

we have certain analogies in the experience of mystics. We have the 'Dark Night of the Soul' breaking in the 'Dawn of the Celestial Bridal.' And we have in physical life an exact counterpart in the fear of Love which is characteristic of the Virgin. This is especially marked in the case of boys. There is an instinctive fear, repulsion and anxiety, which must be overcome before the soul swoons in bliss. Is it racial experience that tells him that love is the twin brother of death? Love and Death are the levers of that universal life which we saw to be the Name of the Universe. Each is an annihilation of an individual in the interests of universal Energy. Thus, as we have seen in a slightly different shape, when referring to the quintessence of comedy, Love and Death are the sole preoccupation of the artist, whose subject is Life. There is no other real interest, for there is nothing else in which to delight.

If, then, we can take the view that Death is an intense form of Love, in which the individual is permanently destroyed, as he is temporarily destroyed during the act of love, then this Life is universal Joy, a Divine Comedy, whose soul is Laughter. We can even explain the joy of cruelty as a deeper realization of the nature of cruelty, as a piquancy, a sting, in what would otherwise be a detestably sweet wine.

But if we fail to grasp this view, then we are forced to the alternative that Love is only a form of Death. The universe is an abyss of agony. "The mystery of the cruelty of things" is as terrible as Swinburne's "Anactoria" makes it. Everything is sorrow, we are Buddhists, and only in utter cessation is there peace. Buddha himself recognized this clearly enough; his intense distaste for sex is our witness. He saw that it was playing the game of Life to love; it was allowing oneself to be dragged deeper and deeper into the mire of Existence. A monotheism with any perception of the facts of nature — hard nowadays to escape some such perception! — may make its God in the image of the Marquis de Sade. The whole of organic nature is an orgy of murder and lust. There is only one escape from this position; to accept the unity of Love and Death, and to regard Death as mere Delight. Such a realization avoids the snare of Dualism, lays its axe to the root of the problem of the Origin of Evil, and renders Existence possible and desirable for the thinker as well as for the sensualist.

III.

To the blessed ones who have accepted the Law of Thelema these words will hardly have been necessary. The doctrine is plainly stated in the Book of the Law.

"For I am divided for love's sake, for the chance of union. This is the creation of the world, that the pain of division is as nothing, and the joy of dissolution in all."

"Now, let it be understood, if the body of the king dissolve, he shall remain in pure ecstasy for ever."

"Aye! Feast! Rejoice! there is no dread hereafter. There is the dissolution, and eternal ecstasy in the kisses of Nu."

"Thrill with the joy of life and death! Ah! thy death shall be lovely: whoso seeth it shall be glad. Thy death shall be

the seal of the promise of our age-long love."

"Strive ever to more! and if thou art truly mine — and doubt it not, an if thou art ever joyful! death is the crown of all."

This, then, is the will of the Universe; Life eternal and universal, not petty, individual and transient; Life of which we are only conscious when in trance; Life whose consciousness is gained perfectly and permanently by the adept in virtue of his trance in proportion as he becomes fixed therein and makes his daily life partake thereof; Life that works inexorably and deliciously through Love and Death, which are Love. And this is expressed simply, succinctly, perfectly, in that transcendent phrase, the greeting wherewith we close our writings:

Love is the law, love under will.

Note — Taking a few plays at random we see every one the description of a hunting. Note that the strongest dramas are those in which the hunt is keenest. Where the hunting interest is weak or masked, the play becomes frivolous and lacking in the stuff of greatness.

- Ajax — The hunting of Ajax by Ulysses.
 Agamemnon — Agamemnon by Aegisthus.
 Oedipus — Oedipus by Fate. Karma is very frequently taken for the hunter. The man's being hunted by himself is particularly funny!
 Orestes trilogy — Orestes by Fate.
 Bacchae — Pentheus by Dionysus.
 Hamlet — Claudius by Hamlet. Here the motive is weakly carried out, and so the play is only interesting for the revelation of Hamlet's soul.
 Lear — Lear by Madness.
 Macbeth — Macbeth by his conscience, or by the Witches.
 Othello — Othello by Iago.
 Twelfth Night — The Duke by Viola (note hunter's disguise).
 As You Like It — Orlando by Rosalind (ditto).
 Romeo and Juliet — Love by Heredity.
 Coriolanus — Coriolanus by the mob-spirit.
 Julius Caesar — Caesar by Cassius.
 Ghosts — Oswald by Heredity.
 Hedda Gabler — Hedda by Breck.
 Rosmersholm — Rosmer and Rebecca by the wife's ghost.
 A Doll's House — Nora by her nascent individuality. (The lack of personal struggle makes this a weak, silly play.)
 The Master-Builder — The Builder by Hilda.
 An Enemy of Society — Society by Stockmann. (He conquers it, so this is a comedy.)
 Brand — Brand by the Hawk.
 Peer Gynt — Peer Gynt by Solveig. (Note the way she lurks silent throughout the play. Other exciting episodes are all huntings.)
 Mortadello — Mortadello by Monica. (Note disguise at banquet.)
 Snowstorm — Nerissa by Eric; Eric by Maud. (Observe hunters' disguises again.)
 The Scorpion — Laylah by Rinaldo; their love by the Scorpion. (This is a romance, and neither comedy nor tragedy in the best sense.)
 Household Gods — Crassus by Alicia. (Note supreme disguise.)
 A Night in an Inn — The Thieves by the Idol.
 The Gods of the Mountain — The Beggars by the Gods.
 The Blind Prophet — The Prophet (individual life) by Universal Life.
 The Argonauts — Jason by Ares.
 Adonis — Adonis by Psyche.
 Atalanta in Calydon — Meleager by Circumstance. (Here the hunter is not personified, and so the play is weak. But note the comedy of the hunter hunted.)
 The Mother's Tragedy — Cora by Karma.
 The Fatal Force — Ratoum by S'afi (disguise again).
 Jephthah — Jephthah by Jared. (Crude and undeveloped form of the idea.)
 The World's Tragedy — Fate by Alexander.