisons can be tested, and new modes of sanity be discovered. It is there that the antiseptic conditions of laboratory exist. That is the function of Paris.

Symbolism, in a general sense, has always been a part and parcel of magic, religion and poetry; what the French symbolists did was simply to discard the old symbols and invent the new private symbols, the meanings of which were known to them only and the reader had no key to unlock their mysteries. The basis of symbolism is the theory of 'correspondence', which means that every material and natural object may be used as a symbol for a spiritual, moral and intellectual idea or ideas which can be suggested in no other way, so concrete, familiar and significant. The affinity between the ideas and the objects rests upon the various known attributes of the object. Take the case of 'rock' which is strong, fixed steadfast and capable of providing rest or support, so it becomes the symbol of God or the church, friendship or love or trusted leadership. But the rock is also dry and barren. It breaks into fragments under the fierce light
of the sun, so it may also stand for spiritual barrenness and disintegration. So, as the religious mystic felt the need of describing the ineffable union of man and woman in marriage, and for him the momentary but intense joy of sexual union became a fit symbol for the speechless bliss of the union of soul (Bride) with God (the Bridegroom).

Symbolism, therefore, is a way of saying or suggesting things which cannot be expressed so richly, effectively and pregnantly in any other way, and the value of a symbol depends upon its expansiveness, its power to suggest multiple meanings, only a few of which may be known to the reader or intended by the poet. One may recall here a significant remark of W.B. Yeats:

It is only by ancient symbols, symbols that have numberless meanings besides the one or two the writer lays an emphasis on, or the half score he knows of, that any highly subjective art can escape from the barrenness and the shallowness of a too conscious arrangement.10

In such symbols the complexity and even obscurity arises from the infinite echoes and reverberations of meanings concentrated in concrete objects, familiar yet mysterious.

10. *Idea of Good and Evil*, p. 127
It was in the 19th century, however, that the symbolist technique was given a new twist or orientation at the hands of 'the decadent' French poets, headed by Baudelaire under circumstances peculiar to the age. The artist felt isolated in the materialistic society of the industrial age. Isolation bred a sense of pride and superiority. He prized his vision and deep insight into reality, which could not be expressed in the debased language of the marketplace. So he had to devise a pattern of symbols, converting even the sordid details of the dirty city and its dirtier slums into the stuff of his poetical style. As he was opposed to convention and did not care for the public taste, he symbols used by him were mostly personal and private, for which he alone held the key, so that the reader desirous of understanding him must rise to his height.

The movement in France was directly opposed to the elegant style of the Parnassian poets who concentrated upon the vivid, concrete representation of the surface of life. Baudelair, the father of the movement, has explained the origin of the symbolic attitude in the following words:

In certain almost supernatural states of the soul the depth of life is revealed in ordinary everyday happenings; ordinary life then becomes the symbol."
from external world corresponded to his own inner life and thus the world became a storehouse of images to be evoked and loaded with deep spiritual meaning by the magic of his imagination. The technique required a flexible medium, and Baudelaire invented a poetic prose musical but rhymeless, supple and delicate, changing insensibly with every nuance of thought and feeling.

With Rimbaud magic dream and confusion of senses became the devices for escaping the humdrum world of everyday life in order to be able to perceive the depth of reality. The boundary of Baudelaire's opium-dream was thus extended to delirium and his flexible style made infinitely more flexible. Paul Verlai made his own contribution with his verbal music, free metrics and renderings of obscure sensations in a precise and vivid language.*

But the high priest of the movement was Mallarme, a devoted, mystical artist, lost in the contemplation of words and symbols and peeling off all the familiar associations of the language in order to mould it into a fit medium for the translation of his spiritual dreams and visions. Words became musical notes, with verbal incantations, and the poem a mystery to which the reader must find out the key. 'For the symbolist poet like

Mallarme', says Arthur Symons, 'to name is to destroy, to suggest is to create'. This view led often to the expression of vague, undifferentiated emotions, -- emotions mystical but vapourous'.

From France the movement spread into other countries and very soon the various branches of literature were flooded with symbols. Psychology, through Freud and Jung, made its own peculiar contributions, and Symons' seminal book, The Symbolist Movement in Literature (1899) proved to be a great bridge between France and England and deeply influenced W.B. Yeats and T.S. Eliot, who modified and enriched the system and made it a vital movement in modern English literature. Much of the obscurity charged against modern poetry is partly due to this symbolist technique where private and highly obscure images, drawn from the remote fields of science, psychology and learning, are united by the logic of imagination or dream.

In literature realism as a movement has taken many forms. At first it was the personal vision of external reality, the picture of the external world of man and nature passing through and becoming coloured by the peculiar temperament of the observer, like the realism of Chaucer or of Ben Jonson, or of Thackeray. In the late 19th century it became scientific and presented the objective observations of

the external facts and objects with as complete a detachment and fidelity as we associate with the impersonal observations of a scientist. The next step came when under the growing influence of the biological laws of heredity and environment man came to be regarded as a natural object constantly moulded by these forces. This extension of scientific realism came to be known as Naturalism, of which the French novelist, Zola, was the most distinguished first exponent. Zola was influenced by science photography and strove to collect much documentary information and evidence about the family history and surroundings of characters as was possible. He traced the history of generations in succession and focussed attention on the lives of the industrial workers with their crudeness, violence, vulgarity and promiscuity. In this way Zola's naturalism amounted to a sort of 'inverted romanticism', with its interest in primitive humanity, not certainly for the Wordsworthian search for its innate dignity and purity of passion, but for sheer animality of man, without even the least veneer of civilization, which for Rousseau was a loss of man's natural freedom.

Then came the depth psychology of Freud with its emphasis upon the inner reality of the human psyche, the subconscious or unconscious layer, which shifted the attention from the outer to the inner world and led to the development of the extreme form of the realistic technique known as
Surrealism, which arose out of the ashes of Dadaism. Dadaism was officially launched on Feb., 1916, in Zurich, by Tristan Tzara, a Rumanian student of philosophy, and a band of young German artists, who were so thoroughly disgusted with the contemporary civilization that they were resolved to kill it with their mockery and ridicule. They issued manifestoes, exhibited pictures and recited poems in order simply to demonstrate their open rebellion against social decorum, morality, religion and culture. They welcomed "horrified indignation, enjoyed violence and were especially amused in puzzling and outraging the respectable sponsors of the Academy of art and literature.... "Dada was a joke, a hoax, played upon the war-time and post-war Europe. It was against all system, defied all logic and reason; full of sound and fury, it stressed the absolute significance of nothing."

It naturally disintegrated very soon and by 1920 it began to assume a more constructive form as Surrealism in the hands of one of its own supporters -- Andre Breton. Surrealism aimed at the most precise possible externalization of primary reality, the reality of the Freudian unconscious which is beyond forms of reality yet tackled by art. Logic and rationalism were out of date, and artistic discipline, rules of grammar and syntax quite inadequate to fathom this primal, chaotic depth. Breton explained the nature of this new technique in the first Manifesto as 'pure psychic automatism
by which “it is intended to express verbally, in writing, or by other means, the real process of thought. Thought’s diction, in the absence of all control exercised by reason and outside all aesthetic or moral preoccupations.” The main inspiration came from the mechanism of dream, its strange ways of associating images and discordant thoughts. The latent images and fantasies were to be expressed by submerging the mind below the conscious level and allowing the pen to move automatically under the unchecked inspiration of the subconscious impulses. Surrealism was, thus, a negation of logic and control, of all conventions and systems in art, even the negation of Freud’s own scientific method and high aim which was to widen and invigorate the ego by harmonizing it with the ‘id’ or the primitive underself. Surrealism later embraced the communist ideology and its controlled use yielded fruit in the poetry of Dylan Thomas.

The term ‘Expressionism’ has been used in two different senses which must be clearly discriminated at the outset. In its first and earlier sense it is associated with the aesthetics or art theory of the famous Italian philosopher, Croce, who was of the opinion that the real expression which is artistic is internal. As soon as a sensation of the mind becomes initiation, clear and vivid to our consciousness, it has been expressed. A poem, thus, is expressed in the mind of the poet and its written version is simply the externalization or
translation of this inner expression into word-music, for the readers.

But expressionism as an art movement, especially in drama, is the product of war-torn Germany, shocked and disgusted with external realities, its earliest exponents being Strindberg and Kaiser. It was the product of extreme subjectivism and explosive emotional intensity of the artist, driven by society to feed upon his own inner resources, without any free medium of communication with the outside sympathiser. It may be defined as a process of 'objectrivizing the subjective'. 'to project in outer symbol a state of mind, an inner crisis, a psychological condition.

Let us now sum up the nature and the characteristics of the modern poetry, which will help us in studying the poetry of Walter de la Mare.

(a) Modern poetry is the product of a deliberate reaction against the romantic preoccupation with nature and rural situations and characters; against the romantic love of natural beauty, natural images and symbols; against romantic preference for a style of exclusive poetical, colourful, expansive and elaborate.
(b) Comprehensiveness -- Comprehensiveness in modern poetry arises from the wide and diverse fields from which it derives its analogies and references, and also from the heterogeneity of the materials and tones which may enter into the organization of a single poem.

(c) Indirectness -- The romantic poetry is personal, direct and assertive, but the poetry of our day is impersonal and dramatic; the poet himself, like God, in his creation is present everywhere, but seen nowhere. The suggestive power of language has been carried to an extreme limit, and irony, paradox, pun, ambiguity, juxtaposition of diverse and contrary words and images have become part and parcel of the poetry of our complex age. The infusion of the dramatic element into the body of lyrical poetry has led to the popularity of the dramatic monologue, where the musings of the dramatic personae are the sallies from the borderland between the conscious and the sub-conscious, a sort of waking dream, without any apparent system or logic, a medley of images and fragments, which refuses to cohere into an intelligible order.

(d) Quite naturally the reader of the modern poetry stands aghast before 'the cross-word puzzle', and W.B. Yeats rightly complained that 'the book of people no longer exists; we are assailed with a multitude of pamphlets written by specialists for specialists.'

(e) Allusiveness -- Referring to the Metaphysical poets Dr. Johnson observed that they were men of learning and to display their learning was one of their primary aims. Donne tried to incorporate his vast and varied, generally out-of-the-way, learning into his verse, and the modern erudite poets, Pound, Eliot and Auden, have followed the same technique.
The paradox of modern poetry lies in the fact that it began as an attempt to adopt the language of the people, but finally became the language of a 'coterie' and fashioned a new style and technique only to raise a Chinese wall between the poem and the readers whom it is designed to inform, delight and edify.

Water de la Mare chronologically speaking does belong to the twentieth century for all his poems, short stories, novels and anthologies were published between 1902 and 1953, and therefore may be called a modern poet; but he is more popular as a Georgian poet. The content, style and technique of his poetry all confirm him as a Georgian poet beyond any doubt. Walter de la Mare is the only poet besides W.H. Davies, John Drinkwater, W.W. Gibson and Harold Munro, whose poetry found place in all the five volumes of *Georgian Poetry (1911-1922)* edited by Edward Mansh.

The Georgian Movement came to be known by this name since it flourished in the reign of George V. Among the poets under this label the notable ones were Rupert Brooke, John Drinkwater, W.W. Gibson, Harold Monro and Marsh himself.

These poets were anxious to establish new forms and to experiment in other ways also and it was precisely with
these ends in view that they enthusiastically defended free-
verse and some of them even practised it. But by and large,
they were conventional and they seldom strayed outside the
main English tradition, and where they did so they were the
least successful. "They present a pageant of the English
countryside, stemming from Cowper and Tennyson, though
brought into a twentieth-century focus --Martin Armstrong's
poem "Miss Thompson goes Shopping", Edmund Blunden's Alms-
women (both these poems are dated 1920), Sassoon's "The Old
Huntsman", are examples, and there are others, by the
Hundred, in the work of the poets from Brooke to Drinkwater,
and in poets virtually forgotten --A. Hugh Fisher, Rowland
Thirlmere, F.W.Harvey, and (almost the last of the uneducated
poets) Alfred Williams."11

The main tradition of the Georgians was pastoral
and many of the Georgians were pastoral writers whose
vaguely pantheistic attitude to the English scene has been
expressed in many poems. The subject-matter of a number of
poems of the Georgian movement is nature--not "red in tooth
and claw"-- but the simple, humble, day today events of
country-side life.

p. 533-34.
The Georgian’s love of nature appeared to be an attempt to escape from the realities of contemporary life and they wrote their poetry as if the contemporary world of industrial progress and starting developments did not exist at all. This escapism is the outcome of a curiously limited nature of the poetic experience and the remarks of Sola Pinto deserve mention in this connection, “The England of the machines and the factories and the England of the suburbs are wholly absent, .... No body would guess from it that Bleriot had recently made first flight in an aero plane across the channel or that there had been an abortive Russian Revolution or that Germany was preparing to invade Europe There is, of course, need for poets to comment directly or indirectly on contemporary politics or social life (though most of the great ones have done so) but poetry which grows out of a fully developed and integrated sensibility necessarily reflects in its rhythms and imagery the quality of contemporary life.

Allied to love of Nature and abhorrence of the industrial life there were certain other romantic traits in the poetry of the Georgians. These traits were -- local patriotism, love of animals, of country folk and of children.

Many Georgian poets are little read and little regarded but it would be unjust to ignore their historical importance. “The Georgians revitalised naturalism, and if they
lacked the intellectual powers of Wordsworth and Shelley, they gave to the romantic stream a new turn which was really enforced by contemporary situation. So long man loves the world about him, so long as he remains sensitive to the life and forms of nature, so long as he has moods of mild meditation, whimsical self-analysis, revulsion against urban and social shackles, poetry of the Georgians kind will satisfy a vital need. Nor must be ignore the diversity of their technical accomplishment, or facility in stanza-forms, their loosening of verse).

A cursory glance at the subject-matter and technique and style of Walter de la Mare's poetry, particularly the poetry of his early phase which include *The Listeners* (1912) *Peacock Pie* (1913), *Motley* (1918) and *The Veil* (1921); shows a period perceptibleness. In his early phase he was definitely interlinked with the period and the characteristics of the Georgian Movement are well marked in his poetry. Lyricism is a very well marked quality of his poetry and he offers a variety of lyricism. His love of Nature is in the tradition of the Georgians. Also de la Mare has always been a lover of animals particularly, of little and shy creatures. These characteristics of his poetry justifiably qualify de la Mare for the title of a Georgian Poet. But the multi-dimensional genius of a poet like de la Mare cannot be summed up in a single phase 'Georgian Poet'. He certainly deserves more attention than has been paid
so far. An attempt has, therefore, been made in the following pages to study de la Mare's poetry afresh. Most of the critics and students of de la Mare have confined themselves to one and very prominent aspect of his poetry, namely "Dream and Mystery" and almost neglected the other and equally important aspect, namely "Realism". Even major critics of de la Mare like Henry Charles Duffin, R.L. Megroz and D.R. McCrosson seem not to have done justice to the poet. D.R. McCrosson has even gone to the extent of saying that "to claim that de la Mare's poetry is realistic in the accepted sense of the word would be to do a disservice to a poet who, I think, may well rank in time to come, at least in certain respects, with Yeats". In the present study of Walter de la Mare's poetry, I have, therefore, laid greater emphasis on this otherwise neglected aspect i.e. 'elements of realism' while giving due importance to the elements of dream and mystery which is so pervasive in his poetry.
Chapter II

Elements of Mystery: The World of Dream and Imagination

Walter de la Mare has created in his poetry a world of dream, fantasies and imagination through his 'childlike' attitude, which appeals alike to children and the grown-ups. Fairies, phantoms and mysterious presences haunt his entire poetry. In fact it is this dream activity and the 'child' in him that enables the withdrawal of the poet's mind into the realms of the past and the mysterious. It is, therefore, necessary to acquaint ourselves with the concept of 'imagination,' 'dream and the 'child' in the context of de la Mare's poetry. For a better understanding of these three 'key-concepts' who else can help us better than Walter de la Mare himself, the compiler of the beautiful anthology Behold, This Dreamer (1939); the sub-title of this anthology is: "of reveries, night, sleep, dream, love-dreams, nightmare, death, the unconscious, the imagination, divination, the artist and kindred subjects." Prior to this Walter de la Mare's views on 'imagination,' 'dream' and 'childhood' were expressed in a lecture on "Rupert Brooke and Intellectual Imagination" delivered in 1919. This lecture was subsequently included in his other anthology Pleasures and Speculations (1940). This lecture, primarily about Rupert
Brooke, nevertheless, provides a basis for an understanding of de la Mare’s concept of the imagination in general and poetic imagination in particular. D.R. McCrosson, has said that there are “two predominant types of imagination: the childlike and the boylike”.¹ Those who have childlike imagination are like all children: “They are not so closely confirmed and bound in by their groping senses. Facts to them are the liveliest of chameleons. Between their dreams and their actuality looms no impassable abyss. There is no solitude more secluded... no absorption more complete, no perception more exquisite, and one might even add, more comprehensive.... They are contemplatives, solitaries, fakirs, who sink again and again out of the noise and fever of existence into a waking vision”.² Children are like visionaries. As they mature, however, what is childlike “retires like a shocked snail into its shell... consciousness from being chiefly subjective becomes largely objective.” It is at this point that the boyish type of mind and imagination, the intellectual analytical type begins .... to flourish”³ By the time the ‘boy’ grows to manhood his imagination is moulded by one or the other phase. In other words, the “shocked snail” either remains permanently in its shell or it refuses to be intimidated by actuality and continues to roam at will. If the latter occurs and the ‘childlike’

¹ de la Mare, Walter (ed.) Pleasures and Speculations (London: Faber & Faber, 1940, pp. 176-77.
³ Ibid., p. 178.
persists, the adults' imagination is visionary; it is "intuitive, inductive". But if his mind is shaped by "boyhood", his imagination will be 'intellectual' or 'logical, deductive'. By making this nice distinction de la Mare shows the difference between the visionary imagination and the intellectual: "The One knows that beauty is truth, the other reveals that truth is beauty". But de la Mare recognises that even the most objective and analytic mind is sometimes likely to day-dream and to have 'intuitive insights' and that conversely, the 'child like' visionary mind is occasionally supremely matter-of-fact.

Another distinction de la Mare makes between the two types concerns their sources of poetry: the visionaries are within, while the intellectuals are without— in action, knowledge of things, and experience. The result is that in the intellectual's poetry, "there is less mystery and wonder, less magic ... It does not demand of the reader so profound or so complete a surrender." It is simply a different kind: "we can ardently welcome its courage, enthusiasm and energy. .... its

5. Bartlett, F.C. "Types of Imagination" in Journal of Philosophical Studies vol. 3, 1928, pp. 78-85, has a similar method of classification and notes his indebtedness to de la Mare who could himself have been indebted to Francis Thompson's essay on Shelley published in 1909.
penetrating thought, its wit and fervour and arrogance..."7
This distinction between types of minds is found elsewhere in de la Mare's prose works where he has used more conventional terms like "reason" as opposed to "imagination" and ultimately he also follows Coleridge for whom "fancy" is memory and derives its material from the phenomenal world, while "imagination" transcends the senses and receives the material from the eternal.8 Walter de la Mare is also indebted to Coleridge for the epithet "Shaping Spirit" which he often uses with reference to Imagination.

That imagination in the Colerigean sense is of paramount importance, was obvious to Walter de la Mare. He was therefore of the view that "Reason" apprehends matter-of-fact; the "Imagination", matter-of-truth: in the realm of imagination all things excepting unimaginable are possible".9 Reason itself seemed to de la Mare to depend, in part at least, upon the imagination, "for the mind ... will do little what we wish untill we have "imagined" the wish fulfilled".10 Further more, the phenomenal world is not the supreme reality because "nature itself resembles a veil over some further reality of

---
7. de la Mare, Walter, Pleasures and Speculations (London: Faber & Faber, 1940), p. 80.
9. de la Mare, Walter, Early One Morning in the Spring (London; Faber & Faber, 1935), p.214.
10. de la Mare, Walter, Behold, This Dreamer, (London: Faber & Faber, 1939), p.34.
which the imagination in its visionary moments seems to achieve a more direct evidence". So to depend therefore on knowledge gained through senses is to depend upon appearances only.

But, to use D.R. McCrosson's words, there is the 'underside' of the imagination which has to be taken into account. Walter de la Mare, therefore, recognises that imagination does not always deal in sweetness and light. It has its darker aspects, too. Evil, therefore, flourishes in his fiction and is made manifest just as he says "imaginative evil" flourishes in the dark". Imagination is vulnerable to its deprivations.

Inspite of the reverence that he has for "imagination" Walter de la Mare never suggests that the artist or any one else should retire wholly into his imagination, and his own life shows that he himself never did so. "The artist who enwraps himself in the solitude may learn many secrets and attain to an esoteric knowledge of the truth that lies concealed beneath appearances," but, at the same time, he would lose "touch and sympathy with the thoughts and desires, the loves, cares, follies of this work-a-day world; and dreams at last may cheat him of his goal."

---

11. de la Mare, Walter, _Op.Cit._, p. 27.
13. de la Mare, Walter, _Behold. This Dreamer_, (London: Faber & Faber, 1939), n 21.
Conversely, he warned that if the artist "disobeys his intuitions and gives himself even to the best of practical causes, he risks the sacrifice of the rare imaginative truth which is in him." 14

Regarding the source of "imagination", Walter de la Mare is not very specific as a scientist or philosopher, but he is highly suggestive and some of his theories are reminiscent of those of Carl Jung. Equated with the imagination, and possibly antecedent to it is the 'unconscious' "the reservoir of the elixir vitae" on which "intuition" and imagination draw. In fact, for Walter de la Mae, it is the source of all that makes a being human. "What", he asks, "can man achieve, in deed, unaided by the reviving waters of this unplumbable well?" 15 Into this well go "every fusion of memory, every fancy and fantasy, dream and day-dream". 16 Out of it comes all we know of reality.

But Walter de la Mare did not think that this "unplumbable well" begins to fill upon a person's birth, or that its "reviving waters" would be drained away by death. It is here that de la Mare seems to echo Carl Jung's theory of the "Collective Unconscious" where in, according to Jung, rest the

“primordial images common to humanity”, which he calls "archetypes”. These are “the most ancient and most universal 'thought forms' of humanity”, for the “Collective Unconscious”, itself is entirely universal ... its contents can be found everywhere".17

Water de la Mare describes the unconscious as an archipelago of humanity whose myriad island peaks are connected under the sea”,18 a metaphor he uses many times in his fiction closely paralleling Jung, de la Mare felt that in the unconscious was held “the wild and ancient stock of dream”;19 and that the English downs embodied ancestral memories20 although “our human tap roots ...pierce deeper than the fibers of nationality and race.”21 And he felt that, while the unconscious “oozes secrets that are chiefly physical concerning a remote and sunken physical past”, it also oozes secrets “which refer to a no less remote but spiritual future”.22

19. Ibid., p.106.
Throughout the entire de la Mare canon the "impossible she" is the most pervasive and persistent archetype. Who "she" is exactly, one can't know: "She is memory and strangeness, earth's delight and death's promise. In a thousand shapes and disguises she visits us." Long before critics had turned their attention to the exploration of myth and archetypes in literature, de la Mare recognised and utilized the myth of exile or banishment from Eden, the dwelling place of his "impossible she"; "The old Adam, the happy prehistoric child, in every one of us, ... harks back in spirit to the garden of his banishment; where Eve awaits him, and he can be once more happy and at peace, the veil withdrawn, all old enmities forgiven and forgotten, amid its beauty and life."

But what is important to remember is the fact that de la Mare equated the imagination with the unconscious; and this may be one of the reasons for his failure to come to terms with reality.

Closely related to Walter de la Mare's speculation about the nature of imagination and equally important to an

---

23. Ibid., cxxiv.
Throughout the entire de la Mare canon the "impossible she" is the most pervasive and persistent archetype. Who "she" is exactly, one can't know: "She is memory and strangeness, earth's delight and death's promise. In a thousand shapes and disguises she visits us." Long before critics had turned their attention to the exploration of myth and archetypes in literature, de la Mare recognised and utilized the myth of exile or banishment from Eden, the dwelling place of his "impossible she"; "The old Adam, the happy prehistoric child, in every one of us, .... harks back in spirit to the garden of his banishment; where Eve awaits him, and he can be once more happy and at peace, the veil withdrawn, all old enmities forgiven and forgotten, amid its beauty and life".24

But what is important to remember is the fact that de la Mare equated the imagination with the unconscious; and this may be one of the reasons for his failure to come to terms with reality.

Closely related to Walter de la Mare's speculation about the nature of imagination and equally important to an

---

23. Ibid., cxxiv.
understanding of his work are his speculations about 'dream'. That dreams were to him something more than an inexplicable and inconsequential part of existence can be seen in his 'vast and infinitely fascinating compilation of literature on the subject, Behold. This Dreamer! (1939). This book besides a lengthy introduction, contains accounts of experiences, speculations, poems and observations about dreams complied from some four hundred sources. From Homer, the Bible, and Apuleius, to C.D. Lewis, Helen Waddell, and Logan Pearsall Smith; from what is conceivably every source in English, in the original or translated, de la Mare has gleaned the literature of the western world for this remarkable volume. Even he has been dealt with in the introduction to the anthologies but rather disparagingly.

Dreams were truly precious and fascinating to Walter de la Mare. They are, in a sense, a communion of the self with the self. He confessed that he himself had spent more time adventuring in dreams than he had while awake, and that his dreams profoundly influenced him. In fact, he admitted, once at least in conversation, that it would have been hard for him to choose between which he preferred ---

---

27. Ibid., p.97.
28. Ibid., p. 79.
-dream life or waking life. A critic of the poet may almost write “dream life the real life”, but de la Mare would have remarked that there was no difference, for to him imagination and dreams were practically synonymous and both were paths to reality.

Dreams were to Walter de la Mare the source of poetry. Inspiration to come in a “condition of consciousness compounded in some degree of both dream and wake”, in which condition poems seem to appear “like self created phantoms.” Elsewhere he refers to inspiration as a “golden pause in life” when Life is no longer a riddle but a dream, and asks: “What indeed, is every work of art before it is accomplished, but a day dream with a definite purpose and particular goal”.

He not only felt that dreams are the source of art, he was also convinced that, the enjoyment of literature is largely dependent upon the reader's capacity to dream. When we experience a poem, or fall in love, it is the same as when we embark upon a dream: "the whole of our world is changed"; for, when these things occur, "the spirit within us seems for the moment to have returned to a state of being and to an abode of which earth with all its loveliness is only a partial and illusive reflection".

Another aspect of dream which fascinated de la Mare is the possibility that sleep may be the boundary which separates two or more personalities, a possibility hinted at in his suggestion that we set out in dream, as it were, "as if to keep an assignment with a friend --- a second self."

Referring to this idea de la Mare speculated that perhaps sleep was even another state of being, one distinct from the state of waking. For although he found that people may wish for fulfillment of their waking lives in dreams, he

---

felt it untenable to believe that the life experienced in dreams is a mere extension of waking experiences. About this point he suggests with characteristic humour:

Life's punctual mag pie serial is at least more amusing for being the work of two collaborators so unalike in style, so much at odds regarding form and matter and method, so various in their shocking, disregard of our tastes and ideals; and so remote one from the other apparently in motive, value and moral code, and in their notions of the sane, the significant, the welcome, and the useful.39

Walter de la Mare also admitted the possibility that dreams may be "pre-cognitive" and "prophetic" and that they sometimes ___ although rarely ___ so closely resemble actuality that they may be relics of a previous life.40 He even suggests that occurrences in history have dream-like quality. Balboa wading into the Pacific to take possession of it; Pizarro, lacking iron, shoeing his horses with gold ___ "Such

39. de la Mare, Walter, Op. Cit. pp. 11-12
40. Ibid., p. 11.
41. Ibid., p. 79.
felt it untenable to believe that the life experienced in dreams is a mere extension of waking experiences. About this point he suggests with characteristic humour:

Life's punctual mag pie serial is at least more amusing for being the work of two collaborators so unalike in style, so much at odds regarding form and matter and method, so various in their shocking, disregard of our tastes and ideals; and so remote one from the other apparently in motive, value and moral code, and in their notions of the sane, the significant, the welcome, and the useful.39

Walter de la Mare also admitted the possibility that dreams may be "pre-cognitive" and "prophetic"40 and that they sometimes although rarely so closely resemble actuality that they may be relics of a previous life.41 He even suggests that occurrences in history have dream-like quality. Balboa wading into the Pacific to take possession of it; Pizarro, lacking iron, shoeing his horses with gold __ “Such

39. de la Mare, Walter, Op. Cit. pp. 11-12
40. Ibid., p. 11.
41. Ibid., p. 79.
things, however remote they may be, seem to belong to some dream life of our own, as if we had once actually participated in them.\footnote{42}

Indeed Walter de la Mare was prepared to admit almost any possibility concerning the origin of dream: not only may they be the vestiges of race memories,\footnote{43} or the reminiscence of former life,\footnote{44} they may also come from another and higher intelligence.\footnote{45} For he asks: "We say, we think; but would it be nearer the truth to say, we are thought into."\footnote{46}

That life awake and sleep and death were inextricably interwoven. His pre-occupations with death had nothing of the morbid in it; he simply felt that death was interesting and as curious as life. He could not imagine death as an "endless sleep unstirred, unillumined by any phantom of

\footnote{43} \textit{Ibid.}, p.284.
\footnote{44} de la Mare, Walter. \textit{Love} (London: Faber & Faber, 1943), Lxxvii.
\footnote{46} de la Mare, Walter. \textit{Behold, This Dreamer!} (London: Faber & Faber, 1939), p.79.
dream," and for him only the unimaginable is impossible. He thought, instead, that perhaps "we may die into a state of dreaming," or that perhaps "life itself... will prove to have been in the nature of a dream and death of an awakening." And poetry suggests, he believed that the dead may communicate with the living." In any case, his sense of humour, proportion, balance also precluded morbidity in his speculations about life and death. For example, in a characteristically sane and somewhat ironic statement about the matter he conceded that the whole question of the relation between the living and the dead who may not remain dead! is a difficult one." And indeed it is." 

In these days of scientific exactness many readers of Walter de la Mare may find somewhat exasperating his ability to entertain so many speculations without being able to decide upon the ultimate worth of one specific probability.

---

48. de la Mare, Walter. *Behold, This Dreamer!* pp.11-112
But for many others this ability is one of his most entrancing assets. In a sense one might say he has the ideal Keatsian mind: he was able to rest easily in doubts and uncertainties without any irritable reaching out after fact. Facts were to him of secondary importance.\textsuperscript{52} Walter de la Mare is not for those who think it sufficient to know about a scientifically proven fact or a mathematical calculation. He was impatient with the scientific-materialistic modern man who, he wrote prophetically in 1935, may someday “parcel out the air, and make a country club of Venus”,\textsuperscript{53} and he levelled his scorn at the “all but hairless, flesh eating, pedestrian creature Man” who “has only recently managed to learn to fly and then insulted heaven and earth with death laden metal monsters”.\textsuperscript{54} “It has been left”, he wrote in 1935 “to our own enlightened day to discover the secrets of laughing at everything that is tainted with the transcendental.....”\textsuperscript{55}

D.R. McCrosson rightly points out that to the materialist, to the scoffers at anything transcendental de la Mare has little to say. And should any one be looking for

\textsuperscript{52} McCrosson, D.R.,\textit{Op.Cit.}, p. 25.  
\textsuperscript{54} de la Mare, Walter. \textit{Op.Cit.} p.64.  
answers, he has none. A characteristic of him is his questioning attitude: "If only questions were as easy to answer as they are to ask!" He questioned everything, never arrogantly, however, because he believed in fact, it was the only thing he seemed certain of that all life is shot with strangeness and mystery, for we can no more solve the secret of life than that of sleep. Since the publication of The Songs of childhood in 1902 under the pseudonym of Walter Ramal, Walter de la Mare’s reputation has mainly rested on his poetry. He is among the greatest poets of English dream poetry as he is beyond doubt the greatest English poet of childhood. He belongs to the elect company of Browne, Traherne, Donne, Shelley, Keats, Coleridge, Poe, the Rossettis, Swinburn, Francis Thompson and W.B. Yeats. Nine volumes of his poetry are largely devoted to dreams: The Listners and Other Poems (1912), Peacock Pie (1913), Motley (1918), The Veil (1921), The Fleeting (1933), Memory (1938), The Burning Glass (1945), Inward Companion (1950) and O’ Lovely England (1953). Besides these nine

59. de la Mare, Walter, Behold, This Dreamer!(London: Faber & Faber, 1939, pp. 57-58.
volumes, exclusively devoted to dream he has critically surveyed the whole domain of sleep and dream and connected phenomena in the 100-page Introduction (entitled Dream and Imagination) to his anthology in prose and verse Behold, This Dreamer! (1939). With its rich collectanea.

One important point about Walter de la Mare's dream poetry to be noted at the very outset is that there is no barrier that sharply separates the dream world and the waking world and de la Mare has a spontaneous accessibility to both the realms. In some poems with a perfect ease the poet throws an atmosphere of the mysterious over his characters and situations which are otherwise quite ordinary situations, common men and women engaged in the routine affairs of life. Just as there are real men and women to use H.C. Duffin's words', with "Other-worldly" characteristics, so there are places too which have familiar English setting but with a few subtle touches they start belonging to a mysterious world which is akin to dream experience. Poems like "Martha", "Nod" "Queen Djenira", "Never-to-be", "Sophia" and "The Dark Chateau" may be mentioned in this regard.61 Let us now

consider a few poems dealing exclusively with dream like atmosphere in the following pages:

"Motley", "The Marionettes" and "The Fool's Song", and in *The Veil* collection the poem entitled "The Monologue" indicate a range of mental travelling, a fact which has hardly been appreciated before the seminal work of R.L. Megroz entitled *Walter de la Mare : A Biographical and Critical Study* (1928), as belonging to his dream poetry. This characteristic dream poetry, however, lies nearer to the imaginative child poems than to those later poems where the poet is driven to pray the ghost of beauty:

"Be but my Faith in thee,
For sanity's sake.62

Many, indeed of the poems of *Down-a Down Derry, Peacock Pie* and *Songs of Childhood* by any strict classification be included in his dream poetry.63

---

Dream poetry being the product of a primitive mode of thought, always resembles child poetry in one particular. It is sensuous. It is melodious, strongly rhythmical and loaded with imagery: Folk-tales, ballads, and primitive epics are all remarkable for their dream-like richness of imagery. Furthermore, 'dream' is impulsive, moved by the tides of elemental emotion, though on its way to the surface of the mind its course may be diverted and its currents divided. Coming from the deeps, from a common pool of memory, when it finds concrete expression in art it calls to the same deeps in the readers, a fact which is experienced, invariably by almost every reader of de la Mare's poetry. Among the English dream poets the magic of Walter de la Mare, like that of Shelley, is a "continually" if not 'continuously' welling fount. Only the mind of Shelley or Yeats is comparable to his among the poets of first rank for this accessibility to dream. How fine is the art which can express a dream of timelessness — the theme of that lovely poem "The Tryst":


N.B. These are almost the same views as have been expressed by Walter de la Mare himself in so many words and on so many occasions, besides they are also highlighted by Critics like H.,C. Duffin (A Critical Study of Walter de la Mare's Poetry, 1948)m and D.R. McCrosson (Walter de la Mare). A detail of this has already been given in the preceding pages.
Faint now the colours in the West;
   And, stilled with lapse of day,
All life within it laid to rest,
   The Wintry wood grows grey.

Frost enlines the withered flower
Its hips and haws now blackening are,
The slender tree top cower
Beneath the evening star.65

Here the words become almost notes of music, and the reader perceives that sound is not less important than image in the poet's style when inspiration is tense. Here is de la Mare's brief poem from The Listeners entitled "The Hawthorn hath a Deadly Smell":

An apple, a child, dust
When falls, the evening rain
Wild briers spiced leaves,
Breathe memories again;
With further memory fraught,
The silver of the may
Wreathed is with incense for
The Judgement Day. 66

The individual experience is universalised, and one key to the emotional source of Eternal dream — a regret for the past, a longing for restful security from greedy Time and Death, who slay and rob all that the heart would hold, is discovered:

But beauty vanishes, beauty passes;
However rare____ rare it be;
And when I cramble, who will remember,
This lady of the West Country? 67

It is the impulse behind many of his poems. The poet must gather up the treasure that 'Time is taking away. In One mood he would store them up in one lovely memory:

You, in the valley standing,
In your quiet wonder look

66. Complete Poems, p. 135
67. Complete Poems, p. 135
All that glamour, peace and mystery
In one grave look.
Beauty hid your naked body,
Time dreamed in your bright hair
In your eyes the constellations
Burned far and fair.⁶⁸

After a magnificent piece of rhetoric on “Night fall” he cries
with the accent of the mystic “A.E”:

Cities of men, in blindness hidden now,
Fume their faint flames to that arched formament,
But all the dwellers in the lonely know
The unearthly are abroad, and weary and spent,
With rush extinguished, to their dreaming go.
And world and night and star-enclustered space,
The glory of beauty are in one enravished face.⁶⁹

“Life” is a trembling back

“To earth’s same empty track

---

⁶⁹. Ibid.
Of leaden day by day, and hour by hour.\textsuperscript{70}

and the lovers must be

Of all thing lovely the cold mortuary.\textsuperscript{71}

For a time all is disillusionment outside the dream. In the dream it self he is still seeking. The three strangers, "have footed" 'cowled' meet one "on urgent, secret errant bent," and confer with him and wish him "God-speed," and he resumes his travelling over the far tranquil hills of dream. He was that "lone hastening solitary" in the dream:

An each worlds' night in vain  
I patient wait on sleep to unveil  
Those vivid hills again.\textsuperscript{72}

(The Three Strangers)

In Life, a strange city, he knows two houses well:

\textsuperscript{70} Complete Poems,p.203.  
\textsuperscript{71} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{72} Ibid,p. 213
One wherein Silence a garden hath
And one where Dark doth dwell.\textsuperscript{73}

That garden of silence he will lead you into with eyes
dreamful yet watchful:

Speak not ___whisper not;
Here bloweth thyme and bergamot;
Softly on the evening hour,
Secret herbs their spice shower,
Dark-spiked rosemary and myrrh,
Lean stalked, purple laveander .\textsuperscript{74}

(The Sunken Garden)

But beware, and “breathe not____ trespass not”:

Of this green and darking spot,
Latticed from the moon’s beams,
Perchance a distant dreamer dreams;
Perchance upon its darkening air,

\textsuperscript{73} Complete Poems., p. 203.
\textsuperscript{74} Ibid. p. 189
The unseen ghosts of children fare,
Faintly swinging sway and sweep,
Like lovely sea-flowers in the deep.\textsuperscript{75}
(The Sunken Garden)

Almost all these dream poems — “Alexander” is an exception — make no pretence to be other than expressions of personal emotion, the individual’s reactions to life and death and beauty. The poet is a haunted man, though

I was at peace until you came
And set a careless mind aflame.\textsuperscript{76}
(“The Remonstrance”)

he remonstrates. Now he must abandon himself to the “ghostly lips and eyes”, to the nostalgia of unsatisfied desire and the painful attendance on revelation

“... O vision grave
Take all the little all I have.”\textsuperscript{77}

\textsuperscript{75} Complete Poems. p. 190.
\textsuperscript{76} Ibid. p. 200.
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid.
he cries in a despair that is an ecstatic worship of a beauty ever imminent and ever unattained:

This only I say ____ though cold and bare
The haunted house you have chosen to share,
Still 'neath its walls the moon beam goes
And trembles on the untended rose;
Still o'er its broken roof-tree rise
The starry arches of the skies:
And 'neath your lightest world shall be
The thunder of an ebbing sea.78

(The Remonstrance)

In these dream poems Walter de la Mare sees too intently, and is always aware of an aura of the inexplicable mystery lurking about every object. This continual testing of shades of thought separates his simplest dream poetry from the big class of the “heart exciting”. He is always pursuing faintest hues of the phantasmal light that never was, except in the domain of

78. Complete Poems, p. 200
dreams. But for the subtlety of language and directness of dream inspiration comparable to de la Mare's we turn to Coleridge, Shelley, and W.B. Yeats, Keats, except in "La Belle Dame Sans Merci", like Tennyson, interrupts the dream flow with particularisation, even in the beautiful fragment on "The Eve of Saint Mark", or embodies it in a wide landscape as he does with the marvellous vision "deep in the shady sadness of a vale," or many of the passages in "Endymion", William Morris is often compared with de la Mare and is well known as a great dreamer but his poetry is not the poetry of dream Morris's clearest images came in his narrative, but even where his verse is neither diffuse nor oversimplified in diction, as in "The Haystack in the Floods", the dream effect is intermittent and is in evitably weakened by the drama of violent passion, but Yeats's "Shadowy Waters" is a dream poem rather than a drama. The poet concerns only with presenting the dream in its mysterious beauty of image and music is driven by our psychological sophistication to the method of the ballad without dramatic action beyond what may be implicit in a monologue. Many of Yeats's lengthy dream poems can only be explained due to his mental isolation. The modern dream poet appeals to us, convinces us, by simple veracity to the dream inspiration. Dream poetry, says Megroz,
probably springs also from an unusually active, unconscious memory of distant ancestry. A scene or a tone half remembered in daily life can trouble us profoundly. Why not, then, the unconscious inheritance of our ancestry? Must this be confined to the physical characteristics of the body and leave the soul uninfluenced? 79

In the day-dream there is common emotion, the wish for companions in solitude, companions who sympathise, understand and protect the solitary heart which shrinks from the callousness of the world. This, according to R.L. Megroz is an infantile emotion and in the poetry of primitive people and of childhood it has created all "the little people" of fairy and. In one of Walter de la Mare's best poems "The Listener", his impulse of the dream is clearly seen 80:

Is there any body there? said the Traveller,  
Knocking on the moonlit door;  
And his horse in the silence champed the grasses  
Of the forest's ferny floor; 81

Behind the wish-fulfilment of the dream is the desire for atonement, the desire for the thing that will satisfy. Now the longing for atonement is clearly a fundamental and pervasive element in Walter de la Mare's poetry. Fundamentally it is the desire for Atonement, to be at one with self, with God, with an ideal, with one of the other sex, with a luscious fruit, with one's class, country, ancestry, or race. Stripped off its secondary conscious elaboration all "inspired" poetry is dream. That is why it differs from the prosaic work of the consciously selective mind in its effect and method. What is this dream work? It is an instinctive activity of mind termed "infantile" by the psycho-analyst. It is akin to the primitive thinking of the savage. It does not use words as symbols of intellectual concepts: it uses pictures perceived involuntarily, and the poet describes them in sounds which yield the emotional satisfaction of music.

So dream poetry wakes the child in us, the child that longed, and wished, and had to give up, very often the dream may come from buried memories, not of childhood, but of that remote race-childhood of life. If emotion cannot find an abject in real experience on which to expand itself, if it
cannot attain "real experience", in this sense, it attaches to itself representational images, and by fusion may actually create new images. This creative work may be accomplished unconsciously by the dream and may be embodied in the "magic poem" which is shaped mainly by this unconscious process.\textsuperscript{82}

"The Listners" of Walter de la Mare sets up a mood, a regressive trend of thought towards atonement which can be paralleled by the child's need of its mother, known to the psycho-analyst as the mother \textit{imag}o. Not finding the satisfaction, the peace of atonement, the seeker, so that he shall not be left alone discovers that the very ground, the trees, walls stir with \textit{mysterious life}:

Is there any body there? said the Traveller,
Knocking on the moonlit door;
And his horse in the silence champed the grass
Of the forest's ferny floor:
And a bird flew up out of the turret,
Above the Traveller's head:

And he smote upon the door again a second time;
‘Is there any body there? he said.
But no one descended to the Traveller;
No head from the leaf-fringed sill.
But only a host of phantom listners
That dwelt in the lone house then
Stood listenning in the quiet of the moonlight
So that voice from the world of men:
Stood thronging the faint moonbeams on the dark stair,
That goes down to the empty hall,
Hearkening in an air stirred and shaken
By the lonely Traveller’s call
And he felt in his heart their strangeness
Their stillness answering his cry,
While his horse moved, cropping the dark turf,
‘Neath the starred and leafy sky....

These “listners” belong to the family of “little people,” the fairies, elves, gnomes, precences, that are with us in the loneliness of life. In childhood these “little people” are the

83. Complete Poems, p.126.
first compensation for severance from the mother and come before the affections go out to seen, heard, and felt objects.\footnote{Megroz, R.L. \textit{Op.Cit.}, p. 120.}

"The Revenant" is a poem which in mood is closely akin to "The Listners", though differing in imagery and music. Here is the passive expectancy, and the forlorn hope of regaining what is lost:

"Men are all shades, O Woman. Winds wist not of the way they below,
Apart from your kindness, life's at best but a snare.
Though a tongue, now past praise, their bitter thing doth say, I know
What solitude means, and how, homeless, I fare.
Strange, strange are ye all except in beauty shared with her ___

Since I seek one I loved, yet was faithless to in death.
No life enough I heaped, so thus my heart must fare with her.
Now wrapped in the gross day, bereft of life's breath."85

The peace of Atonement appears in "The Ghost":

"Peace in thy hands,
Peace in thine eyes,
Peace on thy brow;
Flower of a moment in the eternal hour,
Peace with me now."86

The path of the seeker comes to many disillusionment. So "The Dwelling-Place." Where

"The throbbing chords of violin and lute,
The lustre of lean tapers in dark eyes,
Fair colours, beauteous flowers, fair bloomed fruit
Made earth seem Paradise.

To them that dwelt within this lonely house:

86. Ibid. p.134.
Like children of the gods in lasting peace,
They ate, sang, danced, as if each day's carouse
Need never pause, nor cease.\(^\text{87}\)

It was but a temporary abode, for

"Yet clear above that portal plain was writ.
Confronting each at length alone to pass
Out of its beauty into night starlit.
That worm Alas!"\(^\text{88}\)

But the search brings compensations. The dream is suffused with "a grave crystal light" in "The Dark Chateau":

"In dream a dark chateau
Stands ever open to me,
In far ravines dream-waters flow.
Descending soundlessly;
Above its peaks the eagle floats,
Lone in a sunless sky ... 
No voice is audible. The wind

\(^{87}\) Complete Poems, p.124-125.
\(^{88}\) Ibid., p.125
Sleeps in its peace.\textsuperscript{89}

It is indeed "the unseen, the imagined, the untold of, the fabulous, the forgotten, that alone lies safe from mortal moth and rust".\textsuperscript{91} In "The Dark Chateau" it is still a quest. So, too, in "Arabia":

Sweet is the music of Arabia
In my heart, when out of dreams
I still in the thin clear mirk of dawn
Descry her gliding streams. . . \textsuperscript{91}

They haunt me her lutes and her forests;
No beauty on earth I see,
But shadowed with that dream recalls
Her loveliness to me . . \textsuperscript{92}

The dream is ever waiting upon the mood, and

\textsuperscript{90} . Megroz, R.L. \textit{Op.Cit.}, p. 122 quotation from Walter de la Mare's short story "The Vats".
\textsuperscript{91} . \textit{Complete Poems}, p.121.
\textsuperscript{92} . \textit{Ibid.}, p. 121.
When music sounds, gone is the earth I know
And all her lovely things even lovelier grow;
Her flowers in vision flame, her forest tress,
Lift burdened branches, stilled with ecstasies.

and

When music sounds, all that I was I am
Ere to this haunt of brooding dust I came;
While from Time’s woods breaks into distant song
The swift-winged hours, as I hasten along.\(^{93}\)

(“Music”)

Resurging ancestral memories mingle with the dream desire.

The haunted Traveller turns upon himself in “Vain Questioning”. Life remains

“A livelong tangle of perplexities”\(^ {94}\)

He would find some shadow of satisfaction in the transient but the recurrent beauty of this world:

\(^{93}\) Complete Poems, p. 199.
\(^{94}\) Ibid. p. 204.
“Leave this vain questioning. Is not sweet the rose?
Sings not the wild bird ere to rest he goes?
Hath not in miracle brave June returned?
Burns not her beauty as of old it burned?
O foolish one to roam
So far in thine own mind away from home!”\textsuperscript{95}

(The Vain Questioning)

So in the lovely song “Farewell”, the dreamer sings:

“Look thy last on all things lovely,
Every hour. Let no night
Seal thy sense in deathly slumber
Till to delight
Thou have paid thy utmost blessing;
Since that all things thou wouldst praise,
Beauty took from those who loved them
In other days.”\textsuperscript{96}

There is still room for the dream:

“Where blooms the flower when her petals fade,
Where sleepeth echo by earth's music made,
Where all things transient to the changeless win,
There waits the peace Thy spirit dwelleth in.”

But what is the impossible? We can think only by the employment of fictions. The art of life consists in using fiction as, a means to a constantly receding and exalted goal. “The representative world is a system of fictions. It is a symbol by the help of which we orient ourselves.” All aesthetic and religious ideals are fictions, symbolic modes of perceiving infinite truth. The attempt to understand the world finally is, as Walter de la Mare tells us, “Vain Questioning”, and as the scientific thinker confirms him, “both unrealisable and foolish for we are only trying to comprehend our own fictions. All great literature is an expression of dream perception controlled by the divine formative tendency of human intelligence. Inspiration is the mystical source of this ever-renewed contribution to the heaven of our thought. Dream alone is not creative; but absorbed by the imagination it becomes the fabric of a new vision. The child lives in the

98. Cf. Walter de la Mare believes that everything is possible by the “Imagination” except “the Unimaginable”.
golden age of dream; the task of his maturity is not merely to re-tread that pathway to the lost Paradise, but to find fresh relations between the imagined and the real. The poet who has too much energy to be absorbed by the dream of the lost paradise returns sooner or later, as does Walter de la Mare in most of his poems, to life for new material to feed the imagination for "there is no escaping that kingdom of heaven which is within you, because it is the condition of the soul's vitality . . . . If it is a dream it is a dream we live by, and a dream we live by is more real than a reality to de la Mare"\textsuperscript{100} . Infact Walter de la Mare is one of greatest poets of dream in English.

Chapter III

Elements of Mystery : The Haunted World

The presence of the supernatural elements has created an aura of mystery and magic in the poetry of Walter de la Mare. This, a major trend of his poetry, was quite explicit as early as 1902 when he got published his first volume of poems entitled Songs of Childhood. The poems in this volume are primarily supernatural. Out of the 44 poems in the Songs of Childhood (1902), twelve are directly connected with fairies, witches and phantoms and some six of them hint at the paranormal. The opening poem of the volume entitled “Sleepy head” sets the tone: The child lay awake in “the white moonlight” when he heard “a faint singing in the wood”. It seemed to invite him to the woods:

“Out of bed
Sleepy head,
Put your white foot now,
Here are we,
'Neath the tree
Singing round the root now

The child hesitated as there was 'snow in the wood' but the 'gnomies' insisted him to come:

"Come away,
Child and play
Light with the gnomies;
In a mound,
That's where there home is.
Honey sweet,
Curds to eat,
Cream and frumentry,
Shells and beads
Poppy seeds
You shall have plenty."

But as soon as the child puts on his "stockings and shoe" the song and mystery vanish and the streaks of grey light the morning sky:

---

1. Complete Poems, p.3.
2. Ibid.
But soon as I stooped in the dim moon light
To put on my stocking and my shoe,
The sweet-sweet singing died sadly away,
And the light of the morning peeped through:
Then instead of the gnomies there came a red robin.

To sing of the buttercups and the den.3

Supernaturalism is one of the characteristics of the English Romanticism. The English poets actually revived it from the Medieval Romances where it was originally found. From the medieval ages up to modern times supernatural elements have never been totally absent in English poetry. Walter de la Mare being a Georgian poet owes much to the English Romanticism and one of important characteristics of the English Romanticism which seems to have influenced his work most is their interest in supernatural elements de la Mare's poetry reminds us of Coleridge's "Kubla Khan", "Christabel" and "The Ancient Mariner". The poetry of both Walter de la Mare and S.T. Coleridge has certainly a special

---

3. Complete Poems, p. 3.
appeal "partly from natural inclination, and partly from a deliberate plan (as in case of Coleridge) to produce a certain kind of art of creating a faevey, twilight world, a world of wonder and fantasy, which is the home of perpetual youth".4

Walter de la Mare's poems have the beauty of the visionary things. He succeeds in making his readers experience the same sweet sensation which he might have experienced. Very often he seems to deal with the commonplace and the conventional but his peculiarity lies in making them unconventional, uncommon and "Other Worldly". "The trick of revealing the ordinary in whimsical colours, of catching the commonplace off its guard, is the first of de la Mare's two chief gifts. The second gift is the sense of the supernatural, of the fantastic other-world that lies on the edges of our consciousness".5 His poetry, takes the reader into a world of the mysterious while speaking of 'Arabia' and its music, of the fairyland, of sleep, of the lonely dreams of a child; of the dark chateau; and of 'the sunken garden' etc., science withstanding, this universe becomes a marvellous and

4. Sturgeon, Mary C. Studies of Contemporary Poets. p.74,
exciting place where anything may happen any time. Walter de la Mare is the supreme master of this unintelligible and unpredictable world or what Lord Dunsany calls "the haunted Land of de la Mare". He is the interpreter, the priest and the poet of this mysterious world. For him, this very world is alive with the supernatural. Life, is an iridescent bubble of magic blown on the breath of reality.\(^6\) Even when the setting of his work is homely, "he also introduces us to witches and mermaids and elves, to mouldring Gothic castles and Arabian deserts, caves of pearl and coral hidden in the depth of ocean. And even his homely characters and scenes have something queer about them. The houses are secret and irregular, full of dark, nooks and dusty accumulated junk; quaint ornaments; forgotten books and dim portraits".\(^7\) There are different forms of the supernatural beings like ghosts, fairies, gnomes, ogres and witches more abundantly than any one else. When he makes us experience the presence of supernatural beings like ghosts and witches, etc., we enter into an uncanny mental state. The secrets, beauty and wonder of the visionary world are hidden in the heart of the poet, and he is able to kindle

---


them into the hearts of his readers. This haunted world of Walter de la Mare's poetry is so charming that even the most scientifically-minded readers are likely to suffer from "suspension of disbelief" and lose themselves entirely, of course for the time being, in the beautiful world of fairy land. His critical essays testify that de la Mare "on many occasions seen or felt the presence of "ghosts", "shadows", and "spectres". The testimony is also in his prose tales and especially in his poetry. He felt these presences are everywhere, but they are not necessarily the departed spirits or malign influences. More often than not, "ghost" in de la Mare is more closely to be identified with the Anglo-Saxon word from which it derives: gast, spirit, soul, breath."^8

It can be as immaterial as the presence felt when two friends talk:

When all at peace, two friends at ease alone
Talk out their hearts -- yet still,
Between the grace-notes of
The voice of love

---

From each to each
Trembles a rare speech,
And with its presence every pause doth fill.⁹

In such poems, the presence be speaks love; but there are other times when the presences, though equally immaterial, seems forboding and terrible. Such is the case in “Winter Dusk” a lovely narrative of a mother reading to her two children:

Dark frost was in the air without
The dusk was still with cold and gloom,
When less than even a shadow came
And stood within the room.

. . .

But of the three around the fire,
None turned a questioning head to look,
Still read a clear voice, on and on,
Still stooped they over their book.

and

And nearer yet that spirit drew
Above that heedless one, intent
Only on what the simple words
Of her small story meant.\textsuperscript{10}

"Nor dreamed she, as she read to two/ 'T was surely three
who heard. "Still she seems to know of, to intuit, the presence
of the undreamed of, unseen intruder:

Yet when the story done, she smiled
From face to face, serene and clear
A love, half dread, sprang up, as she
Learned close and drew them near\textsuperscript{11}

Ghosts or spirits are often encountered in sleep
and are often more material than mere "felt" presences. When
the body, which Walter de la Mare considered as an habitation,
is asleep, the spirit goes forth; or as he says in his poem "The
Flight" that at the dead of night when the world asleep the
spirits goes out:

\textsuperscript{10} \textit{Complete Poems}, p.132.
\textsuperscript{11} \textit{Complete Poems}, p.132.
Stand watch O days, no number keep
Of hours when the dark clay is blind
When the world's clocks are dumb in sleep
'Tis then I seek my kind".12

Again, his prose as well as his poetry gives abundant evidence that Walter de la Mare believed that all mankind __ all birds and beasts, too for that matter have, while asleep, have two worlds13:

Two worlds they have --- a glob for got,
Wheeling from dark to light;
And all the enchantment realm of dream
That burgeons out of night.14
("Sleep")

In Walter de la Mare's world not only every creature is inhabited by a spirit but every house, every garden, every place where man has been at one time retains ghosts,

presences; and in his most anthologised poem, he calls them “listners”. When one talks of house having “personality”, one is saying in a rather common place way what Walter de la Mare felt was true in the deepest sense. Surely we have all at one time or the another visited ancient buildings and felt the presence of those who were there long long ago. Walter de la Mare shares in this feeling, but he differs in that he endowed these presences with more reality than most other people are likely to do. In “The sunken Garden”, the poet warns:

Breath not ___ trespass not;
Of this green and darkling spot,
Latticed from the moon’s beams,
Perchance upon its darkening air,
The unseen ghosts of children fare,

In “Vacant Farmhouse” the speaker describes first the house, then the garden about it whose fruit trees are now “suckered, rank, unpruned”, and finally the abandoned out-building. Here is the description of the house and the garden:

“Three gables; clustered chimney-stacks; a wall
Snowed every Spring with cherry, gage, and pear,
Now suckered, rank, unpruned. Green-seeded tall
A drift of sullen nettles souring near ___
Beside a staved-in style and green-scummed pond,
Where once ducks-dabbled sunshine ripped round17

Then he describes abandoned out building:

Dark empty barns; a shed; abandoned byres;
A weedy stack-yard whence all life has fled;
A derelict wain, with lose and rusted tyres;
And an enormous elm-tree over head . . .18

And finally his eye travel back to the house and feels the “presence”:

17. Complete Poems
18. Ibid. p.54.
"That attic casement ... was there a flaw in the glass?...
I thought, as I glanced up, there had peered a face.
But no. Still: eyes are strange, for at my
Through the cool sunlit evening air, steady stare
Scared silent sparrow flew up out of the ivy
there
Into an elder tree ___ for perching place. 19

Again there is the suggestion of a spirit or spectre in the house, but the poem also suggests something 'spectre'ish' about the speaker himself. If it is so the idea appears many times in Walter de la Mares work. "The Revenant" may be cited as a good example of type :

O all ye fair ladies with your colours and your graces,
And your eyes clear in flame of candles and hearth,

Toward the dark of this old window lift not up your smiling faces, Where a Shade stands forlorn from the cold of the earth.\textsuperscript{20}

and then in the third stanza of the poem he claims that “Men all are shades.”

A very delightful poem of this nature is one of his poems for children, “The Old Stone House”. In it he captures the feeling of terror and curiosity that all children have when they must pass by a house that is haunted:

Nothing on the grey roof, nothing on the brown, Only a little greening here, where the rain drips down; Nobody at the window, nobody at the door, Only a little hollow which a poet once wore; But still I tread on tiptoe, tiptoe on I go,

\textsuperscript{20} \textit{Complete Poems}, p. 199
Past nettles, porch, and weedy well, for oh, I know
A friendless face is peering, and a clear still eye
Peeps closely through the casement as my step goes by.21

Sometimes presences in Walter de la Mare's poems "The Revenant," "The Ghost," and "Thus Her Tale," for example __ are ghosts in the sense that most children think of them: spirits of the dead returning. Walter de la Mare would have been reluctant, however, to accept the concept of the return of the departed spirit because he would have had difficulty believing that spirits depart. Central to his belief in the possibility of ghosts is the belief in what he might have called "the law of conservation of spirit" __ nothing created, nothing destroyed.22 As J.B. Priestley observed, de la Mare's world is the region which lies "between the conscious mind of our time and the collective unconscious".23 In that region the self has a continual existence __ transmuted, to be sure, but always there. In this sense, then, the self neither ____________

comes from anywhere nor goes to anywhere. It is. So in his “Thus Her Tale” the speaker, a lady who was murdered long long ago still haunts the house sometimes as spectre, sometimes simply as a shadow and sometimes in her complete self. She explains the reason of constantly haunting the house when she says,

“Self-Slaughtered I,for one I loved, who could not give me love again”

and therefore, she is anxious to take revenge:

“Thus her tale!’ quoth sod to sod. ‘Not ours, good friends,to challenge it;
Though her blood still cries for vengeance on her murderer from this brake!24

“The Ghost” is also a very representative poem. A departed soul returns to the house where it lived before dying, knocks and speaks to the present dwellers of the house:

"Who knocks?" 'I. who was beautiful,
Beyond all dreams to restore,
I, from the roots of the dark thorn am bitter.
And knock on the door'.25

"Who speaks?" 'I once was my speech
Sweet as the bird's on the air,
When echo lurks by the waters to heed;
"Tis I speak thee fair".26

The 'ghost' of the departed soul comes at the dead of night where there is complete silence and darkness every where and tries to open the house by groping his hand over keys, bolts and bars:

Silence. Still faint on the porch'
Brake the flames of the stars.
In gloom groped a hope-wearied hand
Over keys, bolts and bars.27

---

26. Ibid.
27. Ibid., p. 197
These were poems about ghost, the number can be immensely multiplied for the supernatural being are scattered through the pages, of Walter de la Mare's *Complete Poems* (1969) containing 948 pages.

Here are some instances of other supernatural beings like witches, gnomes fairies and ogre etc., which are easily discerned in the pages of any poetical collection of Walter de la Mare. It is the presence of these supernatural beings, their sudden appearance or disappearance etc. which actually creates an eerie atmosphere in his poems. "The Hare" is one such example. In this poem a natural object puts on a supernatural gleam. An old witch-hare is seen by a boy. It "cocks a lissome ear and eyes the moon and nibbes the green" but as the boy whispers "Whsst! the witch-hare fleds away over the field like a "ghost":

    In the black furrow of a field
    I saw an old witch-hare this night;
    And she cocked a lissome ear,
    And she eyed the moon so bright,
    And she nibbled of the green;
And I whispered 'Whsst! witch-hare',
Away like a ghostie over the field
She fled, and left the moonlight there.28

In "I Saw Three Witches" there are traditional views of witches riding their brooms, sailing in a Shallop like the witches in Shakespeare's famous tragedy Macbeth. They gave grim faces and wear "a snickering smile". They can change their form and the moonlight "turned them to bushes":

"I saw three witches
Asleep in a valley
Their heads in a row, like stones in a flood,
Till the moon, creeping upward,
Looked white through the valley,
And turned them to bushes in bright scarlet bud.29

In "The Three Beggers" there is a fairy-child who spies three beggers in "crimson mantle muffled." and asks them:

29. Ibid, p.8
“What will ye give me from your bag
For fairy kisses three?30

The first man is ‘reddish’ the second a ‘chestnut man’ and the third a ‘yellow man’. The ‘reddish man’ takes a crust out of his bundle; the ‘chestnut man’ draws a bone; and the ‘yellow man’ picks a groat. But by magic all these three are changed into ‘peacock pie’ “sweet version’ and white lily, respectively:

That changeling, lean and icy lipped
Touched crust, and bone, and groat, and lo!
Beneath her finger taper-tipped
The magic all ran through.31

There are poems in which the eerie atmosphere is heavy with the sinister. In “The Ogre” the man eating monster comes to a lone cottage in a Trebarwith Vale. The silence of the Trebarwith Vale, the silence of the night and the peace

31. Ibid.
reigning in the house are deftly contrasted with the restlessness and the ravenous hunger of the Ogre:

The Ogre eager is to sup,
And here seems dainty store. 32

He enters the house and finds two children asleep. He is about to proceed with his gruesome task when "wafted from the kitchen comes a woman's song," a lullaby praising Jesu:

Lullaby, thou little tiny child
By-by, lullay, lullie;
Jesu in glory, meek and mild,
This night remember thee. 33

The effect is instantaneous. The ogre "snarled in gluttony and fear but the hymn ultimately works on the ogre and he withdraws:

With gaunt locks dangling, cronched he, then

32. Complete Poems, p.19
33. Third n 20
Drew backward from his prey,
Through tangled apple-boughs again
He wrenched and rent his way.

Out on Trebarwith Sands he broke
The waves yelled back his cry"34

These are some of the representative poems about the supernatural beings like ghost, phantoms, shadows, witches, fairies gnomes and Ogre; etc. The presence of these supernatural creatures is one of the major sources of the aura of mystery which is one of the most dominant feature of de la Mare's poetry. The spooky atmosphere of these poems has been further heightened by the twilight effect of the particular time which the poet seems to have deliberately chosen. None of these creatures, ghost, phantoms, spectres, fairies, gnomes and witches or ogre, etc. appears in de la Mare's poetry in broadday light but in very dim and dark situations when there is complete silence in the atmosphere and there is darkness all around. Besides the supernatural creature there is yet another reason why there is "Other Worldliness" about the poetry of

34. Complete Poems, p. 20.
Walter de la Mare and this relates to the mystical temperament of the poet. In the next few pages therefore I have tried to explicate the mystical dimensions in Walter de la Mare's poetry. These mystical streaks are found mostly in poems which are otherwise known to be his best nature poems.

After all the true home of the supernatural, of the, "Other World", says H.C. Duffin, is nature. Other aspects can be explained away as emanation of an abnormal mind but there remains the age-long sense of "queer ... going-on" in that world of "in-animate" nature against the vast background of which man moves like a pigmy god. For Walter de la Mare, whose abiding interest in "nature" and "miniature" is so explicitly expressed in his poetry; "Nature is the great fairy."35

“Nature has pantheistic moods of her own, and they are not to be denied at the bidding of science”; so at least thinks Walter de la Mare like Yeats, Barrie, Kipling, James Stephens, and Lord Dunsay, and other writers of the later nineteenth century.36 Pantheism, as a cult of mysticism, and

---

36. Ibid. p.64
as a philosophic creed holds that the Universe is permeated, sustained and inter-penetrated by one "Universal Mind" and that every portion of the universe is but an expression of this animating principle, as is also each individual mind while subject to the limitations of mortality. Walter de la Mare is able to feel the presence of the Creator behind the creation. He is a lover of the earthly beauty not for its own sake but because he "is a member of the order of poets who by reason of their perception believe that everything human is a shadow cast by something eternal. It is therefore impossible to read extensively in de la Mare without realising that life's beauty and mystery are a foreshadowing of a life immeasurably more beautiful and mysterious, a life immortal and divine; the earthly life is a faint thin pattern of the life of God."\textsuperscript{37} de la Mare's poem "Evening" offers a clear instance of pantheism. It is a very realistic and detailed description of approaching evening. As the twilight darkens (it may be specially noted that all poems dealing with mystical experiences have this twilight greyness or darkness), the birds return to their abodes; and glow-worms break through the darkness, then stirs the owl in its nest to prowl through the dewy air etc. "Now all

\textsuperscript{37} \textit{Collected Poems}, p. 91
is still" and the whole atmosphere is shrouded with wonder and mystery. It is through all these things that the poet is able to feel the presence of "their ancient Masters":

"O, What an arch of light now spans
These fields by night no longer Man's!
Their ancient Master is abroad,
Walking beneath the moonlight cold:
His presence is the still ness, He
fills earth with wonder and mystery.\(^{38}\)

"The Scribe" is also an important poem for two reason — it shows not only de la Mare's passion for beauty but also has a bearing upon the fact that the poets' attitude towards beautiful objects is not simply sensuous or asthetic, but to use H.C. Duffin's words, in de la Mare's poetry "Nature's beauty seems sometimes to clamour for mystic interpretation ---".\(^{39}\) In "The Scribe" the poets' meditation does not remain confined to the description of the beauty of various objects of Nature, but their beauty leads him to think of their Creator. In the opening stanza he sings in praise of God, the Creator:

\(^{38}\) Collected Poems, p.91.
What lovely things
Thy hand hath made:
The smooth plumed bird
In its emerald shade,
The seed of the grass,
The speck of stone
Which the way-faring ant
Stirs ___ and hastes on\textsuperscript{40}

He is overwhelmed, and therefore, wishes to write in praise of their Creator. For this he would sit by some tarn, using its water as ink as his "spirit wills to write of Earth's wonders":

--- I should sit
By some tarn in thy hills,
Using its ink
As the spirit wills
To write of Earth's wonders
Its live, willed things\textsuperscript{41}

\textsuperscript{40} Complete Poems, p. 217.
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid.
But

Flit would the ages
On soundless wings
Ere unto Z
My pen drew nigh;
Leviathan told,
And the honey-fly\(^42\)

The poet therefore, realises his position in relation to 'the Lord of all' and comes to the conclusion that it is impossible to write of the immense beauty created by God:

And still would remain
My Wit to try ___
My worn needs broken,
The dark tarn dry,
All woods forgotten ___
Thou, Lord, and I\(^43\)

\(^42\). *Complete Poems*, p.217
\(^43\). Ibid.
In this regard Walter de la Mare may justifiably be compared to a great mystic poet in English language, namely, G.M. Hopkins. Who in his famous poem, "Pied Beauty" also praises God for "the dappled thing" He has created:

Glory be to God for dappled things
For skies of couple-colour as a brinded Cow;
For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim
Fresh fire-coal chestnut falls; finches' wings;...\(^44\)

Similarly, Walter de la Mare also sings in praise of God, for the "lovely things" He has created and they are manifestation of Himself. He, therefore, strongly longs for eulogizing Him. Here Walter de la Mare "is very close to the oriental mysticism of a poet like Rabindranath Tagore"\(^45\)


But in Walter de la Mare's poetry this concept of Divine Presence manifesting Himself through various objects of Nature is not always as all pervasive and distinct as it is in the Romantic poetry of the nineteenth century poets like Wordsworth and Shelley. On the contrary, in Walter de la Mare it is some Mysterious Presence with whom the poet communes. It is this Mysterious Presence which charges even ordinary objects of Nature, in his poetry, with wonder and mystery, hence the difference between Wordsworth and de la Mare; since his first quest "in all situations is to find out some solution to a life times mystery". In most of his mystical poems, therefore, Walter de la Mare's style is "Interrogative". He usually does not simply confer praises or identifies himself with the Divine Presence pervading all objects of Nature the way Wordsworth seems to have done, but tries to explore that all-pervasive Spirit through various queries. It is characteristic of most of his poems. Take, for example, "The Mirackle". The poet cannot name with certainty the agency that has created various objects in the in-animate world. In his characteristic questioning manner the poet expresses his

anxiety to know that **Power** because "the hackneyed miracle of growth" still remains a **mystery** for him:

Who beckons the green ivy up
Its solitary tower of stone;
What spirit lures the bind weed's cup
Unfalteringly on?
Calls even the starry lichen to climb
By age long inches endless time.\(^{47}\)

Similarly in the poem "The Vacant Day" he describes his experience of a walk in a meadow at noon. He "heard the summer noon resound with call of myriad things unseen". He listened them and his "heart was dumb" a stage so common to a mystic when he is overwhelmed by the **Divine Beauty**:

As I walked out in meadows green
I heard the summer noon resound
With call of myriad things unseen
That leapt and crept upon the ground\(^{48}\)

\(^{47}\) *Complete Poems*, p. 68.
\(^{48}\) *Ibid* p.215
I listened and my heart was dumb
With praise no language could express;
Longing in vain for him to come
Who had breathed such blessedness.49

The same idea is found in another poem entitled
"No body knows". Here also the poet does try to commune with
the all-pervasive Presence, in the form of the wind that is
blowing b, "ivied orchard wall," but fails to understand it;
hence what the wind says remains a mystery for ever:

"Often I have heard the wind sigh
By the ivied orchard wall,
Over the leaves in the dark nights,
Breath a sighing call,
And faint away in the silence,
While I, in my bed,
Wondered, what it said.50

49. *Complete Poems*, p. 215
He admits his inability to understand fully the voice of the wind and seeks consolation in the generalization that “No body knows what the wind is”.

Some times, like Shelley, Walter de la Mare too seems to subscribe to the belief that human soul never dies. With his physical death. That is he believed in “the conservation of soul”. Instead, it becomes one with the “Eternal Spirit”. By this absorption in the Divine Spirit he doesnot mean a complete loss of the individual indentity but that the personality loses its earthly dross and participates in the universal “Light” and “Loveliness”. Thus Shelley speaks of John Keats, in his elegy on the poet, who had become one with the “Loveliness”:

He is a portion of the loveliness
Which once he made more lovely”

he doth bear

His part, while the one Spirit’s plastic stress

Sweep through the dull world
And bursting in its beauty and its might. 51

Similarly in "They Told Me" the poet hears the rationalistic call that "Pan was dead", yet he is often surprised to listen to 'his' voices in "the green valleys" and "elder thickets,":

They told me Pan was dead, but I
Oft marvelled who it was that sang
Down the green valley languidly
Where the grey elder thickets hang." 52

This idea is again repeated about the same boy 'Pan' in the "Sorcery":

"What voice is that I hear
Crying across the pool?"
"It is the voice of Pan you hear
In the twilight dim and cool." 53

51. Shelley, P.B. Adonais, Stanza 43.
52. Complete Poems, p.61
53. Ibid, p.62
The woodman who tells him that "It is the voice of Pan you hear" warns the poet not to seek the face of the dead Pan for he is "summoning thee/ To darkness deep and black". But the poet believes that "He dwells in the thickest shade.' and is ultimately convinced that "Pan is not dead" but still sings sweet out of Earth's fragrant shade" and leaves amongst violets "tears of an antique bitterness".

These poems confirm beyond doubt the mystical traits of Walter de la Mare besides the element of wonder, mystery and magic are found abundantly in his poetry. In some of his poems discussed in the foregoing pages pantheistic notes are also easily recognisable. In some of them he expresses his conviction to have experienced the Divine Presence behind various objects of Nature, to whom he sometimes address as "the ancient Master" and some other times as "the Creator" or "the Lord". Walter de la Mare strongly believes that "the Creator" manifests Himself through His creations. He also communies with various object of animate and in-animate objects of Nature and seems to have a faith in the identification of the human and the divine after the physical death. But what makes him different from other mystic poets is his sharper perception of the elements of
“mystery” and “wonder” which permeates through his poetry and entitles him to be designated as the poet of “the other world”.

As pointed out earlier this concept of the Divine Presence is not very distinct in de la Mare as it is in the Romantic poet’s like Wordsworth. Although he believes that “God is like an element all pervading, like the air” but upholds no dogmatic religious view:

No map shows my Jerusalem
No history my christ.55

(“Burning Glass”)

Only seldom does de la Mare introduce, as he does in “The Flower,” the idea of God. Nor as Charles Williams, Graham Greene, and others have pointed out, does he subscribe at all to orthodox or traditional Christianity.56 In “The Flower”, for example, man seeks a “Companion.” A similar idea is expressed in “The Vacant Day” in which the speaker is seen

Longing in vain for him to come
Who had breathed such blessedness

On this fair world, where in we pass
So chequered and so brief stay;
And yearned in spirit to learn, alas,
What kept him still away.  

Even late in life Walter de la Mare gives no indication in his poetry of a positive belief in the existence of God as is revealed in his poem “The Traveller” (1945), the last poem of any significance he was to write. This poem is characteristically titled; but, as Victoria Sack-ville-West suggested in her Wharton Lecture on de la Mare, one should take care not to read into the poem “a very obvious and platitudinous set of philosophical ideas.” However, although she accurately states that to de la Mare “the whole of life is a journey; he is acutely aware of our pilgrimage towards some “mysterious bourne”; he is, himself, the constant traveller,  

she reads the poem inaccurately, perhaps, even platitudinously. She finds in the poem an "affirmation of faith" because the traveller prays "to a mysterious, but, in the last resort, a pitiful God." and she compares the Traveller to Coleridge's Ancient Mariner.59

"The Traveller" far from being an "affirmation of faith" in a "mysterious but a pitiful God" affirms an awareness of transience of existence which almost approaches despair. A product of his late years, the poem makes it all too apparent that de la Mare had found, no happy faith at least in conventional terms. An affirmation is expressed in this poem, but it is relatively bleak one 60:

Ay, what though Man have but one earthly
    life,
Cradle to grave, where in to joy and grieve?
His grace were yet the agony and strife
In quest of what no mortal can achieve.61

60 . Complete Poems, p.55
61 . Ibid. p. 501.
An earlier poem "The Familiar" (1921) expresses similarly the idea that the only God there is, is in man himself; it is an enigmatic colloquy between the speaker and a Voice that can be taken as God's. When the speaker asks "Are you far away?" the Voice answers,

"Yes I am far ___ far;
Where the green wave shelves to the sand'
And the rainbows are;
And an ageless sun beats fierce
From an empty sky:
There, O thou Shadow forlorn
Is the warmth of thee, I"^62

It may therefore be concluded that Walter de la Mare seldom confine himself to mere descriptions of Nature. He was rarely a mere observer because he felt so deeply that all living things share the common mystery. To him life is endlessly interesting and his sense of the supernatural doubles the interest. It throws an aspect of the mysterious over "ordinary" things, leaving them none the less part of the work-

^62 Complete Poems, p. 250.
a-day scheme. It is with the help of the mysterious presences — "Divine Spirit, Universal Mind" God (more often them not the concept is indinct) — in his mystical poems and with the help of the supernatural creatures — ghosts, spectre, shadows, fairies, gnomes and Ogre, etc. — that Walter de la Mare takes the next step and carries us into a world, which though geographically mundane, is not otherwise recognizable for its uncanny and mysterious atmosphere. These elements of mystery in a way pre-dominates the poetry of Walter de la Mare to the extent that to a large number of readers and critics he is simply a children poet singing of the fairy land who has nothing to do with the realities of life. I have therefore proposed in this study to highlight another and equally important aspect of his poetry, namely, the elements of realism which are decidedly no less conspicuous than the elements of mystery. The next chapter therefore, deals with the elements of realism in Walter de la Mare's poetry.
Chapter IV

Elements of Realism : The Phenomenal World

The word ‘realism’ originates from low Latin ‘realis’ appertaining to ‘res’, things as opposed to ideas and imaginations. It is primarily a philosophical term used in two opposite senses. The older of these is the scholastic doctrine, traceable back to Socrates, that universals have a more ‘real existence than things.’ In the most extreme form realism denies that anything exists in any sense except universals. The modern application of the term is to the opposite doctrine that there is a reality apart from its presentation to consciousness. In this sense it is opposed to idealism. In its crude form it is known as ‘Natural’ or ‘Native’ realism.

In literature and art ‘realism’ is the element which is concerned with giving a truthful impression of actuality as it appears to the normal human consciousness. ‘Actuality’ here stands for both tangible objects and mental processes and, of course, no art can tell us the whole truth
about either. But there certainly is a kind of art which attempts to convey an impression of the whole truth without idealizing or caricaturing an art which excludes nothing as uncommon or unclean which can be made in any way to strengthen the impression of life and variety. Realism is that literary synthesis which, through selection and creation heightens for the reader his understanding of reality.

The realist, despite all the resistance, fulfills the demand formulated by Hamlet, "to hold the mirror up to nature." Realism rests upon a realistic theory of knowledge according to which the object revealed by sense perception, and the unobservable objects inferred from sense perceptions, by physical science, exist independently of being perceived or known. In realistic writing the author assumes an objective, rigorously excludes his own feelings, normative, philosophical interpretations and recommendations for action. And he aims to give the reader a strong sense of participation by circumstantially and relative fullness of detail. Realism is the reflection in literature of life itself. The standard for realism is the distillation of the objective truth.
Realism as a guiding principle or absolute aesthetic goal has presided over the entire work of literature and it has been observed that late stages of civilization in particular tend to the realist manner. We can well begin a brief survey of English poetic realism with Chaucer, the greatest realistic poet of the Middle Ages. Let us, for example, take the case of his Wife of Bath. "She is very large, very vulgar, garishly dressed female, rather deaf, with a terrific 'past'. There is nothing ethereal or idealistic about her. Chaucer has not missed a single significant detail, from her moist, new shoes and scarlet stockings to her large hips and bright red face. His appreciation of the colour and texture of her clothes and skin is significant:

Hir hosen weren of fyn scarlet reed
Ful streit y-teyd, and shoes ful moyste and
new
Bold was hir face, and fair, and reed
of hewe
These lines are, of course the result of a poetic sensibility of a high order, and this sensibility is excited not by anything strange or exceptionally beautiful but by the commonest facts of daily life. The poet accepts the facts and incorporates them in this world of poetry without a trace of self-consciousness. There is a harmony, as it were, between his mind and the external world.

Chaucer's realism is at the summit of a great civilization, the civilization that produced the European Universities and the European Cathedrals. It is not isolated. Realism is found all through English medieval poetry, Langland in Piers Plowman, in the Miracle Plays, in the ballads, and in many excellent popular poems like The London Lickpenny and The Nutbrown Maid.

In the sixteenth century, after a flaring up for a moment, the medieval tradition of poetic realism was for the most part eclipsed by Petrarchan and Platonic idealism and Arcadian romance, but it did not wholly die out. There are traces of it in Spenser, especially in Mother Hubberds Tale with its excellent picture of the Ape in the old soldier's clothes and there is a good deal in Shakespeare.
Shakespeare may readily be reckoned as the last of the great poetic realists in the medieval manner when he writes such poetry as the song of Autolycus:

The lark, that irra-lyra chants
With heigh! with height! the thrush and the jay
Are summer songs for me and my aunts,
While we lie tumbling in the hay.

Signs of a new realistic temper in poetry are visible at the beginning of the seventeenth century and even before in the writings of Raleigh, Donne and Ben Jonson. In their works we can see the beginnings of a new kind of poetic realism which was to reach its full stature in the eighteenth century. Again, like Chaucer's visions of common things, it springs from a sense of social stability; it is the voice of a man who is not afraid of the physical world since he belongs to an ordered society and can speak in an assured and civilized tone.

Seventeenth century English poetry is full of experiments in the treatment of realistic material such as Herbert's religious approach to it, the attempts of Vaughan
and Traherne to show it in the light of mystical vision, Milton's application of it to the Horatian method in his lighter sonnets and finally Dryden's early experiment in *Annus Mirabilis*, where he tried with only an occasional measure of success to treat it with epic magnificence:

The morn shone clear on the becalmed flood
Where, while her beams like glittering silver
    play
Upon the deck our careful general stood
And deeply mused on the successful day.

The courtier poets of the Restoration, in particular Rochester, with Dryden himself in his later works, were responsible for establishing what we might call the second great realistic school of English poetry, which is linked to medieval realism through Dryden's admiration of Chaucer. This realism of the Augustans is really the result of the successful attempt of English poetry to survive in the hard mechanical universe created by the philosophers and scientists of the seventeenth century, by Descartes and Hobbes and Newton. Boileau, the French poet, said that Descartes had cut the throat of poetry, but
English poetry was too tough to be killed by the new materialism. It boldly faced the mechanical universe made of the atoms of Hobbes and enjoyed the adventure of transmitting this stubborn material into poetry.

The quality of Augustan poetic realism springs not from the frank and instinctive sense of harmony between the poet's mind and the physical world that characterizes the realism of the Middle Ages, but rather from a sense of separation of mind from matter and often indeed a conviction that the physical world is ugly, absurd and repulsive. It is the conviction which is expressed with such terrible power in the Last Voyage of Gulliver. The poets, however, unlike Gulliver, did not turn away in loathing from the ugliness and squalor of the physical world. They invented, or rather, perhaps adapted from Latin Satire, a method of bridging the gulf between their minds and the 'hard', 'dry' universe described by Wolsley. This method is that of satiric humour, and especially that of the mock heroic. The 'ordinariness' of the every day world, which did not exist for Chaucer and the ballad poets, had become a potent factor in the life of Queen Anne's reign, but the poets were able to overcome it and possess their stubborn
material with what Wolsley called "the spirit of good sense and gracefulness." In Pope's character of Buckingham where this sort of mock-heroic realism achieves a veritable grandeur:

In the worst inn's worst room, with mat half hung
The floors of plaister, and the walls of dung,
On once a flock bed, but repaired with straw
With tape-tyd curtains never meant to draw
The George and Garter dangling from that bed
Where tawdry yellow strove with dirty red,
Great Villers lies-alas! how changed from him,
That life of pleasure, and that soul of whim!

Besides this conviction of light-verse there was also another more ambitious development of realistic poetry in the eighteenth century. It may be described as an attempt to extend and enrich Augustan realism by adding to it new subject matter and a new kind of sensibility. This attempt was commonly connected with the use of Miltonic style and verse for the realistic description of landscape and country-side begun half in jest by John Phillips and
continued by Thompson, Dyer and their successors, leading up to Cowper's notable achievement in The Task and elsewhere.

Poetic realism was threatened by other enemies besides 'Nature-Worship' in the eighteenth century. It had to fight against the silly kind of neo-classicism (nymphs, shepherds, zephyrs and fountains), and especially after the middle of the century, against the new romanticism (haunted castles, medieval knights, witches and fairies), with its close ally sentimentalism, or the cult of the pathetic and pretty. However, the civilization of Georgian England was too solid and genuine to collapse immediately, and poetic realism like the pictorial realism of Hogarth and the realism of Fielding's novels, was one of its most characteristic forms of expression. Dr. Johnson, himself no mean realist, was the consistent champion of Truth, Nature and Reality in poetry, and another powerful factor in the last decade of the century was the example of Burns, whose poetry represents a survival in Scotland of a realism of the medieval kind which had not been destroyed by English learned and courtly influences. The result was that when the Romantic Movement came, it was not too romantic.
Three of the most important poets of the early 19th century are at their best when they are dealing with realistic subject matter and developing one or other of the several realistic traditions of the eighteenth century. Wordsworth, the greatest of them all was fundamentally a realist, perhaps the greatest English realistic poet since Chaucer. He alone among the poets of his time understood that the supreme task of modern poetry would be to use the material of every day experience and reveal its inner spiritual meaning, or in his own famous words, “to choose incidents and situations from common life and relate or describe them throughout in a selection of the language really used by men, and at the same time to throw over them a certain colouring of the imagination where by ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect.” Wordsworth was hampered by the theory of diction and also by the ‘Nature’ worship. His realism succeeds when he uses the more grandiose eighteenth century tradition of Thompson and Cowper, the application of the Miltonic spirit and Milonic verse to realistic subject matter. Wordsworth is the first and perhaps the only realist in English poetry who is also a prophet. The other two great realists of the age of Wordsworth were Byron and Crabbe. Byron, like
Wordsworth, was temperamentally realistic, but unlike Wordsworth, he was no prophet or mystic, and had no 'double vision.'

Crabbe appears at first glance to be much closer to the Augustans than any of his contemporaries and is often mistaken for a mere imitator of their manner. "A Pope in worsted stockings", as he was quite wrongly called. Actually, although he used the Augustan style and metre, thus wisely linking his work to their external tradition, his poetry represents a development of eighteenth century realism quite as much as Wordsworth's or Byron's. In his fine preface to his Tales of 1812 he defends realism in poetry, although the word was unknown to him. He speaks of 'actuality of realtion,' 'nudity of description, and poetry without an atmosphere,' referring especially to Chaucer, Dryden and Pope's character of Buckingham. But he reveals his own true best when he stesses the 'painful realities' that a poet can exhibit to his readers and thus interest and please them, provided these realities are not their own concerns and distresses. This, of course, is a theory of tragedy and Crabbe may be called with justice the first tragic realist in English poetry.
Taken as a whole, Victorian poetry tended to follow the romanticism of Keats and Coleridge and the idealism of Shelley rather than the realism of Crabbe and the latter Byron. Wordsworth was a potent influence, but the true significance of his work was not understood, and Tennyson failed hopelessly when he tried to imitate the bareness of his realistic descriptions. But Tennyson and Browning both wrote notable realistic poetry which has stood the test of time better than most of their romanticism and idealism. The modern reader can enjoy "Maud" and "Men and Women", but finds it hard to get through the "Idylls of the King" and still harder to stomach "Christmas Day" and "Easter Day". The weakness of realism in the work of both these poets is due to the failure of the 19th century middle class to achieve a civilization comparable to the civilization of the Augustans, hence the trivial and sentimental tone of Victorian conversation as reflected in Tennyson's lighter works. Tennyson's great contribution to poetic realism is to be found in his admirable pictorial sense and his use of commonplace detail in order to produce an atmosphere of emotional intensity:
All day within the dreamy house
The doors upon their hinges creaked
The blue fly sung in the pane; the mouse
Behind the mouldering wainscot shrieked,
Or from the crevice peered about.
Old faces glimmered through the door,
Old footsteps trod the upper floors
Old voices called her from without.

Browning made a discovery which was a source of inspiration to Kipling and to many later poets. He found that realistic effects could be conveyed by means of rhythm and especially by the introduction of the rhythms of common speech into verse.

The Pre-Raphaelites made some interesting experiments in realism such as Rossetti's "Jenny" and "A Last Confession", and Morris's unfinished socialist epic The Pilgrim of Hope, but the most remarkable Victorian realist poetry outside the works of the two great masters is by Arthur Hugh Clough and Coventry Patmore. The poetry of both these writers springs from the life of civilized social groups, Clough's from the academic world and Patmore's
from country and ecclesiastical society. Hence, like the Augustans, they both have a social tone that enables them to face contemporary realities including proper names and small talk, and use them for poetic purpose.

Victorian poetic realism ends with Hardy and Houseman, most of whose poetry belong chronologically to the twentieth but spiritually to the late nineteenth century. For both science had again created a hard material universe not unlike that which confronted poetry in the late seventeenth century, but they could not face it with the gaiety of Rochester and Dryden and Pope because they did not belong to a stable and civilized society. Hence the comic outlook was impossible for them, and they became the poets of the tragedy of the lonely individual in a non-moral universe. Both sought for roots in the earth, as it were by making their poetry representative of locality with ancient traditions. Hardy had the immense advantage of belonging to a part of England with a very rich and distinct individuality and with some literary traditions in the shape of the excellent realistic dialect poetry of William Barnes, the Dorset poet.
Since Hardy and Houseman the history of modern English poetry might be not unfairly summarized as the search for an adequate realism, a realism equal to the task of replacing the romanticism which expired with the Pre Raphaelites. The so-called Georgian poets of the years immediately preceding 1914 rightly concerned themselves with contemporary life, but they dealt too exclusively with the world as it was seen through their windows of a weekend cottage, so that their poetry, as Mr. Eliot has said, seems to have 'no inside'. Most of its characteristic qualities are to be found in Rupert Brooke’s Grantchester. The First Great World War killed this gentlemanly sort of poetic realism by confronting poetry with the terrible realities that we find in the early volumes of Siegfried Sassoon:

I found him in the guard-room at the Base;  
From the blind darkness I had heard his crying  
And blundered in with puzzled, patient face  
A sergeant watched him; it was no good trying  
To stop it; for he howled and beat his chest.
The poems of Siegfried Sassoon fulfilled the prophecy of J.M. Synge, who had written as early as 1908 that 'before verse can become human again, it must learn to be brutal'.

Since then English poets have been trying to achieve a realism at once wider and deeper than that of the Georgians, Mr. T.S. Eliot has brought to the task great learning, valuable suggestions from French literature and an astonishing technical virtuosity. He has extended the scope of poetic realism by interpreting the boredom and frustration of modern urban life and also by linking poetry again to religions tradition. Modern realism in western countries has become increasingly defeatist and tends to see only the disintegration of that modern society which it describes. The succeeding Jesuit, Gerald Manley Hopkins, who had anticipated many of the demands of the modern poetic realist in the eighteen eighties. The political situation is such an important part of modern actuality that no realism worthy of the name can turn its back on it. To succeed greatly modern poetry will have to achieve a realism which, in Mr. Stephen Spender's words, must be not
an imitation but an analysis of the society in which we are living.

The modern climate of opinion is unfavourable to any poetry except realistic poetry, though unfortunately there are usually a few creators of fantasy in every age. The representative modern poet must, however, be realistic, and as he is socially isolated, his poetry is usually difficult and obscure, for he lacks the social idiom which was the indispensable instrument of the medieval and Augustan writers and which was not wholly out of reach even in the 19th century. It may well be affirmed that this poetry of actuality is one of the supreme achievements of the English mind, and that it is the characteristic English contribution to the realistic way of thought which is the supreme gift of the democratic peoples of Western Europe to the World.*

In Walter de la Mare’s poetry too, inspite of the predominance of imagination, dream, mysterious presences and an eerie atmosphere, we also find a continuation to the

---

tradition of realism which started with Chaucer in the 14th century, and was always there in English literature until it culminated in the poetry of William Wordsworth. In Wordsworth's poetry despite his ‘Nature Worship’ and the mystical inclination, one finds, the best possible realistic details when he deals with natural descriptions. In de la Mare also we find that he is superb when it comes to the description of the phenomenal world; which has a bearing up on the fact that he was a minute and close observer of the phenomenal world around himself. There is a valid reason for this. Walter de la Mare was born in Charlton, Kent, which is popularly known as “the Garden of England.”¹ Kent is traditionally rich in natural beauty and continues to be the chief producer of apple in England. He opened his eyes in this “Garden of England” and readers of de la Mare’s poetry are well aware that the child in him continued till his last breath. Naturally his poetry is full of realistic descriptions of beautiful landscapes and animate world — birds, animals, small insects, etc. In this connection Kenneth Hopkins has made a very pertinent remark:

“His attachments have all been local; birds, clouds, the seasons; and his travels have not been to the sites of ancient battlefields, or to cities having the largest this or the most celebrated that.”

Walter de la Mare himself believed that “poetry is the outcome and flower of surroundings.”

Also initially and ultimately the genius of the landscape is the genius of the people around it. Each influences the other. In the course of their centuries of history the people of every country have become unconscious landscape gardeners and for England there have been few landscape gardeners like Walter de la Mare, who to his last breath sang of “O Lovely England.” Therefore, there is much in his (de la Mare’s) work which strike us as “remembered.”

---

   N.B.: This the title poem of Walter de la Mare’s last collection of poems published in 1953, three years before his death.
very good example when he compares the setting/locale of Walter de la Mare's famous poem "The Listners" with a place called Chiddingston in Kent.\(^6\) It is not the case with one single poem but it holds good for many of his poems which have for their setting/background the hopfields and cherry-orchards of Kent. All these descriptions are realistic in the true sense of the term.

Here is Walter de la Mare speaking of England's woods, sea, and sky to a 'foreign sailor':

'In England now you be;
This her wood, and there her sky,
And that her roaring sea.'\(^7\)

Speaking of the flora he says:

'It is wild roses
Do smell so winsomely
And winy briar too', says I,
That in these thickets be.\textsuperscript{8}

Describing the birds, he informs the 'foreign sailor':

'It is the mavis
That perches in the tree,
And sing so shrill, and sings so sweet,\textsuperscript{9}

In this brief poem "The Englishman" de la Mare introduces the English flora, fauna, sea and sky -- the whole of Nature around him. It shows his affinity with the Nature poets of the twenties. The way he speaks very authoritatively to "the foreign sailorman" of various trees, birds and animals besides the English sea, has a bearing upon the poet's interest and the knowledge of the wealth of Nature that he enjoyed and knew best as a small child, an impression which he could never shake off till his last breath when he sang of "O Lovely England". His poetry is also full of the beauty of the place and patriotic love for it; This passionately patriotic love for the place and the

\textsuperscript{8} Complete Poems, pp.58.  
\textsuperscript{9} Ibid.
sensuous love for the beauties of it may be exemplified by two of his early poems, namely "The Englishman" and "England". "England" is certainly a poem which bears testimony to the fact that the poet was deeply rooted to his soil. He praises England's hills, valleys and woods, which to him are lovelier than any other in the world:

"No lovelier hills than thine have laid
My tired thoughts to rest;
No peace of lovelier valleys made
Like peace within my breast."\(^{10}\)

and that

"Thine are woods where to my soul,
Out of the noontide beam,
Flees for a refuge green and cool
And tranquil as a dream.\(^{11}\)

In stanza No. 3 he praises the English sea. Though the poet's emotional attachment to the soil of

---

11. Ibid.
England is quite clear in the very opening stanza of the poem when he declares England's hills, valleys and woods lovelier than that of any other country. It is further reinforced when he wishes to be buried in the same soil:

"My heart within me faints to roam
In thought even far from thee:
Thine be the grave where to I come,
And thine my darkness be.\textsuperscript{12}

Besides this patriotism and deep association with the place his poetry is also replete with the beauties, sights and sounds of Nature which he experienced as a little but observant and sensitive child in the Kentish village of Charlton. Due to the lack of philosophical and interpretative dimensions the attitude of these early twentieth century poets has been described as "charmingly phenomenal". De la Mare's poetry too, despite his philosophical and emotional aspects, is full of the loving observation of the miracle of Nature around him. He usually

\textsuperscript{12} \textit{Complete Poems}, p. 90.
deals with the abstract aspect of Nature as is clear from some of the titles of his poems given below:

"Three Cherry Trees", Bunches of Grapes,
"Evening", "Night", "Winter", "Autumn",
"Winter Dusk", "Bind Weed", "Bluebell",
"A Dale of Snow", "Noon and Night Flowers",
"The Little Green Orchard", etc.

In this regard the most striking poems are those in which de la Mare describes the 'foaming, orchards', 'Sunken Gardens', 'Setting Sun', 'Rising Moon', 'Evening', 'Night' or seasons like Spring, Winter, Autumn and Summer, etc. These poems show his sensuous love for the objects of Nature. The poems are rich in pictorial quality as the poet provides fullest possible details of each of them besides their emotional associations and metaphorical suggestions. As many as fifty species of various trees and shrubs are referred to in one of early Collection of Poems, Poems 1901 to 1918. They reveal the poet's keen observation and the knowledge of the flora around him. He writes of them not only with the love of a naturalist but very authoritatively almost like a botanist. He refers to one
single tree or shrub or flower by its various names. For example, the same shrub is referred to by three different names — Convolvulus, Bindweed and White Convolvulus, in "In Vain", "The Miracle", and "The Bindweed". Similarly, one single flower is referred to in three different poems by its three different names — bluebell, harebell and hyacinth in "April", "Bluebells", and "Alone". In "The Englishman" the poet introduces the Natural wealth of England to "a foreign sailorman" who is anxious to know about the place, its flora, fauna and the sea; etc. He asks various questions about trees, flowers and birds, and the sea of England. The poet answers them all very authoritatively and satisfactorily. The poet tells him that he is in England. The 'foreign sailorman' "lifts his voice yet "louder" and asks:

“What smell be this
My nose on the sharp morning air
Snuffs up so greedily?”

The poet, however, replies with disarming simplicity:

---

"It is wild roses
Do smell so winsomely,
And winy briar too
That in these thickets be."\textsuperscript{14}

In another poem entitled "Trees" he gives a detailed account of the trees and shrubs of England with their characteristic qualities. In the opening stanza of the poem he describes the trees used as firewood or fuel and points out the trees which give maximum heat and light when burnt. He claims to have known almost all the trees in England and finds the 'bonnie Ash (a forest tree with silver-grey bark and hard tough wood) which burns most fiercely:

"Of all trees in England,
Her sweet three corners in,
Only the Ash, the bonnie Ash
Burns fierce while it is green"\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{14} Complete Poems, p.180.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid, p. 180
In stanza II the poet considers the pliant trees and shrubs and discovers the willow as the ‘loveliest’ and most easily bending under the driving rain of all the trees and shrubs found in England:

“Of all the trees in England,
From sea to sea again,
The willow loveliest stoops her boughs
Beneath the driving rain”\(^a\)

In the third stanza he describes the aromatic trees and shrubs. He speaks of various trees and plants and their fragrant material like frankincense (kind of resin from trees, giving out sweet smelling when burnt) and myrrh

“There is none for smell, of bloom and smoke
Like Lime and Juniper.”\(^b\)

In the fourth and the last stanza of the poem “Trees” the poet speaks of the influences of various trees of human beings; of all the trees and shrubs in England _____ Oak, Elder,

\(^a\) Complete Poems, p. 180.
\(^b\) Ibid, p.180.
Elm, and Thorn; Yew is the only tree which leaves a solacing and comforting impact on those who are sad and sorrow-striken:

"Of all the trees in England,  
Oak, Elder, Elm and Thorn,  
The Yew alone burns lamps of peace  
For them that lie forlorn." \(^{18}\)

Hence in this brief poem of four stanzas de la Mare seems to have studied almost all the trees and shrubs of England very minutely with the 'Love' of a naturalist and 'interest' of a scientist.

The poems "The Bindweed", "The Hawthorn hath a Deathly Smell" and "Noon and Night Flowers" are other poems which may be presented as an evidence to the fact that de la Mare had got a very thorough knowledge of the flora of England. In "The Hawthorn Hath a Deathly Smell", a brief poem of three stanzas which smells of the romantic decadence, the poet talks of various aromatic plants and

---

\(^{18}\) Complete Poems., p.186
shrubs and compares their fragrance. He observes that all of them have sweet smell whether it is 'meadow sweet', 'tansy', 'thyme' or 'faint-heart pimpernel', but the 'silver of the may' (white, red or pink blossom of a thorny shrub) is sweeter than all of them:

"The flowers of the field
Have a sweet smell;
Meadow sweet, tansy, thyme,
And faint-heart pimpernel;
But sweeter even than these
The Silver of the may"19

In another poem, "The Bindweed" the poet is shown studying bindweed (a kind of convolvulus with white or pink blossom) almost like a botanist. He notices various changes that occur in it from morning till night. In the opening stanza of the poem he refers to the fact that the bindweed roots go very deep down into the earth:

"The bindweed roots pierce down

19. Complete Poems, p.135
Deeper than men do lie  
Laid in their dark-shut graves  
Their slumbering kinsmen by”20

In the second stanza he describes the frail structure of the bindweed flower as ‘thin-spun’ and the fact that it blossoms under the sun shine and spread its fragrance in day time only:

"Yet what frail thin-spun flowers  
She casts into the air,  
To breathe the sun shine, and  
To leave her fragrance there".21

But with the setting of the sun and rising of the moon at night these ‘thin-spun’ bindweed flowers spend out all of their energy and ultimately droop down:

"But when the sweet moon comes,  
Showering her silver down,  
Half wreathed in faint sleep,"
They droop where they have blown.\textsuperscript{22}

Such a minute and stage-wise study from the piercing of the roots deep down into the earth to the withering away of the bindweed's blossoms is expected only of a man who is highly devoted to and interested in the study of flora.

The poem entitled "Noon and Night Flowers" is equally important in this regard. This brief poem of four stanzas is also based on the poet's close observation of the flowers of England. In the opening stanza of the poem the poet emphasises that various flowers are associated with particular hours of the day and night, and that they have been strictly adhering to this scheme:

"Not any flower that blows
But shining watch doth keep;
Every swift changing chequred hour it knows
Now to breakforth in beauty; now to sleep."\textsuperscript{23}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{22} Complete Poems, p.110. \\
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid, p. 111.
\end{flushleft}
There are flowers which blow during the sunshine so that bees may come and suck honey from them, but there are others which are meant to blossom at night in darkness, instead of the bees they draw moths towards them:

"This for the roving bee
Keeps open house, and this
Stainless and clear is, that in darkness she
May lure the moth to where her nectar is."

These were the general remarks about the flowers of the day and night. This study is carried further, and in the next stanza the poet talks of some specific type of flowers associated with particular hours of the day and night. Pimpernel blows at noon in the bright sunshine while primrose blossoms at night under the moonlight:

"Lovely beyond the rest
Are these of all delight:
The tiny pimpernel that noon loves best,

\[24 \text{ Complete Poems, p.111}\]
The primrose palely burning through the night.\textsuperscript{25}

In brief "The Flowers of Noon and Night" is an important poem in as much as it shows de la Mare's intimate knowledge of flowers. He observes minutely various flowers associated with particular hours of the day and night. And in all this the poet seems to emphasise the strict scheme or order which is governing in the world of Nature.

Some other poems also show de la Mare's exclusive interest and knowledge of the flora of England. They certainly establish him as one in whom the loving observation of a naturalist and the searching interest of a scientist (botanist) seems to have been fused together. But as a true poet of Nature who sings of the sights and sounds of hers de la Mare unfolds himself in poems in which flora is treated along with the animal and the phenomenal world — that is the whole of Nature is fused together and focussed constantly. It is in these poems that one should

\textsuperscript{25}. \textit{Complete Poems}, p.112.
seek to explicate multiple-layers of his treatment and attitude to Nature.

Walter de la Mare like other Georgians and early twentieth century poets was primarily a town-dweller. He therefore, generally seems not to have been influenced and attracted by the wild, sublime and cruel aspects of Nature. What he chose to describe is generally suburban Nature or the countryside adjacent to the town. But at the same time the creative role of his childhood impressions cannot be ignored. He was, however, attracted by beautiful objects, quiet places, peaceful objects and silences of Nature. This search for the "Beauty", "Certainty", and "Quiete kind", is the motto of the Georgian poetry.26 As such in his poems we usually do not come across storms, high mountains, and breaking seas, but gardens, various flowers, small birds (not usually the birds of prey) and descriptions of seasons, weathers, evening and night, etc. An eerie and dreamy atmosphere characterises his entire poetry. Hence it is not usually the bright sunshine but twilight, mist, fog, moonlit and starlit skies that the readers of de la Mare's poetry come across.

The first thing that may be noticed in these poems describing the beauties, colours and sounds of Nature is the element of simple delight and sensuous love for her. It is "a simple spontaneous unreflecting pleasure which all unsophisticated being feel in free open-air life".27 This 'childish delight' pervades through almost all his descriptions of the natural landscapes particularly in the songs that he sings as a child or recalls any childhood experience in the midst of Nature.

Take, for example, the brief poem entitled "Myself". It is not a poem about de la Mare as such but it is important because here the poet recalls his childhood experience in a garden in Autumn. Summer, the season of warmth and life is about to give way to Autumn whose coming is visible in the atmosphere. He gives a very sensuous description of the garden — with autumntide mist and, green and giant boughs of trees spreading far and wide:

“There is a garden, grey
With mist of autumn tides;
Under the giant boughs,
Stretched green on every side”.28

The poet (as a child) goes on playing in this peaceful atmosphere without any distraction. Until evening comes and birds and bees etc. all return to their respective abodes, even winds are silent. Yet the child is there in the garden playing alone:

“After the birds are flown
From singing in the tree,
When all is grey, all silent,
Voices, winds and bees;
And I am there alone:
Playing in the evening garden
Myself with me.”29

In “Wanderers” the poet describes the delight of evening walk through “the meadows of night”. The meadows are wide and full of daisies which are tossing and shining their

28 . Complete Poem, p. 96
29 . Ibid.
dew ___ this is the beauty of the earth. Over head in the sky are the constellations brightening the sky:

"Wide are meadows of night,
And daisies are shining there,
Tossing there lovely dews,
Lustrous and fair;"\textsuperscript{30}

It is through these that the wanderers go:

"And through these fields go,
Wanderers amid the stars___
Venus, Mercury, Uranus and Napture,
Saturn, Jupiter, Mars."\textsuperscript{31}

This beauty of the earth and sky delights the wanderers and impresses them so much that they exclaim in great appreciation:

"Fair are the meadows of delight
Through which we stray."\textsuperscript{32}

\textsuperscript{30} Complete Poems, p.182.
\textsuperscript{31} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{32} Ibid.
A spectacle of silent evening is presented in “Sorcery” where the woodman after his day’s labour is returning home, through a silent forest. The poet describes the silent atmosphere of the forest, the setting sun, reddish glow on the horizon and in this twilight the last beams of the setting sun are brightening the edge of the woodman’s axe:

“The woodman passed away
Along the forest path'
His axe shows keen and grey
In the last beams of day;
And all was still as death.”

“Winter” is another poem in which de la Mare recalls the sensuous experience he had as a child on one winter evening when he was in a ‘dell of snow’. The atmosphere was calm and quiet except for a single robin which also flew away when the snow fall increased. The poet was in a dell which was experiencing heavy snowfall. Due to the heavy frost

---

Since the hound was very dear to Lady Jane, she took no serious notice of the complaint. On the contrary she, almost like the loving mother of a naughty child who is proud of his activities, challenges her neighbour, pointing out the qualities of her pet:

"Hoots! Lord, speak not so proud to me!
My hound, I trow, is fleet and free,
He's welcome to your deer, O;
Shoot, shoot you may,
He'll gang his way,
Your threats we nothing fear, O."5

Unfortunately the day came when the neighbour could bear no more and shot the hound dead. He brought the bleeding and dying dog to its mistress:

"He's fetched him in, he's laid him low,
Drips his life blood red and slow,
Darkens his dreary eye, O;
'Here is your beast,
And now at least

5. Complete Poems, p. 139.
My hands in peace shall lie, O."^6

She could not put up with the painful scene of the dying hound which was very dear to her. Out of her anger for the neighbour who killed the hound and her sympathy for the dead, her cheeks became red and tears trickled down on them from her eyes:

"Her cheeks burn angry as the rose,
Her eyes with wrath and pity flows."^7

This surprises the lord; he is moved by the condition of Lady Jane at the loss of her dear hound:

"He gazes fierce and round, O,
'Dear Lord!' he says,
'What loveliness
To waste upon a hound, O'."^8

He consoles the lady and tries to compensate the loss by offering his entire property to her:

^7. Ibid.
^8. Ibid.
A spectacle of silent evening is presented in "Sorcery" where the woodman after his day's labour is returning home, through a silent forest. The poet describes the silent atmosphere of the forest, the setting sun, reddish glow on the horizon and in this twilight the last beams of the setting sun are brightening the edge of the woodman's axe:

"The woodman passed away  
Along the forest path'  
His axe shows keen and grey  
In the last beams of day;  
And all was still as death."\(^{33}\)

"Winter" is another poem in which de la Mare recalls the sensuous experience he had as a child on one winter evening when he was in a 'dell of snow'. The atmosphere was calm and quiet except for a single robin which also flew away when the snow fall increased. The poet was in a dell which was experiencing heavy snowfall. Due to the heavy frost

\(^{33}\) Complete Poems, p.62.
even boughs of the trees were not visible and the wintry sky was dim:

"Green Mistletoe!
Oh, I remember now
A dell of snow,
Frost on the bough;
None there but I:
Snow, snow, and a wintry sky."\textsuperscript{34}

In that dell of snow the poet says that there was none except a robin sitting in a tree. Hearing its shrill notes, the poet tried to seek for it with his 'snow-clubbed feet' until the sun set in the West:

"And he whistled sweet;
And I in the crusted snow
With snow-clubbed feet
Jigged to and fro,
Till, from the day,
The rose light ebbed away."\textsuperscript{35}

\textsuperscript{34} Complete Poems, p.97
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid. p. 98.
The robin flew into the air, and 'the night frost fell'/ 'Into the calm and misty dell.' Then the dusk gathered low and ultimately the moon and stars were visible in the sky, their beams of light shone the 'hooded briers':

"And the dusk gathered low,
And the silver moon and stars
On the frozen snow
Drew taper bars,
Kindled winking fires
In the hooded briers."\textsuperscript{36}

The "Rainbow" and "Mountains" are two brief poems which may be cited as good examples of Walter de la Mare's intent observation, power of grasping a phenomenon or natural scene and then to reproduce it with equal vividness in his poems.

After the rain is over and the 'gold sun' reappears in the sky. The poet sees 'the lovely arch'/ Of Rainbow, 'across the sky':

\textsuperscript{36} Complete Poems, p. 99.
"I saw the lovely arch
Of Rainbow span the sky,
The gold sun burning
As the rain swept by." 37

In the second and the last stanza of the poem the poet talks of the nature and durability of the rainbow. He tells us how it looks and how quickly it disappears:

"In bright-ringed solitude
The showery foliage shone
One lovely moment
And the Bow was gone." 38

This brief poem of only two stanzas of four lines each is important for more than one reason. It establishes de la Mare as one who is an intent watcher of the phenomena of Nature, and one who has got the power to describe these phenomena of Nature in all their vividness. And also as a lover of the beauty of the earth, sea and sky but who also believes that the beauty of the phenomenal world is transitory and ephemeral.

38. Ibid.
"Mountain" besides showing de la Mare's knowledge of mountains and mountain-life and his power to give sensuous descriptions of the objects, also expresses his love and longing for quiet and mysterious places.

The poet finds before him lone and snow-covered hills overgrown with 'frosty ulys'. They are standing in 'secret silence':

"Still and blanced and cold and lone
The icy hills far off from me
With frosty ulys overgrown
Stand in their sculptured secrecy."

The lonesomeness is further reinforced when the poet emphasises that over these 'ice-marbled glaciers' no animate object (bird or animal) is seen. Even Chamois, a small goat-like animal that lives in the high mountains of Europe, and eagle, usually found on high peaks of mountains and hills, are not seen.

"No path of theirs the Chamois fleet
Treads, with a nostril to the wind:
O'er their ice-marbled glaciers beat
No wings of eagles in my mind\textsuperscript{40}

Yet the poet is not afraid of the perils of these 'cold and lone' hills. He is in love with their quietitude and mystery, and therefore longs for reaching these 'untroubled snows'.

"Yes, in my mind these mountains rise,
The perils dyed with evening's rose;
And still my ghost sits at my eyes
And thirsts for their untroubled snows."\textsuperscript{41}

This brief poem contains the truthful descriptions of a natural scene.

Walter de la Mare's interest in, and power to describe objects and phenomena of Nature becomes manifestly clear in poems dealing with seasons and weathers, particularly in the descriptions of morning, evening and night. Like James Thomson, the author of \textit{The

\textsuperscript{41} \textit{Complete Poems}, p.122
\textsuperscript{42} \textit{Ibid.}
Seas ons (1730), de la Mare also provides very detailed and realistic accounts of various seasons and their corresponding impact on animate and the human world.

Spring is the first of the cycle of seasons in Europe. It is the season of the renewal of life and growth, and starts from the third week of March and continues till the last week of June. But the most important month of this season is April in England. Chaucer and Langland spoke of it in the 14th century and T.S. Eliot spoke of it in the twentieth century. Then how could it be possible for de la Mare, who had an abiding interest in Nature, to forget this important season. In the poem of the same title that is "April" he invokes it almost in the same vein as Chaucer, Langland, and James Thomson had done before him:

"Come, then, with showers; I love thy cloudy face
Gilded with splendour of the sunbeams thro'
The heedless glory of thy locks."\(^{42}\)

The first half of the poem merely describes the changes in the phenomenal world ___ 'splendour of

\(^{42}\) Complete Poems, p. 76
sunbeams', 'brimming rivers', and 'dim dells where in azure bluebells blow' in view of the approaching Spring, in the month of April:

"I know
The arch, sweet langour of the fleeting grace,
The sindy lovebeams of thy dwelling place,
The dim dells where in azure bluebells blow,
The brimming rivers where thy lightnings go.
Harmless and full and swift from race to race."43

While in the second half of it the poet takes into account the corresponding change in the animate (birds and bees), flora (bluebell and poplar), and the human world. Like Chaucer and James Thomson, de la Mare also considers the month of April (i.e. Spring) as the season of regeneration, increased vivacity and harmony:

"Thou takest all young hearts captive with thine eyes;
At rumour of thee the tongues of children ring
Louder than bees; the golden poplar rise

43. Complete Poems, p. 76
Like trumps of peace; and birds, on homeward wing,
Fly mocking echoes shrill along the skies,
Above the wave's grave dispasoning."

Similarly in the "The Scarecrow" the poet speaks of the regenerating spirit of Spring after winter is over. The "Scarecrow" which has been dull and dead during Winter regains life and resumes its duties when 'that child called Spring' revisits the field and a new life reawakens everywhere:

"All Winter through I bow my head
Beneath the driving rain."45

when Spring came even the "Scarecrow" feels 'some rapture in its rags':

"But when that child, called Spring, and all
His host of children, come,
Scattering their buds and dew upon
These acres of my home,
Some rapture in my rags awakes;

44. Complete Poems, p. 76.
45. Ibid. p.108.
I lift void eyes and scan
The skies for crows, those ravening foes,
Of my strange master, Man."^46

The "Scarecrow" is getting ready to watch the fields because sterility will soon turn into fertility:

"Soon will the wheat swish body high
Where once lay sterile snow;
Soon shall I gaze across a sea
Of sun-begotten grain,
Which my unflinching watch hath sealed
For harvest once again."^47

Continuing the description of renewed life and gaiety in the phenomenal world de la Mare speaks of the impact of "Spring" in his poem entitled "The Reawakening", in the following words:

"Green in light are the hills, and a calm wind
flowing

---

^47. Ibid.
Filleth the void with a flood of the fragrance of Spring;
Wings in this mansion of life are coming and going,
Voices of unseen loveliness carol and sing."^{48}

Following is the impact of Spring on the flora:

"Coloured with buds of delight the boughs are swaying
Beauty walks in the woods, and wherever she rove
Flowers from wintry sleep; her enchantment obeying,
Stir in the deep of her dream, reawaken to love."^{49}

This is also a season that makes care-free and inspires him to love as new life sprouts everywhere:

"Oh, now begone sullen care — this light is my seeing;

^{48} Complete Poems, p. 214
^{49} Ibid.
I am the palace, and mine are its windows and walls;
Day break is come, and life from the darkness of being
Springs, like a child from the womb,"50

After Spring comes Summer, a season of warmth and stability. Though it does not strike the heart of man as suddenly as does Spring after the long slumber of winter; yet it is also associated with warmth, love and regeneration. In the "Bright Life" which is a love poem, the poet deals with the plenty of life in the phenomenal world in Summer season and its impact on human beings. He advises the beloved, who is sad and mourning for some one who is dead and gone, to shake off the memory of the dead in view of the coming of the season of warmth and regeneration:

"COME now", I said, 'put off these webs of death,"51

51. Ibid. p. 80.
He persuades her to feel the presence of warmth and life as spread in the phenomenal world and seek inspiration from them:

"Lay thy warm hand on earth's cold clods and think
What exquisite greenness sprouts from these to grace
The moving fields of summer; on the brink
Of arched waves the sea horizon trace,
Whence wheels night's galaxy; and in silence sink
The pride in rapture of life's dwelling-place!"52

Similarly in “The Vacant Day”, another poem which treats of “the summer noon”, the poet emphasises the pervasiveness of warmth and life. The promises of a resurgence of life on earth, water and sky are described briefly in the poem. In the opening stanza he tells us how the abundance of life and warmth in the phenomenal world convinces him of the presence of Summer:

52. Complete Poems, p. 80
"As I did walk in meadows green
I heard the summer noon resound
With call of myriad things unseen
That leapt and crept upon the ground"\(^{53}\)

Describing the same abundance of life and gaiety in the sky he says:

High overhead the windless air
Throbbed with the homesick coursing cry
Of swallows that did everywhere
Wake echo in the sky."\(^{54}\)

Beside him in the water also he saw life and gaiety blooming full:

"Beside me, too, clear water coursed
Which willow branches, lapsing low,
Breaking their crystal gliding forced
To sing as they did flow." \(^{55}\)

\(^{53}\) Complete Poems, p. 215.
\(^{54}\) Ibid.
\(^{55}\) Ibid.
One feels the poet’s total absorption with plenitude of the beauty, warmth and life in the summer season. He even becomes almost dumb, and therefore expresses his inability to write of them. He says, ‘I listened; and my heart was dumb’/ ‘with praise no language could express.’

After Summer comes Autumn which is followed by Winter. Spring is the season of reawakening and revived activities, while Summer is comparatively stable season of warmth and plenty of life. But after Summer comes Autumn with which starts desolation and sterility. It is in this season that crops ripe and harvest is done; as such the fields etc., give a dismal and desolate look. In “Autumn”, a brief poem of three stanzas’ de la Mare deals with this desolate aspect of the face of earth after Spring and Summer are over. In the opening stanza he contrasts the awakening, warmth and abundance of life of Summer, to the dullness, coldness and decreased activities in the season of Autumn — no rose, no grass on the earth, and grey clouds with no birds in the sky:

---

“There is a wind where the rose was;
Cold rain where sweet grass was;
And clouds like sheep
Stream o’er the steep
Gray skies where the lark was." 57

In the second and the third stanzas of the poem de la Mare speaks of the corresponding change that has occurred in man’s heart. It is not a season that inspires love and warmth even in dull and dismal hearts, but a season which affects their vitality and makes them gloomy and sad. A kind of correspondence is suggested between the forlorn heart of the poet and the dull and dismal atmosphere prevailing in the outside world:

“Sad winds where your voice was;
Tears, tears where my heart was;
And ever with me,
Child ever with me,
Silence where hope was.” 58

57. Complete Poems, p. 97.
58. Ibid, p. 97
Thus in this poem “Autumn” too de la Mare has followed the tradition of James Thomson and the Romantic poets of Nature, who considered autumn as a season of decreased activities, dullness, desolation and lack of warmth and love.

The last and the fourth of the cycle of seasons is Winter. Winter is generally associated with the suspension of life, death and decay in English poetry. The brief poem entitled “Winter” describes beautifully a winter evening, when the sun becomes ‘rayless’ after ‘Day’s journey is done.’ The first stanza beautifully describes the characteristic winter evening in the West, when the sky is ‘clouded’ and the trees become ‘leafless’. The icy cold wind produces shrilling sounds as it blows through the ‘leafless boughs’. The only bird that can be seen in such a desolate atmosphere is the robin who is pouring out his heart-felt and tragic songs:

“Clouded with snow
The cold winds blow,
And shrill leafless bough
The robin with its burning breast
Alone sings now.\textsuperscript{59}

In the second stanza de la Mare portrays a photographic picture of the setting sun: As the 'Day's journey (is) done' the sun has grown 'rayless', it shed its last reddish glow on various objects of earth, then starts snowfall and they are covered with snow:

"The rayless sun,
Day's journey done,
Sheds its last ebbing light
On fields in leagues of beauty spread
Unearthly white.\textsuperscript{60}

The twilight image is one of the most recurring images in de la Mare's poetry.

In another poem of the same title i.e. "Winter" the poet describes his experience in a dell in a winter evening. The whole of the dell was full of snow and fog with no sign of life except a robin shrilling from within a tree. The poem, however, has touches of mysticism. After the 'rose-light (had)

\textsuperscript{59} Complete Poems. p. 110.
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid.
ebbed away', the 'dusk gathered low' and the moon and stars were visible in the sky shedding their beams on various objects of the earth:

And the dusk gathered low,
And the silver moon and stars
On the frozen snow
Drew taper bars,
Kindled winking fires
In the hooded briers."

This revived interest in Nature, particularly in the countryside, was a conspicuous phenomenon amongst the Georgian poets.

From the poems discussed in the foregoing pages it may be concluded that while de la Mare was in harmony with other Georgians in his love for Nature, he differed from the majority of them in his treatment and attitude to her. Like other Georgians his attitude too is 'charmingly descriptive' but unlike these 'casual observers', an exact perception and minute observation are the characteristic marks of his poetry. He

61 Complete Poems, p. 97.
paints all the details that he observes realistically and in painting them shows an intensely sensuous love for them. Unlike other Georgians, of course with the exception of W.H. Davies and Masfield, etc., de la Mare's approach to Nature is essentially sensuous. He described what he received through his senses. In this regard special mention should be made of his poems about seasons and weathers. In all these poems his central interest is however, in earth, sea and sky as they appear to the eye. These poems largely convey the colours, sights and sounds of English landscape.
Chapter V

Elements of Realism: Animal and the Aviary World

Walter de la Mare's descriptions of the phenomenal world are comprehensive enough to include earth, water, sky and the flora inhabiting the space between the two (Earth and Sky). He is "with Wordsworth and Keats in his passionate response to the present loveliness of earth, sea and sky." de la Mare is more a delineator of Nature's sights and sounds than a philosopher pondering over her ways and means, over the designs and intentions of the power behind her. But these inanimate objects are not the whole of Nature; to use Emily Dickinson's words,

"Nature" is what we see
The Hill ___ the Afternoon ___
Squirrel ___ Eclipse ___ the Bumble bee ___
Nay ___ Nature is Heaven ___

That is Nature does not simply mean static and inanimate objects only, but it also includes the animate objects like “Squirrel”, “the Bumble bee”, “the Bobolink”, and “the Cricket”, that is animals, birds including the little creatures like the insects, etc. They constitute an important part of what the term “Nature” denotes.

Therefore in Walter de la Mare’s poetry one finds a tenderness, love and compassion is shown by de la Mare towards the animate objects, particularly towards little creatures. In fact his love and compassion for animals, birds and little creatures like insects, etc. have prompted some of his memorable and representative poems.

“The Bandog” is a poem which may be cited as a good example of the poet’s love and affection for the tame animals. He is worried about the missing of his pet “the

---

Bandog" whose name was 'Mopser'. He is out to search for his dog and enquires every body who so ever meets him:

"Has any body seen my Mopser?___3

Describing its identity, civility and obedience the poet speaks of the dog as affectionately as one is expected to speak of ones own child.

A similar feeling of love and affection is expressed for a hound in "The Gage". This hound which belonged to a Lady Jane, was very naughty and a permanent problem for the neighbours. Once the neighbouring Lord came to Lady Jane and complained against the activities in which the Lady's hound had been indulging in the neighbour's premises:

'Lady Jane, O Lady Jane!
Your hound hath broken bounds again,
And chased my timorous deer, o
If him I see,
That hour he'll dee;
My brakes shall be his brier, o'. 4

---

3. Complete Poems, p. 139.
4. Ibid.
"I'd give my stags, my hills and dales,  
My storm-cocks and my nightingales.  
To have undone this deed, O;"$^9$

But her deep love for the hound makes her turn down his offer, she became almost mad; and in her fit of madness she started cursing the neighbouring lord. But after some time the "ghostly hound", by some miracle, became alive. It started smelling for its sorrow-striken mistress and rushed to her who became at once cheerful and looked no longer forlorn. The important point about this poem is the mutual love between man and animals; not only was the Lady Jane mad and forlorn for the hound, but the hound itself was restless to meet its mistress; from the moment it regained its life, the hound started a search for her.

de la Mare's genuine love for the animate objects is expressed in the poems where he shows compassion for their suffering and strong hatred for those who commit atrocities on them. Like Hardy, de la Mare too "cannot simply mention an animate object without showing his intense personal sympathy with the consequent understanding of its

life and feeling”.\(^{10}\) Take for example his poem “Alas, Alack!”, which is about a frying fish in the boiling fat. At the pathetic scene of a frying fish the poet’s in-born sympathy for the animate objects is evoked. He understands the feeling of the fish and realises the pain it is under-going; and describes these mutually shared (by the fish and the poet) feelings so sincerely that even a casual reader of the poem cannot overlook its pathos. The poet, calls Ann and says that the frying fish is moaning’ because of the torture it is put to by dipping deep into the boiling fat. It comes up on the surface and seems to look at the poet with beseeching eyes:

“Out of the fat,
As clear as glass,
He put up his mouth
And moaned ‘Alas!’\(^{11}\)

As it realises its helplessness to come out of the frying pan, the fish surrenders to its fate:

\(^{11}\) Complete Poems, p. 138.
“Then turned to his sizzling, 
And sank him back.”12

The important thing about this brief poem of twelve lines is that fish is an essential part of an Englishman’s daily meal, yet the spectacle of the frying fish moves de la Mare’s heart as is clear from the pathos which run through the poem.

de la Mare was vehement in his denunciation of man’s cruelty to his fellow creatures. “Considering how man has treated the animals,” isn’t it surprising that any animal should trust him?”, de la Mare once remarked in conversation;13 and this observation is a preoccupation in many of his poems in which the butcher and the huntsman are the main target of the poet’s “vehement denunciation” as McCrosson describes it.14

In “I can’t Abear”, for instance, the poet expresses his strong hatred for the butcher’s shop. He describes various shops ___ “Baker’s are warm, cobbler’s dark,/ Chemist’s burn

watery lights;"¹⁵ He can bear all these shops. But the worst shop of all is that of the butcher, for it is the place where his "dear fellows" that is animals are slaughtered. Expressing his strong dislike for it de la Mare openly declares:

"I can't abear a Butcher,
I can't abide his meat,
The ugliest shop of all is his,
The ugliest in the street;"¹⁶

An equally denunciatory attitude of the poet is shown towards the huntsman. In "Hi!", for example, his tone is savagely denunciatory:

"Hi! handsome hunting man
Fire your little gun.
Bang! Now the animal
Is dead and dumb and done
Never more to peep again, creep
again, leap again
Eat or sleep or drink again. Oh,

¹⁵. Complete Poems, p. 140.
¹⁶. Ibid.
what fun!"  

A similar observation and tone are to be found in “Tit for Tat” in which he ‘envisions the huntsman and his quarry as having reversed roles. Ostensibly for children, this poem should give the most callous adult pause”. Addressing himself to Tom Noddy the speaker asks how the hunting is:

“Have you trod like a murderer through the green woods... While every small creature screamed shrill to Dame Nature, He comes and he comes!  

The poet does not like the huntsman as is clear from the tone of the poem, and therefore, he wishes for him a total doom. The speaker then suggests to Tom that perhaps one day, “An Ogre from space will stoop a lean face”/ “And lug you home”. He then imagines what will happen to Tom the “murderer.

de la Mare’s knowledge and love of the animate objects of Nature are not confined to the domestic pets and wild beasts, but his poetry also bears evidence of his knowledge and

---

love of the aviary world. Poems on many of the English birds — wrens, linnets, cuckoos, larks, robin and nightingales — are scattered through the pages of his Complete Poems (1969). The mere fact that in twenty-four poems about birds he has described more than twenty-four different species of birds; is an ample proof of his interest in ornithology.

Let us first of all take up a poem entitled “The Mother Bird”, which tells enough about de la Mare’s habit of visiting bird nests and studying their behaviour from close quarters. In the opening lines of the poem, he tells us how once he came across a nest in the hedges with a bird in it sitting on its eggs:

“Through the green twilight of a hedge
I peered, with cheeks on the cool leaves pressed,
And spied a bird upon a nest”

Then he describes the behaviour of the sparrow very realistically how meekly but bravely it expressed its protest against the poet’s interruption of its privacy, until it opened its “dagger bill” to utter “one passionate note of victory”:

— 20 —

"Two eyes she had be seeching me
Meekly and brave, and her brown breast
Throbbed hot and quick above her heart;
And then she opened her dagger bill:

And then it uttered: "One passionate note of victory."

The poet differentiates this particular sound of the sparrow from their singing sounds at the break of the day, or at the sun-set. This delicate distinction between the "fierce and vivid cry/ Of valiant tears, and hopeless joy," and the "chirp" and "trill" of a sparrow while singing in morning or evening; proves beyond any doubt that de la Mare's ears were trained enough to make such a delicate distinction which in turn is an evidence of his habit of studying birds closely.

This experience of de la Mare is comparabale to the youthful days of Wordsworth who also used to visit bird nests in order to "spy their sheltered bed." Like de la Mare, Wordsworth also relates his experience of visiting daily the sparrows' nests "with in the leafy shade" in the company of his sister, in his poem "The Sparrow's Nest" in the following words:
“I started ___ seeming to spy,
The home and sheltered bed,
The sparrow’s dwelling, which, hard by
My father’s house, in wet or dry
My sister Emmeline and I together visited.21

“Rooks in October” “Jenny Wren”, and “Chickens” are poems which may be quoted as an evidence of de la Mar’s knowledge of birds ___ both domestic and wild; and also the fact that he was a very intent observer of the activities and behaviour of the birds. In “Rooks in October”, for example, he recalls his childhood experience of watching the rooks. In the opening stanza the poet tells us how they look like while flying against the blue sky at dawn:

“They sweep up, crying, riding the wind,
Ashen on blue outspread ___
Gilt-lustred wing, sharp light-glazed beak,
And low flat, ravenous head.” 22

---

In the second stanza he describes how with "dangling claws" these rooks in the morning come down and rush on to "the yellowing green-leaved boughs,":

"Claws dangling, down they softly swoop
Out of the eastern sun.
Into the yellowing green-leaved boughs ___
Their morning feast begun." 23

and then they grip the delicate twigs and pick up their food from "the stalked embossed green cup."

"Clasping a twig that even a linnet
Might bend in song, they clip
Pat from the stalked embossed green cup
Its fruitage bitter-ripe." 24

But "Jenny Wren" is a poem in which de la Mare speaks with the authority of an ornithologist, here, as in "Tree" in which he describes various trees of England very authoritatively, and also compares and contrast them; de la Mare talks of wren, a song bird of the robin family. In the opening stanza the poet claims

24. Ibid.
that wren is the most “nimble”, “feat” and “trim” of all the birds that rove and sing near places inhabited by men:

"Of all the birds that rove and sing,
Near dwellings made for men.
None is so nimble, feat, and trim
As Jenny Wren."

He then emphasises the loudness and intensity of a wren’s cry. In this regard James Edmund Harting’s view about wren’s shrilling sound is worth consideration, commenting on “the wonderfully loud song” of a wren Harting says,

“It must have struck others that for so small a throat the wren has wonderfully loud song. There is not much variety or tone in it but the notes at once attract attention, and would lead any one unacquainted with them to inquire the author’s name.”

Similarly de la Mare describes the shrilling sound of the wren as follows:

25. Complete Poems, p. 34.
"With pin-point bill, and a tail a-cock,
So wildly shrill she cries,
The echoes on their roof-tree knock
And fill the skies.\textsuperscript{27}

A comparison of the two Harting’s statement about the shrilling sound of a wren and its description by de la Mare in the above quoted passage shows that the poet’s knowledge of the aviary world was in no way inferior to that of an Ornithologist while in the third stanza of the poem he tells us of the size, physique and the enthusiastic and active nature of the bird. So in the poem “Jenny Wren” de la Mare has given a very true picture of a wren which speaks of his knowledge and interest in birds.

Besides wren de la Mare has also written many poems on other song birds, they include linnet, black bird, lark, robin, thrush and cuckoo, etc. On the other hand, king-fisher, hawk, falcon, and stare, etc. represent the birds of prey. But “Of all the singers in the wood-land choir the Nightingale, by common consent, stands first. For quality of sound, variety of notes, and

\textsuperscript{27} Complete Poems, p.314.
execution, she is probably unrivalled. Hence with poets she has ever been the chief favourite. Izaac Walton has truly said,

"The Nightingale breathes such sweet' loud music out of her little instrumental throat that it might make mankind to think that miracles are not ceased." 28

Walter de la Mare also speaks of this miraculous throat of a nightingale in many of his poems, particularly of its association with human melancholy and how it allays that when other means fail. Since it pours out sad notes, the nightingale in de la Mare's poetry is addressed to as "lovelorn thing" and the "Most melancholic Nightingale". The most quotable of his poems about nightingale is "King David". It is the story of King David, a sorrow-stricken and melancholy man. He called for hundreds of musicians but they all failed to ease his melancholy:

"King David was a sorrowful man;
No cause for his sorrow had he;
And he called for the music of a hundred harps,
To ease his melancholy.29

29. Complete Poems, p.169
“But the sorrow that haunted the heart of King David  
They could not charm away.\textsuperscript{30}

But one night he went into his garden, and as he was walking there he listened to the song of a nightingale hidden in a cypress-tree. The King felt as if the bird was echoing and sharing his own grief. He asks her as to who had told the bird of his grief:

\begin{quote}
King David lifted his sad eyes  
Into the dark-boughed tree \_\_\_\_\_\_\_
‘Tell me, thou little bird that singest  
Who taught my grief to thee.’ \textsuperscript{31}
\end{quote}

The bird paid no heed to the King who went on listening to the melancholy song of the nightingale until his own sorrow was completely cured:

\begin{quote}
“But the bird in no wise heeded;  
And the King in the cool of the moon  
Hearkened to the nightingale’s sorrow-\hfill
\hfill fullness,
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{30} Complete Poems, p. 169.  
\textsuperscript{31} Ibid.
It is a common belief about the nightingale's song and English poetry is full of it; de la Mare's poem "King David" is a valuable addition to the poems already written about the melancholy nightingale. "The Linnet" and "The Riddler" are other important poems of Walter de la Mare dealing with the English song birds, they describe their songs, the beliefs associated with them and their various activities like a close watcher of these birds.

Like his vehement denunciation of the butcher and the huntsman, de la Mare also strongly dislikes those who imprison or kill the birds for sports. Similarly, de la Mare's love and compassion for the animate objects make him uneasy at the sight of a 'caged bird' in his poem "The Cage". His heart is moved when he sees a bird "hard-pressed" in "a small cage of clay", trying desperately by fluttering its wings in vain to come out of it:

"Why did you flutter in vain hope poor bird,
Hard-pressed in your small cage of clay?"

"Fret now no more, be still."
for

"Those folded hands, they cannot set you free;" 34

The poem is certainly full of pathos and poet's compassion for the bird, besides his strongly critical attitude towards those heartless and cold-blooded people who deprive these little creatures of their freedom. Hence this brief poem is enough to show de la Mare's love and compassion for bird.

In his love and compassion for animals and birds, and his strong denunciation of those who either kill them or commit atrocities on them de la Mare may be compared to another Georgian poem Ralph Hodgson (1871-1964). In his poetry too, compassion for animals and hatred for their oppressors were dominant; and "he expressed this with passion and vision. 35 For example, his poem "The Bull", (first published in Georgian Poetry vol. II, (1913-15), is "an attempt to present psychologically and poetically the history of a leader of a herd, dethroned in his old age and decrepitude by a young rebel." 36 The old monarch stands

---

34. Complete Poems, p. 389.
36. Ibid.
bewildered unhappy, sick waiting only for death, while vultures hover with patience and remorseless persistence:

“See him standing dewlap-deep
In the rushes at the lake’
Surely, stupid, half-asleep ...

Dreaming things: of days he spent
With his mother gaunt and lean
In the valley warm and green,
Full of baby wonderment,
Blinking out of silly eyes
At a hundred mysteries.\(^{37}\)

He relives, in a dream, the glories of his past, but the dream fades; he wakes from his vision, and finds clouds of flies about him:

“And the dreamer turns away
From his visionary herds
And his splendid yesterday,
Turns to meet the loathly birds

---
Flocking round him from the skies,
Waiting for the flesh that dies.\(^{38}\)

Like Ralph Hodgson, de la Mare too is very hostile towards those who commit tyranny on animals. To him they are "murderer" because for de la Mare man and animals are not different, but they are "fellow beings". He puts at least both children and animals in the same category.\(^{39}\)

Savage, though he can be concerning men's indifference to his fellow creatures, "de la Mare often looks with humour and with a wry good will at the kinship with them which underlies man's brief sojourn on earth."\(^{40}\) Such for example is the poem "Comfort" in which a man and his cat, seated before the fire, share the warm solitude. The cat speaks to the man:

"Dear God, what security,
Comfort and bliss!
And to think, too, what ages,
Have brought us to this!"\(^{41}\)

\(^{41}\) \textit{Complete Poems}, p. 283.
What the cat means by “this” is revealed in the next stanza:

“You in your sheep’s-wool coat,
Buttons of bone,
And me in my fur-about
On the warm hearthstone.”\(^2\)

Here, as he often does, de la Mare laughs at the pretentions of man who has come, how many countless ages, to this comfort, this security, this bliss — “a sheep’s wool-coat”, with “buttons of bone” — while the cat has always had its “fur-about”. The underlying irony in the situation is of course that the “comfort and bliss” of both man and beast are so ephemeral.\(^3\)

Let us conclude this chapter with the view of D.R. McCrosson, a famous critic of Walter de la Mare who considers the natural description in de la Mare’s poetry as a proof of his immense power of observation and extra-ordinary perception,\(^4\) and also that he describes in his poetry the English landscape, animals and birds that he knew and loved best. This proves that

\(^2\) Complete Poems, p. 283.
\(^3\) McCrosson, Op.Cit.
\(^4\) Ibid.
de la Mare despite high flights of imagination and dream and his mystical temperament was never oblivious of the world around him which he has described no less realistically and effectively than a thorough realist like Chaucer, Shakespeare, Spenser and Wordsworth.
Chapter VI

Elements of Realism: Man and the Society

Walter de la Mare's attitude towards the animate objects of Nature cannot be simply summed up in merely two or three words like love, compassion, humour and understanding; etc; but these poems about animals, birds and other little creatures are, certainly not devoid of philosophical dimensions. The poet's observation of the animate objects and the general human attitude towards them inspire him to philosophise on human nature, human potentialities; human predicament; and also the relationship between man and God. It is in these poems that the note of realism and concern for humanity in general is further intensified.

In the "Unstooping" for example, the poet's observation of the animate world leads him to compare and contrast man's life to that of the wild animals and thus provides a starting point to philosophise on the basics of human nature. He observes the "Lion" and "the surly Bear" walking together with their heads downward, which is indicative of the humility and
fraternity in the animate world; both are the virtues of human nature. But on the contrary man's attitude towards his fellow beings and towards those who are in any way weaker, is atrocious. They are proud of themselves, and always walk with their heads upward:

"Low on his fours the Lion
Treads with the surly Bear;
But Men straight upward from the dust
Walk with their heads in air;¹

They even build the gates of their houses high enough to enter them "Unstooping" on the back of their "four-foot beasts", which is again indicative of their pride, despite "Men's" knowledge of the fact that they are born of dust and will become dust ultimately:

"The doors of all their houses
They arch so they may go,
Uplifted o'er the four-foot beasts,
Unstooping to and fro.²

¹. de la Mare Walter, Complete Poems, p. 170.
². Ibid.
Hence in this brief poem the apparently insignificant spectacle of the wild animals, "walking low on their fours" leads the poet to deliberate on the elements of pride and cruelty deep-seated in human nature.

"All But Blind" is also an important poem in this regard. It is another good example of de la Mare's habit of observing the animate objects of Nature which ultimately leads him to philosophise on human limits and limitations. The opening three stanzas of the poem hint at man's pride and the concept of his superiority over others, particularly over small and humble creatures. He considers them less sighted and less knowledgeable in comparison to himself. In the opening stanza the poet says the mole (a small insectivorous animal with tiny eyes and soft fur) can look for the insects in the darkness of its narrow hole while no body else can see properly in that darkness and thus all are blind to the "four-clawed Mole":

"All but blind
In his chambered hole
Gropes for worms
The four-clawed Mole."\(^3\)

\(^3\). *Complete Poems*, p. 171.
Similarly, in the second and the third stanzas of the poem, the poet describes his observation of other insignificant creatures; they are the “hooded-Bat” and the “Barn-Owl”. The “hooded-Bat” is capable of looking things in darkness which man, and for that matter other creatures can’t do. Hence in the darkness of night all are blind to the “hooded Bat”:

“All but blind
In the evening sky
The hooded-Bat
Twirls softly by.”

This observation of de la Mare swings his imagination back to human beings, and he realises that like other creatures of God, man too, has got his limits and limitations. If other creatures are blind to the mole and the bat in the darkness of night man must also be blind to “Some-one”, as is clear from the capital “S” it refers to some Supreme Power which is Omniscient and Omnipotent, and therefore the poet humbly concludes:

“And blind as are

---

These three to me,
So, blind to Some-one
I must be”\(^5\)

While in the “Titmouse” poet’s observation of a very little bird which lives in a very small hole made in the tree-trunk, leads him to think of human predicament, and his ultimate fate in this ephemeral world. He says if you dangle a palm-nut from a tree you would see a “nimble titmouse enter in/ Its snow-pulped kernel for bait”; and in this way this little creature becomes almost non-existent for the outside world:

“Out of earth’s vast unknown of air,
Out of all summer, from wave to wave,
He’ll perch, and prank his feathers fair

Tangle glass-clear wildering stave,
And take his commons there ___”\(^6\)

This entering of the little creature into a small hole made in the tree-trunk and then becoming non-existent for the outside world reminds the poet of man’s short span of life after which he too

\(^5\) Complete Poems, p. 172.
\(^6\) Ibid. p. 229.
ceases to exist and becomes, like the titmouse, a part of what de
la Mare calls "Time's enormous Nought":

"This tiny son of life; this spright,
My momentary Human sought,
Plume with his wing in the dappling light,
Clash timbrel, shrill and gay __
And into Time's enormous Nought,
Sweet-fed, will flit away.7

Similarly, in the "Haunted" his observation of the
animate world leads him to deliberate on human world. The poet
is very much impressed by the peace and sense of security which
the animate objects --- birds and beasts ____ enjoy. But he does
not find the same in the human world:

"The rabbit in his burrow keeps
No guarded watch, in peace he sleeps;
The wolf that howls in challenging night
Cowers to her lair at morning light;
The simplest bird entwins a nest
Where she may lean her lovely breast,

Couched in the silence of the bough,
But thou, O man, what rest has thou?^8

This peace and sense of security of the world of the animate objects when compared and contrasted to the human world by the poet, he finds that there is restlessness and "subtler questioning" in the "divided heart" of man. Unlike "The Wolf that howls in challenging night" and "Cowers to her lair at morning light", to enjoy sound sleep; man's cares are increased by every night and consequently every morning he finds himself more burdened of cares than before:

"Thy emptiest solitude can bring
Only a subtler questioning
In thy divided heart. Thy bed
Recalls at dawn what midnight said
Seek how thou wilt to feign content," ^9

The poet discovers the source of man's restlessness, and insecurity in his pride, high hopes and desires, and the worldly pomp and show. He regrets that man has to give up all these things at the time of the commencement of his final journey when

^8. Complete Poems, p.130
^9. Ibid.
he leaves behind this world of pomp and show with a sense of dissatisfaction:

"Pomp and great friends may hem thee round,
A thousand busy tasks be found;
Earth's thronging beauties may beguile
Thy longing love sick heart awhile;
And pride like cloud of sunset, spread
A changing glory round thy head;
But fade will all; and thou must come
Hating thy journey, homeless home."\(^\text{10}\)

In view of the poems discussed in the foregoing pages, about the animate objects of Nature --- birds, domestic pets, wild beasts and little creatures like the titmouse, mole, moth, and wasp, etc., it may be safely concluded that de la Mare is a very intent and close watcher of these creatures of God. Even the smallest creatures like the titmouse and the mole, etc., usually hidden from the common eye, are within the range of his observation. Further his attitude towards these animate objects, whether they are tame or wild, is very sympathetic. He treats them at par with man, as is clear from the love, compassion and

\(^{10}\) Complete Poems, p.131.
understanding found in his poems for these animate objects, and vehement denunciation of their oppressors like the huntsman and the butcher, etc.

Also the poet's observation of the animate objects of Nature inspires him to philosophise on human nature, human predicament and his ultimate fate in this ephemeral and material world. If the behaviour of the wild animals like the lion and bear leads him to think of pride and violence deep-seated in man; the mole and the "hooded bat" etc. remind him of human limits and limitation. Similarly, the little titmouse's habit of shutting itself up into a small hole in the tree-trunk hints at man's journey into the "Time's enormous Nought". These poems about the animate objects prove beyond any doubt that in de la Mare's poetry, despite all attractions and delight of Nature human concern is upper most.

In de la Mare's poetry Nature has also come in as a background to human actions and emotions. He uses Natural phenomena as an object of comparison to moralise on human fate. Sometimes Natural phenomena merely seem echoing the human moods, while sometimes it creates moods. They also inspire him to ponder on human predicament and the poet concludes that all
the inhabitants of the earth “share the same consciousness”.\textsuperscript{12} Now we consider some poems in which Nature is used as a background to human actions and emotions.

“Autumn" is actually a love poem describing how the poet feels after the death of a child who was very dear to him. It is a good example of harmony/correspondence between the poet's emotions and the atmosphere around him. The death and decay in the season of Autumn in the phenomenal world reminds him of the sterility and barrenness of his own heart after the death of a child dear to him. In the opening stanza, he describes the dismal atmosphere in the season of Autumn:

“There is a wind where the rose was;
Cold rain where sweet grass was;
And clouds like sheep
Stream over the steep
Grey skies where the lark was.”\textsuperscript{13}

This loss of life and activity in the phenomenal world reminds him of the loss of his beloved. He is no longer able to

\textsuperscript{12} McCrosson, \textit{Op.Cit.}, p. 72
\textsuperscript{13} \textit{Complete Poems}, p. 97.
caress the golden hair or feel the warmth of the child's hands.
The only thing possible to visualise is the ghost of him.

"Nought gold where your hair was;
Nought warm where your hand was
But phantom forlorn
Beneath the thorn
Your ghost where your face was."\(^1\)\(^4\)

And the atmosphere echoes his grief and despondency:

"Sad winds where your voice was;
Tears, Tears where my heart was;
And ever with me,
Silence where hope was."\(^1\)\(^5\)

"The Ghost" is also a good example of correspondence between the poet's emotions and objects of Nature. Here also the poet feels as if the objects of Nature are echoing his mood or as if they are sharing the poet's grief. In the opening stanza the poet hints at the fact of death of someone dear to him through a

\(^{14}\) Complete Poems, p. 97
\(^{15}\) Ibid. p.134
significant word "Peace", which has also silenced the heart of the poet:

PEACE in thy hands,
Peace in thine eyes,
Peace on thy brow
Flower of a moment in the eternal hour,
Peace with me now.\(^{16}\)

The poet's heart is no longer full of joy and enthusiasm. It is silent and so is the atmosphere around him—the bird is not singing, nor the sea breaking. Everything is echoing the 'silence' of the poet's heart whose 'storm' is over now:

"Not a wave breaks,
Not a bird calls,
My heart, like a sea,
Silent after a storm that hath died
Sleeps within me."\(^{17}\)

\(^{16}\) Complete Poems, p. 134.
\(^{17}\) Ibid.
Everything—‘night’s dew’, ‘world’s leaves’, and ‘winter’s snow’, etc., seems to have become quiet. They are sharing in the sorrow that has striken the poet’s heart:

All the night’s dews,
All the world’s leaves,
All winter’s snow
Seem with their quiet to have stilled
in life’s dream
All sorrowing now.  

"Alone" is also a love poem giving expression to the poet’s loneliness and boredom after the death of his beloved. Once, when the beloved was alive, everything was full of life and gaiety, there was ‘summer’ everywhere:

"Once the pink cast a winy smell,
The wild bee hung in the hyacinth bell,
Light in efulgence of beauty fell:"  

But after the death of his beloved he is left alone in this world; instead of ‘summer’ it is ‘winter’ that is prevailing all around:

19. Ibid. p. 194
“Alas, my loved one is gone,
I am alone:
It is winter.”  

Here, as elsewhere, there is not only harmony between the emotions of the poet and the atmosphere in the external world, but also the changes in the external world create moods and intensifies the poet's grief. The winter in the outside world reminds him of the winter (symbolic of sterility barrenness, and suspension of liveliness within his own heart. He notices that

“The abode of the nightingale is bare,
Flowered frost congeals in the gelid air,
The fox howls from his frozen lair.”

Similarly, he feels in his heart as if

My candle a silent fire doth shed,
Starry Orion haunts o'er head;
Come moth, come shadow, the world is dead:  

---

20. Complete Poems, p. 194
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
'silent fire', 'moth' and 'shadow' etc. all symbolic of death come to the mind of the poet because his beloved is dead and gone, and he is left alone:

"Alas my loved one is gone,
I am alone;
It is winter.\textsuperscript{23}

And finally a case of correspondence between human mood and the phenomenal world may be cited from the poem "They Told Me". A child named Pan is dead. The poet, because of his extreme love for the child, is not ready to believe it. People say that he is dead and gone but he is not convinced. He feels as if Pan is still alive and speaking through various objects of Nature, like 'the green valley' and 'the grey elder-thickets', etc. He is very sad and think that the whole of Nature is sharing in his grief and therefore, like Matthew Arnold in his "Dover Beach" de la Mare thinks that even the sea is sad and sharing in his grief:

"Sometimes it seemed my own heart heard Inland the sorrow of the sea".\textsuperscript{24}

\textsuperscript{23} \textit{Complete Poems}, p. 194.
\textsuperscript{24} \textit{Ibid}, p. 61
There are poems in which natural phenomena lead the poet to ponder over human predicament, they inspire him to moralise on various aspects of human life. In this group of poems he predominantly dwells on the theme of death and mortality. He is convinced by the cycle of creation, growth and decay in the phenomenal world that the human life and beauty is also ephemeral, because to de la Mare, “all of earth’s inhabitants”, animate or inanimate, share the “same consciousness”; for they all have at least, the same fate^25 ___ as in the “Titmouse” at a feeding station:

“This tiny son of life, This spright;
Plume with his wing in the dappling light,
Clash timbrel shrill and gay ____
And into Time’s enormous Nought,
sweet-fed will flit away.

Not just snow drop and birds, however, share with man “the inevitability of the journey into the ‘Times enormous Nought’.^26

---

26 . Ibid.
Here, in the same vein is the last stanza of "A Rose in Candlelight":

Lo, now the light that bathes this rose,
That wondrous red its cheek to give!
It breathes, "We, too, a secret share;
Fleeting we are, however fair;
And only representative."\(^{27}\)

Similarly in the poem "When the Rose is Faded", which is a love poem, the poet by drawing an analogy reassures himself of the transitoriness of the beauty of his beloved. He observes that even very beautiful flowers are subject to death and decay. Their beauty disappears as soon as they fade:

"When the rose is faded,
Memory may still dwell on
Her beauty shadowed,
And the sweet smell gone."\(^{28}\)

---

\(^{27}\) Complete Poems, p.11

\(^{28}\) Ibid.
Similarly, the beauty of her beloved would vanish the moment she dies:

“Oh, thus, thy beauty,
Loveliest on earth to me,
Dark with no sorrow, shines
And burns, with Thee.29

The poet's belief in the transitoriness of beauty and the inevitability of the journey of all the inhabitants of the earth into "Time's enormous Nought" finds fullest expression in his poem "Shadow", as the title of the poem itself suggests. His observation of the phenomenal world confirms, much against the imagination of the poet which makes "the changing, unchangeable", the inevitability of death in this world. He observes that life and death goes hand-in-hand in this world. Even the beautiful objects like rose, are born but to die:

“Even the beauty of the rose doth cast,
When its bright, fervid noon is past,
A still and lengthening shadow in the dust;
Till darkness come

29. Complete Poems, p. 11.
And take its strange dream home.\textsuperscript{30}

In the second stanza of the poem the poet takes some other objects of Nature like 'bubbles of water', 'golden nimbus of the windowed saint', etc., who are simply journeying to mortality:

"The transient bubbles of the water paint 'Neath their frail arch a shadow faint;
The golden nimbus of the windowed saint,
Till shine the stars,
Casts pale and trembling bars.\textsuperscript{31}

This journey of the objects of Nature to meet their ultimate end, that is, mortality reaffirms the poet's belief that every thing in this ephemeral world is subject to mortality:

"The loveliest thing earth hath, a shadow hath, A dark and livelong hint of death, Haunting it ever till its last faint breath.\textsuperscript{32}

\textsuperscript{30} Complete Poems, p. 66.
\textsuperscript{31} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{32} Ibid.
Most of the imagery used in this poem is functional particularly the image of 'darkness', 'shadow', 'dust' and 'asphodel' (which blooms eternally in the Greek Elysium, the home of the dead), etc. are used symbolically in the poem.

The phenomena of Nature also inspires the poet to ponder over human predicament and philosophise about human nature. Take, for example, his poem "When the Rose is Faded". It is a love poem, but here also, the changes in the phenomenal world, particularly death and decay, which is the ultimate fate of all the inhabitants of the earth; reminds the poet of the fact that the beauty of his beloved is transitory and that she too is a mortal being, as he notices that the beauty and smell go out the moment "the rose is faded" though "Memory may still dwell on":

"When the rose is faded,
Memory may still dwell on
Her beauty shadowed,
And the sweet smell gone.\(^{33}\)

The poet realises that not only the beauty of his beloved is ephemeral, but he also realises the insignificance of the

\(^{33}\) Complete Poems, p. 117.
immortality that he had been trying unconsciously or emotionally out of his love, to confer upon her. He is convinced that it is only at the thought-level that imagination or memory may make "the changing/The unchangeable"; otherwise it is not possible in the real world. Therefore, the poet ultimately comes to the conclusion that human beauty too is transitory and mortal:

Oh, thus thy beauty,
Loveliest on earth to me,
Dark with no sorrow, shines
And burns with Thee.\footnote{Complete Poems, p. 117.}

"The Miracle" is considered to be a good example of de la Mare's belief in pantheism or to see the presence of the Creator behind the creations, but here also we find that the changes in the phenomenal world inspire the poet to think of human predicament and hence to moralise on human nature. His observation does not remain confined to the beauty of the phenomenal world but he also recognises death and decay as the other side of the same coin, that is, a co-partner of life. He starts in the characteristic style of questioning and asks:
"Who beckons the green ivy up
Its solitary tower of stone ?
What spirit lures the bindweed's cup
Unfalteringly on ?"\(^{35}\)

and that

"Who bids the hollyhock uplift
Her rod of fast-sealed buds on high;
Fling wide her petals ___ silent, swift,
Lovely to the sky ?"\(^{36}\)

He believes that as these objects are created and they grow, so will they die and meet their decay :

"Since as she kindled, so she will fade,
Flower above flower in squalor laid."\(^{37}\)

This "kindling" of green ivy, 'bindweed' starry lichen" and hollyhock; their growth, when they 'stand upright' and climbs over walls and tree trunks; and then ultimately their withering away

\(^{35}\) Complete Poems, p.68
\(^{36}\) Ibid.
\(^{37}\) Ibid.
lead de la Mare to ponder on man whose "ambitions" and "vaunting thoughts", too, climb high like ivy or lichen. But man forgets the reality of his existence that he is to die, like other objects on this earth, after "brief time":

“So creeps ambition; so climb
Man’s vaunting thoughts. He set on high,
Forgets his birth, small space, brief time,
That he shall die;
Dream blindly in his stagnant air;
Consumes his strength, strips himself bare.”

De la Mare regrets this tendency on part of man to forget the reality of life and the short span of time that he is to live. And that he spends all his resources for “past earthly promise” at the cost of his ‘delight’, ‘ease’ and ‘pleasure’ for one aim:

“Rejects delight, ease, pleasure, hope,
Seeking in vain, but seeking yet,
Past earthly promise, earthly scope
On one aim set.”

38. Complete Poems, p.68.
39. Ibid.
Here, as elsewhere, de la Mare impresses us as a minute observer of the phenomena of Nature. But unlike the majority of the Georgian poets, he is not simply interested in the spectacle of Nature for its own sake. On the contrary the changes in the phenomenal world swing the poet's imagination back to the human world. In these Natural phenomena he sometimes does find an echo of his own mood or for that matter they sometimes also create mood in him. But that is not all that one can think of de la Mare's attitude to the phenomenal world. "His first quest" in McCrosson's words "in all situations, is to find out some solution to a 'lifetime's mystery'." Hence these Natural phenomena and the changes in them, which de la Mare recognises as the law of Nature, make him ponder over human predicament and philosophise about human nature. He is convinced that "The loveliest thing earth hath, a shadow hath,/A dark and livelong hint of death." It is because of his recognition of death and decay of all the objects of this ephemeral world that he expresses his concern on human flaws like pride, high ambitions for things unattainable, or his attempt to make mortals immortal, etc., and he disapproves of them strongly as a realist.

41. Complete Poems, p.66
In the poems discussed so far in Chapter V and the first half of the present chapter Walter de la Mare has not only established himself as one who is very sensitive and alert to the phenomenal world around himself; but he has also given highly realistic and detailed descriptions of various objects of Nature — inanimate and animate both. Besides a realistic presentation of the phenomenal world these Natural objects and phenomena have often led him to philosophise about man — man in relation to God and society. In several of these poems dealing with the phenomenal world one finds that a particular object of Nature or phenomenon leads him to ponder about human destiny and predicament in this ephemeral world. These poems alone are enough to prove that Walter de la Mare is not merely a poet of children singing of the world of fantasy but a thorough realist. But there are critics and readers of Walter de la Mare's poetry who are not ready to acknowledge him as a realist, as H.C. Duffin says:

"The poet of today — the poet of last twenty five years — must face the prose of existence, the utilities of life. Poetry must be difficult. Its subject matter must be contemporary: communism, sex, progress, Freudianism,
the decay of civilization; otherwise it is to be labelled "escapist."\textsuperscript{42}

There are other eminent critics too who have branded Walter de la Mare as an "escapist". Theodore Manyard for example says:

"de la Mare walked alone in the moon shine or twilight caring nothing for the dusty world in which his physical body is condemned to stay. The war burst in thunder over his head and he hardly seemed to have been aware of it". \textsuperscript{43}

Similarly Cox and Dyson consider de la Mare completely cut-off from his times: When they say that "in all of de la Mare's poems, humanity is stripped of social and historical context",\textsuperscript{44} and H. Coombes is of the opinion that de la Mare is an "escapist" and had little to do with reality:

"And if the factor of 'escape' must come into our final estimate of de la Mare, we shall nevertheless be wise not to

\textsuperscript{43} Manyard, Theodore, \textit{Our Best Poets} (London : Brentanos Ltd. 1924), pp.174-75
insist on 'reality' as in all conditions a fixed and all redeeming criterion."\(^{45}\)

But de la Mare was never an "escapist" as alleged by these critics. He did write about fairy land, dreams and magic and wonderful things in *The Songs of Childhood* (1902) and also in his last collection of poems *O' Lovely England* (1953) but he was always on this very earth of actualities. How a sensitive mind like that of de la Mare could have remained aloof when the two World Wars burst on his head leaving behind a trail of suffering. He was certainly aware of these two Wars and the condition of humanity at that time as will become clear from the analysis of some of the poems written either at the time of Wars or between the inter-war period. They clearly have a bearing upon the mental agony that the poet had suffered. The poetry we are going to consider in the following pages is mainly that which was written, for the greater part, between the two Wars, the most depressing period of modern history. In these poems "the lyrical sadness" of Walter de la Mare became more explicit. Man is presented as a pathetic figure, meeting life with a sigh, troubled by the past and afraid of the future. Life has its burdens and its wounds. Thought

is futile, weaving idle arguments which are as repugnant as they are incredible.\textsuperscript{46} Out of this despondent view of man's earthly lot arises a personal melancholy which prompts these poems. Take for example his poem "The Old Angler". It is a marvellous poem bringing suspense and magic, beauty and terror; an idyll steeped in the pain of waste and regret:

"And he ___ the cheated? Dusk till morn,  
Insensate, even of hope forsook,  
He muttering squats, aloof, forlorn,  
Dangling a baitless hook."\textsuperscript{47}

Elsewhere we find this melancholy rooted in a certain fear, almost a distaste for life. This again is not altogether a "late" mood. There has always been that longing for the untroubled snows of the far mountains of the mind, and now in poems written under the stress of First World War and the futile years that followed there is a perceptible a bitter weariness leading sometimes to frayed nerves and consequent violence of expression, as in the desperate out-look of "Home"

Rest, rest ___ there is no rest,

\textsuperscript{47} \textit{Complete Poems}, p. 228.
Until the quiet grave
Come with its narrow arch
The heart to save
From life's long cankering rust,
From torpor, cold and still ___
The loveless, saddened dust,
The jaded will.\(^{48}\)

While poems like "Public Gallery" and "Of a Son" give the impression of man's helplessness at the hands of an incomprehensible fate which descends on one man and passes over the next. In "Dry August Burned", "Reserved" and "At Ease" one get's an unaccustomed note of anger, at callousness, militarism and cold hearts unmoved by the call of humanity. When a small child finds on the kitchen table a 'hare' slaughtered, she weeps for she has concern for life:

Dry August burned. A harvest hare
Limp on the kitchen table lay,
Its fur blood-blubbered, eyes astare,
While a small child that stood near by
Wept out her to see it there.\(^{49}\)

\(^{48}\) Complete Poems, p. 133.
\(^{49}\) Ibid. p. 365.
She goes out and returns after some time, the concern for the 'hare' was gone. She request her mother for skinning the hare:

Please, may I go and see it skinned?\textsuperscript{50}

The poets of the first World War are Wilfrid Owen, Wilfred Gibson, Rupert Brooke, Robert Graves, Siegfried Sassoon and a number of other lesser known poets. The poets of the second World War are Alun Lewis, Roy Fuller, Sidney Keyes, Keith Douglas, and Drumond Lewis, etc. The first World War had romantics like Rupert Brooke and the realist like Siegfried Sassoon. But the second World War poets "were grimmer with bombers and the atom bomb at land. Both these poets passed through traumatic war experiences. Spender, in the thirties conveyed the communist manifesto while Auden in the new social and political upsurge wrote "Spain". All these poets wrote of modern life, internal as well as external: "Smokeless chimneys, damaged bridges, rotting wharves and choked canals."\textsuperscript{51}

\textsuperscript{50}. Complete Poems. p. 365.
\textsuperscript{51}. A line from W.H. Auden.
Walter de la Mare, as pointed out earlier, was aware of his time although he elected to write as his own scribe had uttered:

“To write of Earth’s wonders,
Its live, willed things”. 52

Some of his best poems about the World War-I are found in the volume Motley (1918). The title poem hints at the ‘fabric of irony’ and ‘the dark thread of death’. The speaker is a clown but he sings a dirge:

Come Death, I’d have a word with thee;
And thou poor innocency;
And Love - - - a lad with broken wing.53

He finds a madness in mankind with the offence of machines of war:

Yes, yes, their bodies go
‘Neath burning sun and icy star
To chanted songs of woe,

53. Ibid., p. 208.
Dragging cold cannon through a mire
Of rain and blood and spouting fire.\textsuperscript{54}

He evokes a morbid picture of death:

\begin{quote}
A Death ___ no ears hath. He hath supped
Eyeless worms in hush of sleep.\textsuperscript{55}
\end{quote}

In another poem "The Marionettes" he presents the scene of death through a puppet show:

\begin{quote}
Let the foul scene proceed:
There is laughter in the wings.\textsuperscript{56}
\end{quote}

But the slaughter is there and man is aghast:

\begin{quote}
Dark is the outer air,
Coldly the nights draughts blow,
Mutely we stare
At the frenzied show.\textsuperscript{57}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{54} Complete Poems, p. 208.
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid. pp. 208-9.
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid. p.209.
The whole is a meaning less show for

Behind the deafened ear,
Hoots ___ angel ___ wise___ the Cause !
And affrights even fear.\textsuperscript{58}

After the war was over there began the post war social crisis. The two volumes which deal with this aspect of the post war conditions are \textit{The Veil} (1921) and \textit{The Fleeting} (1933). In \textit{The Veil} de la Mare writes of the underdog and the sufferings. "In The Dock" he describes the criminals: "Pallid, misshapen he stands", "mute as fish close-netted". There is justice but "Justice for carrion pants". In another poem entitled "Drugged" the poet presents the phantasmagoria of an addict:

\begin{verbatim}
Did these night hung houses, 
Of quiet, starlit stone, 
\textsuperscript{58} Breath not a whisper ... "Stray, 
Thou unhappy one; 
\textsuperscript{59} Whither so secret away?
\end{verbatim}

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid, p. 235.
In "The Hospital" de la Mare thinks of the hospital where the war afflicted persons were admitted as an "Inn with Death as the Tapster : "To him at length even we all keys must resign".

In "The slum Child" he writes about the homeless and the hungry:

Homeless, till evening dark came down;
And street lamp's ray
On weary skulking heggary thrown
Flared in the night-hung town.

Then up the noisome stairs, I'd creep
For food and rest,
Or empty-bellied, lie and weep.
My wordless woes of sleep.60

"News" is an ironic poem on the upper middle class. The poet questions:

60 Complete Poems, p. 284.
What do these Walkers seek
Pranked up in silk and in flax,
With changeless rose on the cheek,
And Hell's hump on their backs?\textsuperscript{61}

In the World War II (1939-45) poets were shaken out of their being. In the midst of the holocaust de la Mare wrote in September 1940, the great poem of futility; "The Unutterable"

What! jibe in ignorance, and scold.
The Muses when, the earth in flame,
They hold their peace, and leave unto'led
Even Valour's deathless requiem.\textsuperscript{62}

And further

No poet yet in Fates Dark count
Has ever watched Night dread as this,
Or seen such evils to surmount.\textsuperscript{63}

\textsuperscript{61} \textit{Complete Poems}, p. 284
\textsuperscript{62} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 285.
\textsuperscript{63} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 460.
These few instances from Walter de la Mare's poetry written either at the time of Wars or between the inter-war period show a clear period perceptiveness. Like other poets of the period de la Mare was also undergoing the same traumatic experience of War. He has, in his poems, not only recorded the happenings of the time but also shown the reactions of the sensitive mind of a poet. These poems alone are an ample proof of the fact that de la Mare was not an "escapist" as critics like Theodore Manyard, Cox and Dyson and H. Coombes, etc. have so vehemently alleged about his poetry. These War poems along with his attitude to Nature, and humanity at large, confirms Walter de la Mare a thorough realist who knows his times very well.
CONCLUSION

Walter de la Mare has created in his poetry a world of dream, fantasy and imagination through his 'childlike' attitude which appeals alike to children and the grown ups. In fact it is this dream activity and the child in him which enable the withdrawal of the poet's mind into the realms of the past and the mysterious. de la Mare believed in two types of imagination: the 'childlike' and the 'boylike'; childlike imagination is visionary, it is "intuitive", "inductive" while the 'boylike' imagination is "intellectual", "logical", or 'deductive'. Children, therefore, are like visionaries. However, as they mature, what is childlike retires like a shocked snail. It is at this stage that the 'boylike' imagination begins to flourish. de la Mare recognises that sometimes analytic mind is likely to daydream to have intuitive insights; while the childlike visionary mind is occasionally supremely matter-of-fact. He seems to follow Coleridge for whom 'fancy' is memory and draws its material from the phenomenal world, while 'imagination' transcends the senses and receives the material from the eternal. But inspite of the reverence that he had for imagination de la Mare never recommends a complete retirement into it. Regarding sources of imagination he is not very specific but some of his theories are
reminiscent of Carl Jung. For de la Mare, too, the unconscious is
"the reservoir of the elixir vitae" on which intuition and
imagination draw; and this identification of the unconscious with
imagination may be one of the reasons for his apparent failure to
come to terms with reality.

Closely related to de la Mare's speculations about the
nature of imagination are his speculations about dreams. Dreams
were truly precious and fascinating to him for they are according
to the poet, "a communion of the self to the self." For him dream
and imagination were practically synonymous and both were path
to reality and thus a source of poetry, for which inspiration
comes in as a condition of consciousness compounded, in some
degree, of both dream and wakefulness. de la Mare also admits
the possibility that dreams may be "pre-cognitive" and
"prophetic" and that they sometimes so closely resemble
actuality that they may be relics of a previous life.

McCrosson rightly points out that to the materialist
and to the scoffers at anything transcendental, de la Mare has
little or nothing to say. And should anyone be looking for
answers, he has none. Therefore, a characteristic of de la Mare
poetry is his questioning attitude which the readers come across
in poem after poem. He questions everything, never arrogantly, however, because he believed ___ in fact it was the only thing he seemsto be certain of ___ "that all life is shot with strangeness and mystery ..." for we can no more solve the secret of life than that of sleep." To him life ___ awake or sleep ___ and death were inexplicably interwoven. His preoccupation with death has no morbidity in it; he simply felt that death was as interesting and as curious as life and that the dead commune with the living.

One important point about de la Mare's dream poetry is that there is no barrier that sharply separates the dream world from the waking world; man has a spontaneous accessibility to both the realms. In some of these poems the poet throws the shades of the mysterious over his characters and situations which are otherwise quite ordinary, involving common men and women engaged in the daily routine of their life. In his dream poems de la Mare is always aware of an aura of the inexplicable mystery lurking about every object. He always pursues the faintest hues of the phantasmal light that never was their except in the domain of dream. In this regard he may be compared to Coleridge, Shelley, and W.B. Yeats.

Besides dream and the childlike imagination, other
important source of mystery in de la Mare's poetry is the presence of the supernatural beings and the eerie atmosphere. This is one of the major trends of his poetry quite explicit in the very first collection of his poems, *Songs of Childhood* (1902); out of 44 poems included in this volume twelve are directly connected with fairies, witches, phantoms, ghosts, etc, and some six of them hint at the paranormal. The poems dealing with the supernatural beings have the beauty of the visionary things. de la Mare succeeds in making his readers experience the same sweet sensation which the poet might have experienced personally. Very often he seems to deal with the commonplace and the conventional but his peculiarity lies in making them unconventional, uncommon and "other worldly." The trick of revealing the ordinary in whimsical colours, of catching the common place off its guard, is the first of de la Mare's two chief gifts. The second gift is the sense of the supernatural of the fantastic otherworld that lies on the edges of our consciousness. His poetry takes the readers into a world of the mysterious, especially when he is speaking of Arabia and its music, of the fairy land, of sleep, of the lonely dreams of the child, of the dark chateau, and of the sunken gardens, science withstanding, this universe in de la Mare's poetry becomes a marvellous and exciting place where anything may happen any
Walter de la Mare is the supreme master of this unintelligible and unpredictable world, or what Lord Dunsany calls "the haunted land of de la Mare." He is the interpreter, the priest and the poet of this mysterious world. For him this very world is alive with the supernatural. Even when the setting is homely, "he also introduces us to witches and mermaids and elves, to mouldering Gothic castles and Arabian deserts, caves of pearls and coral hidden in the depth of ocean." And even "his homely characters and scenes have something queer about them. The houses are secret and irregular, full of dark nooks and dusty accumulated junk, quaint ornaments, forgotten books and dim portraits."

There are different forms of the supernatural beings like ghosts and fairies, gnomes, ogres and witches. When de la Mare makes us experience the presence of the supernatural beings, we enter into an uncanny mental state. In fact the secrets, beauty and wonder of the visionary world are hidden in the poet's heart and he is able to kindle them into the hearts of his readers. This haunted world of de la Mare is so charming that even the most scientifically-minded readers are likely to suffer
from the "willing suspension of disbelief" and lose themselves entirely, of course, for the time being, in the beautiful world of fairy land.

Sometimes presences in Walter de la Mare's poetry are 'ghosts' in the sense that most children think of them, i.e. the spirits of the dead return. He would have been reluctant, however, to accept the concept of the return of the departed spirit because he would have had difficulty believing that spirits depart. Central to his belief in the possibility of ghosts is the belief in what he might have called "the law of conservation of spirit — nothing created, nothing destroyed." de la Mare's world is the region which lies "between the conscious mind of our time and the collective Unconscious. In that region the self has a continual existence — transmuted, to be sure, but always there. In this sense, then the self neither comes from anywhere nor goes out anywhere. It is the spooky atmosphere in his poems has been further heightened by the twilight effect of the particular time which the poet seems to have chosen rather deliberately.

Besides the supernatural beings, there is yet another reason for the "other worldly" characteristic of de la Mare's poetry and this relates to the mystical temperament of the poet.
de la Mare is a member of the order of poets who by the reason of their perception believe that everything human is a shadow cast by something eternal. It is therefore, impossible to read extensively in de la Mare without realising that life's beauty and mystery are a foreshadowing of a life immeasurably more beautiful and mysterious. A life immortal and divine, the earthly life of God.

But in de la Mare's poetry this concept of 'Divine Presence', manifesting himself through various objects of Nature is not always as all-pervasive and distinct as it is in the poetry of the Romantic Revival, like that of Wordsworth and Shelley. On the contrary, in de la Mare, it is some 'Mysterious Presence' with which the poet communes. It is this mysterious presence which charges even ordinary objects of Nature in his poetry, with wonder and mystery; hence the difference between Wordsworth and de la Mare; since the latter's first quest "in all situations is to find out some solution to a life-time's mystery." In most of his mystical poems, therefore, de la Mare's style is "Interrogative." He usually does not confer praises on or identify himself with the 'Divine Presence' which Wordsworth seems to have done; but he tries to explore that 'all-pervasive' Spirit through various queries, which is characteristic of most of his
Walter de la Mare, therefore, seldom confines himself to the mere description of phenomena. He is rarely a mere observer because he felt so deeply that all living things share the common mystery. To him life is endlessly interesting and his sense of the supernatural doubles the interest. It throws an aspect of the mysterious over ordinary things, leaving them none-the-less as part of the workaday scheme. It is with the help of the mysterious presences — "Divine Spirit", "Universal Mind" — in his mystical poems, along with the supernatural creatures that de la Mare takes the next step and carries us into a world which though geographically mundane, is not otherwise recognisable for its uncanny and mysterious nature. It is the abundance of these elements of mystery in de la Mare's poetry that a large number of readers and critics of the poet consider him simply a children's poet, singing of the fairyland and believe that he has nothing to do with the realities of life.

But inspite of the predominance of imagination, dream, mysterious presences and an eerie atmosphere in Walter de la Mare, we find a continuation of the great tradition of realism which started with Chaucer in the 14th century, and was
always there in English literature until it culminated in the poetry of William Wordsworth in the 19th century. In Wordsworth's poetry, despite his Nature worship and mystical trends, one finds the best possible realistic details when he deals with natural descriptions. In de la Mare, too, we find that he is superb when it comes to the descriptions of the phenomenal world around him.

To use Forrest Reid's words, there is much in de la Mare's poetry which strikes us as "remembered". In this connection Thomas Burke provides a good example when he compares the setting/locale of de la Mare's famous poem, "The Listners," with a place called Chiddingston in Kent. All these descriptions are realistic in the true sense of the term. Besides patriotism and deep association with the place, are also found realistic description of the beauties, sights and sounds of Nature which the poet experienced as a little but observant and sensitive child. These poems show his sensuous love for the objects of Nature. They are rich in pictorial quality in the style of the Pre-Raphaelite poets, as the poet provides the fullest possible details of each of them. In this regard special mention should be made of the poems dealing with the flora of England. The first thing that may easily be noticed is "a simple, spontaneous, unreflecting pleasure which all unsophisticated being feel in free open-air
Like James Thomson, the author of *The Seasons* (1730), de la Mare also provides very detailed and realistic accounts of various seasons (Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter) and their corresponding impact on animate and the human world. In these poems de la Mare differs from the majority of the Georgians in his treatment and attitude to Nature. Like other Georgians, his attitude is 'charmingly descriptive' but unlike these casual observers, an exact perception and minute observation are the characteristic marks of his poetry. He paints all the details that he observes, realistically and in doing so, he shows an intensely sensuous love for them. In all these poems his central interest is, however, in earth, sea and sky as they appear to the eye. These poems largely convey the colours, sights and sounds of the English landscape.

Walter de la Mare's descriptions of the phenomenal world are comprehensive enough to include earth, water, sky and the flora inhabiting the space between the earth and sky. But these inanimate object are not the whole of Nature; it also includes the animate object like squirrel, "Bumble hee", the Boblink, and the cricket, that is animals, birds including the little
creatures like the insects etc. In de la Mare's poetry, therefore, one finds a tender love and compassion towards the animate objects, particularly towards little creatures. In fact his love and compassion for animals, birds, and little creatures, like insects, etc., have prompted some of his memorable and representative poems. Like Thomas Hardy, de la Mare, too, "cannot simply mention an animate object without showing his intense personal sympathy with the consequent understanding of its life and feeling.

de la Mare's knowledge and love for the animate objects of Nature are not confined to the domestic pets and wild beasts, but his poetry also bears evidence of his knowledge and love for the aviary world. Poems on many of the English birds — wren, linnets, cuckoos, larks, robins and nightangles — are scattered through the pages of his Complete Poems (1969). The mere fact, that in twentyfour poems about birds in Poems (1901-1918), he has described more than twenty four species of birds, is a proof of his interest in ornithology. de la Mare's poems like, "Wren", "The Mother Bird" and "Rooks in October" invite comparison of the poet to the youthful Wordsworth when the latter used to visit bird nests in order to spy their "sheltered bed." In his love and compassion for animals and birds etc., and
his strong denunciation of those who either kill them or commit atrocities on them de la Mare may also be compared to Ralph Hodgson (1871-1954). In his poetry, too, compassion for animals and hatred for their oppressors were dominant, and he expressed this with passion and vision.

Like Ralph Hodgson in his “The Bull,” de la Mare, too, in poems like “The Cage”, is very hostile towards those who commit excesses on animals. To him they are “murderer” because for him men and animals are “fellow beings.” He puts both children and animals in the same category. This is a proof of the fact that de la Mare, despite his high flights of imagination and dream and his mystical temperament, was never oblivious of the world around him which he has described no less realistically and effectively than a thorough realist like Chaucer, Shakespeare, Spenser and Wordsworth.

de la Mare’s attitude towards animals, birds and little creatures cannot be simply summed up in words like love, compassion, humour and understanding etc; but these poems about animals, birds and other little creatures are certainly not devoid of philosophical dimensions. The poet’s observation of the animate objects and the general human attitude towards them
inspire him to philosophise on human nature, potentialities, predicament and also on the relationship between man and God. It is in these poems that the note of realism and concern for humanity in general is further intensified.

The poems, dealing with birds, pet and wild animals and little creatures like the titmouse, mole and moth, etc., prove de la Mare to be a very intent and close observer of these creatures of God. Even the smallest creature, like the titmouse or the mole, usually hidden from the common eye, is within the range of the poet's observation. If the behaviour of the wild animals like the lion and the bear leads him to ponder over pride and violence deep-seated in many, the mole and the “hooded bat,” etc. remind him of human limits and limitations. Similarly, the little titmouse’s habit of shutting itself up into a small hole in the tree-trunk (hints) at man’s journey into “Times enormous Nought.” These poems about the animate objects of Nature prove beyond any doubt that in de la Mare’s poetry, despite all attractions and delight, the human concerns are the uppermost.

In some of his poems de la Mare uses Natural phenomena as objects of comparison to moralise on human fate. They also inspire him to ponder on human predicament and the
poet concludes that all the inhabitants of the earth “share the same consciousness.” For instance, in his poem “Shadow,” de la Mare’s observation of the phenomenal world, confirms, much against the imagination of the poet, the inevitability of death in this world. He observes that life and death go hand-in-hand in this world. Even the beautiful objects, like rose, are born but to die; and the poet concludes: “The loveliest thing earth hath a shadow hath,/ A dark and livelong hint of death.”

Here, as else where, de la Mare impresses us as a minute observer of the phenomena of Nature. But unlike majority of the Georgian poets, he is not simply interested in the spectacle of Nature for its own sake; instead it swings the poet’s imagination back to the human world, and make him ponder over human predicament and philosophise about human nature. He is convinced that “The loveliest thing earth hath, a shadow hath/ A dark and livelong hint of death. It is because of his recognition of death and decay of all the objects in this ephemeral world that he expresses his concern on human flaws like pride, tyranny and high ambitions for things unattainable, or his attempt to make mortals immortals, etc., de la Mare disapproves of them strongly as a realist.
But there are critics who are of the opinion that de la Mare was totally detached from his times and that he sought refuge in the world of dream and fantasy and hence is an "escapist" which I have attempted to refute in the present study. He did write about fairy land, dreams, magic, and supernatural being but he was always rooted in actualities. How a sensitive mind, like that of de la Mare, could have remained aloof when the two World Wars burst on his head, leaving behind a trail of suffering. He was certainly aware of these two Wars and the condition of humanity at that time as is clear from some of his poems written either at the time of the Wars or between the inter-War period. They clearly have a bearing upon the mental agony that the poet had suffered. In these poems "the lyrical sadness" of Walter de la Mare becomes more explicit. Man is presented as a pathetic figure, meeting life with a sigh, troubled by the past and afraid of the future. Out of this despondent view of man's earthly lot arises a personal melancholy which prompts these poems in which one finds an unaccustomed note of anger at callousness, militarism and cold hearts unmoved by the call of humanity.
The poets of the period passed through traumatic war experiences. Spender in the thirties conveyed the communist manifesto while Auden in the new socio-political upsurge wrote "Spain". All these poets wrote of modern life, internal as well as external: "Smokeless chimneys, damaged bridges, rotting wharves and chocked canals." Some of de la Mare's best poems about the World War I are found in the volume *Motley* (1918); the title-poem is important in this regard. Other poems which need mention are "The Marionettes," "The Hospital" and "News," etc.

After the World War I was over there began the post-war social crisis. The two volumes which deal with this aspect of the post-war conditions are the *The Veil* (1921), and *The Fleeting* (1933). In "The Veil" de la Mare writes of the underdog and their sufferings. "In The Dock" he describes the criminals: "Pallid, misshapen be stands," "mute as fish close-netted". In "The Hospital" de la Mare thinks of the hospital where the war afflicted persons were admitted as an "Inn with Death" while in "The Slum Child" he writes about the homeless and the hungry. During the World War II poets were shaken out of their being. In the midst of the holocaust de la Mare wrote in September 1940, the great poem of futility, "The Unutterable".
These few instances from Walter de la Mare’s poetry written either at the time of the Wars or between the inter-war period show a clear period-perceptiveness. Like other war poets, de la Mare was also undergoing the same traumatic experience of war. He has, in his poems, not only recorded the happenings of the time but has also shown the reactions of the sensitive mind of a poet. These poems alone are a clear testimony to the fact that de la Mare was not an “escapist” as some of his eminent critics have alleged. These war poems, alongwith his attitude to Nature and humanity at large, confirm Walter de la Mare as a thorough realist who knew his times very well.
SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Works by Walter de la Mare:

1. **Kismet** *(Story)* London: Name of the Publisher not available, 1985.

2. **A Mote** *(Story)* London: Name of Publisher not available, 1986.

3. **Songs of Childhood** London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1902 (This book was first published under the Pseudonym Walter Ramal) Sixth Impression, Faber & Faber, 1961.

4. **Henry Brocken** *(novel)* London: John Murray, 1904 (Published under the Pseudonym ‘Walter Ramal’ was dropped in subsequent editions.


* This was modelled on Poet’s tales Ligeia, Berenice, The Black Cat and The Fall of the House of Usher.


19. **Story and Rhyme** London: Dent, (King's Treasuries of Literature, 1921.


22. **The Riddle and Other Stories** London: Selwyn and Blount, 1923.


24. Some Thoughts on Reading (address delivered on 6 July, at Bembridge School on Foundation Day), Bembridge: Yellow-sands Press, 1923).

28. Two Tales — 'The Green Room' and 'The Connoisseur'

* This novel has not been published in Britain as a separate book.


42. **Poems for Children** London: Constable and Co., 1930. This collection includes twenty new poems.

43. **The Dutch Cheese** New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1931; Except for the title-story, this is different from The Dutch Cheese and Other Stories published by Faber & Faber, 1946.

44. **The Sunken Garden and Other Verses** Birmingham: Birmingham School of Printing, 1931. This Collection is different from The Sunken Garden, 1917, op.cit.


47. **Lewis Carroll** (criticism) London: Faber & Faber, 1932.


49. **The Walter de la Mare Omnibus** London: Collins, 1933; re-issued in one volume of 'Henry Brocken', 'The Return' and 'Memoirs of a Midget'.
50. The Lord Fish and Other Tales London: Faber & Faber, 1933.


55. Letters from Mr Walter de la Mare to Form Three Blaydon: School Press, 1936.


58. This Year, Next Year (Poems) London: Faber and Faber, 1937.


60. Memory and Other Poems London: Constable, 1939.

61. Behold, This Dreamer I (anthology and commentary) London: Faber & Faber, 1939.


63. Pleasures and Speculations (Essays) London: Faber & Faber, 1940.
64. **Bells and Grass** (rhymes) London : Faber & Faber, 1941.


70. **The Dutch Cheese and Other Stories** London : Faber, 1946.


74. **Winged Chariot** (long poem) London : Faber, 1951.


* This collection is different from Collected Poems, London : Methuen, 1946, Compiled by the Association of Teachers in Colleges and Departments of Education.

**Books containing contributions by Walter de la Mare**

84. *Cassell's Anthology of French Poetry* rendered into English by Alan Conder London: Cassell, 1950; Introduction II.
85. *Catalogue of the Memorial Exhibition of Works* by the late Claud Lovat Fraser London: Leicester Galleries, 1921; Prefatory Notes.
89. *Collected Poems* by Edward Thomas (London: Selwyn and Blount, 1920; Foreword.


101. *Forrest Reid* by Russell Burlingham London : Faber and Faber, 1953; *Introduction*.


107. *Is it well with the Child?* by Eve Garnett London : Frederick Muller, 1938; *Foreword*.


113. The Legion Book edited by Captain H. Cotton Minchin London: Cassell, 1929; contains 'The Image'.


118. A Perpetual Memory and Other Poems by Sir Henry Newbolt London: John Murray, 1939; Includes a 'Brief Memoir'.

119. The Plumes of Dream by Margaret Ridgeley Partridge New York Coward-McCann, 1951; Introduction.

120. Poetic Technique by Oliver C. de C. Ellis, Geoffrey Johnson and Christabel Burniston Altrincham: John Sherratt and Son, 1949: Introduction.


123. **A Queen’s Book of the Red Cross** London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1939; contains *And so to bed* and *joy*, poems.

124. **Rose Window** (tribute to St. Bartholomew’s Hospital by twenty-five authors) London: Heinemann, 1939; includes *Hospital* and *The Spotted Flycatcher* two poems.

125. **Russell Hillard Loines 1874-1922** (selection from his letters and poems by his friends) New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1927; contains *Recollections*.


131. **Sun before Seven** by Ian Dall London : Nelson, 1936, *Foreword*.


134. **These also** (anthology compiled by M.M. Johnson) London : Cambridge University Press, 1945, *Introduction*.

135. **These things the poets said** by Bognor Regis London : The Pear Tree Press, 1935, includes 'Satto Voce and to E.T. Edward Thomas'.


137. **They Walk Again** (collection of ghost stories) London : Faber and Faber, 1931, *Introduction* and "All Hallows".


140. **Twelve Poets** (anthology of new verse) London : Selwyn and Blount, 1918; contains 'Sam's Three Wishes' or *Life's Little Whirling*. 

142. *Words Without Songs* by Thomas B. Pitfield Altrincham: John Sherratt and Son, 1951; *Introduction*.

**Walter de la Mare’s Contribution to Periodicals:**


146. *The Bookman’s Journal* London: Vol. xii, No. 48, 1925; contains ‘*The Green Foom and A Bookshop Story*’.


English Association by the Oxford University Press.


152. *The London Mercury* November 1921 to April 1922; Vol. V, contains *'The Last Coachload Seatin's Aunt' - a story*.  


154. *The London Mercury* December 1936; contains *'A Sort of Interview'*.  


159. **Music and Letters** London : Vol XIX, No. 1, 1938; contains 'Ivor Gurney: The Poet'.

160. **Of Your Charity Pray** for the repose of the Soul of Gilbert Keith Chesterton who died June 14th, 1936, A leaflet containing 'facturs Est' - poem.


162. **Poetry Review** London : May-June 1951; contains 'Hard Labour'.

163. **Present Poetry and Music a Festival of Britain**, 1951 London : Apollo Society, 1951; *Introduction*.


Criticism on Walter de la Mare:


32. Fergusan, De L. “De la Mare’s Listner and Houseman’s On Wenlock Edge”; *Explicator*, 4, 1945.


34. Ford, Boris. “The Rest was silence: de la Mare’s last Interview”, *Encounter*, 7, 1956.

36. Georgery, H. The Nocturnal Traveller: de la Mare” Poetry, 80, 1952.


43. Hopkins, Kenneth. Edmund Blunden (A Selection of his poetry and prose) London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1950, (pp. 294 to 301 are devoted to de la Mare).

45. Jarel, R.A. "Mr. de la Mare", *Times Literary Supplement*, 1953.


47. Johnson, M.G. "Fantasy and a Real World in the Poetry of de la Mare", *Art and Scientific Thought*, 1944.


50. King, H. "Mr. de la Mare", *A delphi*, 2, 1925.


60. Megroz, R.L. De la Mare: A Biographical and Critical Study. London: Hodder and Stoughten, 1924.


76. Roberts, W.W. A Poet of Two Worlds: the Imagery of Mr. de la Mare”, *Times Literary Supplement*, 1, August, 1936.


79. Sack-ville-West, V. "The Personality of de la Mare", *Listener*, 30, April, 1953.


81. Schenoeider, E. de la Mares' Meercheon" *Explicator*, 4, 1946.


