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The Relationship between Artistic Representation and Reading in "Caliban to the Audience"

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Despite its surface flourish which can often get puzzling for anyone but a patient reader, critics have found it relatively easy to decide what "Caliban to the Audience" is all about. For example, no conscientious critic fails to mention the influence of Kierkegaard on *The Sea and the Mirror* (1944), of which "Caliban to the Audience" constitutes the third part.[1] It is true that Auden's indebtedness to the Danish philosopher at the time of composition was immense, which is not only evident in the text itself but also biographically documented.[2] But simply pointing out Kierkegaardian propositions and allusions in the text as if they were all that is worth serious consideration would of course be far too insufficient. As Greenberg notes in his illuminative study focusing on Auden's intellectual backgrounds (1968, 119-20), his understanding of Kierkegaard is not very accurate whether it was deliberate or not.

The influence of Kierkegaard seems to deserve special mention, presumably because of the noticeable crudity with which Auden assimilates it. That is to say, the mention was needed to elucidate the contents of "Caliban to the Audience" by emphasizing the writer as its organizing principle. If the Kierkegaard question has to do with the contents, more or less the same situation can be observed about the peculiarity of the stylistic excess of the text. The style of Caliban's speech is quite often called Jamesian.[3] This is at the same time an act of naming a problem. The speaker is supposed to be Caliban, who represents what is not in the sphere of art. A contradiction is evident when he speaks in such an artistically conscious style as Henry James's. A solution to this problem can, however, be easily found; in fact, it is Auden's own: "The whole point about the verbal style is that, since Caliban is inarticulate, he has to borrow, from Ariel, the most artificial style possible, i.e., that of Henry James" (qtd. in Carpenter 1982, 328).[4] But this is evidently problematic: it only explains away the contradiction by assuming further unproven facts derived from the symbolism of Auden's own invention.[5] To accept this statement implies assuming two propositions in advance: that whatever Auden says about the characters is applicable to "Caliban to the Audience," even if the text itself does not seem to support it, by virtue of the naked fact that he is its author; that all stylistic peculiarities that can be called artificial must categorically fall under the heading "Jamesian." Here is the Kierkegaard question again, refashioned in new phrases. Even the most perceptive critical estima-

tion is not innocent of these two unwarranted assumptions.

Replogle explains Auden's poetry in terms of a tension between the personalities of the Poet who represents the serious side of it and the Antipoet who tries to overturn the Poet's high pretensions. He characterizes Caliban's speech as "Auden's great chance to let Poet and Antipoet move completely away from their quietly harmonious middle style to surfeit themselves at their outer limits." Then he goes on to argue:

> The performance is everything. Transferred into dull homiletic prose, Caliban's thesis would scarcely hold our interest for half a page. . . . The speech itself, though in prose, is not much different from Auden's poetry. . . . [I]ts syntax and diction are those of his familiar Poet, allowed an elevation beyond his wildest dreams. At the same time the Antipoet practices every verbal trick in his vast repertoire. . . . The style of this remarkable Auden persona tells us a great deal about his creator. . . . *How* he says them [i.e., Auden's poetic preoccupations] so clearly carries its own message about Auden's values and beliefs. (1969, 155)

This analysis is quite sensible and moderately convincing. But the two problems mentioned above are clearly present in it. It is quite right that the manner of Caliban's speech is so obviously unnatural that it suggests the existence of some intention behind it. The first thing we must consider here is how we should define Caliban's actual way of speaking as an object of analysis. In equating it with manifestations of the Poet and Antipoet as if it would not overflow the two categories, Replogle has done virtually the same thing as calling the style "Jamesian," even though he avoids mentioning the name. I do not at all mean that it is all wrong; only, it leaves too much of the "how" of Caliban's speech unexplained. A second question concerns the specificity of the text of "Caliban to the Audience." When introducing the terms "Poet" and "Antipoet," Replogle says his purpose is "to *describe the poetry*, not the man behind it" (92). If his commentary on "Caliban to the Audience" is a description of the poetry, it only confirms that it shares typical traits of Auden's poetry in general and ends up in showing no remarkable aspects of it except possibly how it uniquely combines them. Whether "Auden" is the historical person or a textual being reconstructed from the writings attributed to him does not make much difference. The point is that while appeal to "Auden" can doubtlessly illuminate a number of aspects of the text, it completely fails to describe how the poetry works in its specificity.

I am not in the least objecting to arguing that "Caliban to the Audience" or the entirety of *The Sea and the Mirror* represents Auden's view on the relationship between life and art, or about how Christianity should embrace art.[6] What I am trying to say is only that there is much more to Caliban's speech than that. Specifically, it problematizes its own reception. The speaker, who, mentioning the name "Caliban," strangely does not do so directly to identify himself, is worried how his speech is being received by those who are listening to it. After preaching about the dangers of evading

existential responsibilities in a tone reminiscent of Judge William's in Kierkegaard's *Either/Or*—which does not mean that the tenor is the same—the speaker says:

> I have tried . . . to raise the admonitory forefinger, to ring the alarming bell, but with so little confidence of producing the right result, so certain that the open eye and attentive ear will always interpret any sight and any sound to their advantage, every rebuff as a consolation, every prohibition as a rescue—that is what they open and attend for—that I find myself almost hoping, for your sake, that I have had the futile honour of addressing the blind and the deaf. (Auden 1976, 339)

We may read this as signaling the speaker's move to put into question the authoritativeness with which he was preaching, but the discursive fact that he does not give up prescribing the right attitude that he thinks the audience should adopt keeps his authoritative position completely intact. More specifically, the speaker stresses the central role that the eye and the ear play in understanding or misunderstanding his speech. According to him, the audience are using *both* their eyes and ears. That their reaction must involve the functions of the two organs simultaneously can be inferred from two points: that the speaker treats the two as a set, shown by the awkward phrase "what they open and attend for," which, more accurately, should have been "what the eye opens for and the ear attends for"; that to use either organ separately will not effect the same reaction: "the blind" can hear but are immune from the error that listening to the speech in combination with looking tends to make, and so are "the deaf." (Even if we read "the blind and the deaf" not as blind people and deaf people but as people who are at once blind and deaf, it does not alter the fact that the audience are looking and listening.) Seemingly trivial, this very much helps determine the circumstances of the speech. There is no question of the fact that the audience are listening, but what sights are supposed to be presented to them?

The audience of the title "Caliban to the Audience" are not just any audience but first and foremost an audience who are supposed to have attended a performance of *The Tempest*. Therefore, the theatrical presentation of the fictional world of the play may be attractive as an answer to the question. But it is less probable that the speaker (Caliban) is referring to the part he played in the performance as a raising of "the admonitory forefinger." The expression clearly refers to his preaching in his own speech. Then all that is literally in the sight of the audience must naturally be the figure of the speaker standing in front of the lowered curtain and probably still clothed in his costume. We must note here that this is no more nor less than a logical possibility internally deduced from the text; that is to say, it is a fictional fact.

Still another answer is possible. When we take the "sight" to be mental pictures, we may consider that the audience are imaginatively building up scenes in their mind's eye based on the speaker's visually evocative speech. For example, addressing a young

artist among the audience who has come to attend a performance of *The Tempest* for educative purposes, the speaker says:

> Had you . . . really left me alone to go my whole freewheeling way to disorder, to be drunk every day before lunch, to jump stark naked from bed to bed, to have a fit every week or a major operation every year, to forge checks or water the widow's stock, I might, after countless skids and punctures have come by the bumpy third-class road of guilt and remorse, smack into the very same truth which you were meanwhile admiring from your distant comfortable veranda but would never point out to me. (1976, 333)

Hearing these concrete instances of Caliban's behavior, not only the young man but also the rest of the audience who are after all there to hear this passage may be inclined to visualize them in spite of the subjunctive mood and metaphoricalness which seem to prevent it.[7] The implication of this visualization is that the audience thereby participate in the narrated world where Caliban *really* lives. This is a perfectly normal process of reception which any traditional drama, either with a bare stage or fully equipped with a realistic set, must presuppose. We have only to think of an offstage happening which is only verbally reported but can significantly contribute to the plot, in order to realize the important role of imaginative participation on the part of the audience. If "Caliban to the Audience" can be regarded as something of a drama, it very much depends on this function of offstage business, for without it there is little action to speak of.

The two answers are not mutually exclusive. Though a reader of "Caliban to the Audience" may find it difficult to visualize how Caliban in his offstage behavior looks, the audience have no such difficulty because they have the speaker there in front of them to project their imagination onto. This is not to say that for adequate understanding such visualization is mandatory, much less that it is unconditionally desirable. What I am suggesting is that the two levels of fiction which were separately treated in the two answers are interrelated differently for the reader of the text and the audience who are represented by the text. As far as the audience are concerned, the existence of the speaker is a reality, because they both are part of the fiction at the first level. This paradoxically makes the revelation of his identity toward the reader unnecessary. It does not make a difference if the audience believe for the moment that he is really Caliban or just acting him, for the fact about him, though remaining unspecified, is always one. For the reader, on the other hand, the speaker and offstage Caliban are both fictitiously given. Unlike the audience, the reader may feel inconvenience about not having specific information about the speaker as a visible model from whom he/she can derive his/her image of Caliban. It is less important to ask whether or not this emphasis on sight is a necessary process in reading than to note that the reader is in a position to fictionalize the speaking subject to fill in the gap in information. Now, let us examine the relationship between the speaker and Caliban

in more detail keeping the distinction between the audience and the reader in mind.

"Caliban to the Audience" begins as follows:

> If now, having dismissed your hired impersonators with verdicts ranging from laudatory orchid to the disgusted and disgusting egg, you ask and, of course, notwithstanding the conscious fact of his irrevocable absence, you instinctively *do* ask for our so good, so great, so dead author to stand before the finally lowered curtain and take his shyly responsible bow for this, his latest, ripest production, it is I — my reluctance is, I can assure you, co-equal with your dismay — who will always loom thus wretchedly into your confused picture, for, in default of the all-wise, all-explaining master you would speak *to*, who else at least can, who else indeed must respond to your bewildered cry, but its very echo, the begged question you would speak to him *about*.(1976, 325)

The speech verbally establishes the theater itself as the fictional space — the first level of fiction in our terms — in which this very same speech is supposed to be delivered, a procedure which must be distinguished from metatheatrical reference of the kind that *The Tempest* for example can be considered to contain. In Prospero's epilogue, the imaginary space of the island is still in effect, in which the address to the audience is almost an invocation to God. But here, in contrast to the first and second sections of *The Sea and the Mirror*, which directly join and share the fictional world of *The Tempest*, the "spell" (*Temp.* 5.1.326) that has been sustaining it has been broken, as shown by the reference to the dismissal of the actors. This must exclude the possibility that "Caliban" of the title of this section is the Shakespearean character of the same name as he lives in the fiction that the dramatist created. In fact, far from identifying himself as Caliban, the speaker is instead defining himself abstractly as the echo of the audience's complaint or what the complaint contains as its subject. It is true that his embarrassment about being the one to sit in for the forever absent dramatist can be interpreted to derive from his awareness of the incompatibility of his nature and the role he is now to play, but it does not mean that he is straight out of the play which is supposed to be the place he is destined to dwell.

In the following subsection, the speaker says he quotes the audience by parenthetically noting: *"for the present I speak your echo"* (326). (For convenience's sake, the audience as the speaker impersonates them will be referred to as the "audience.") According to the "audience," what is wrong about Shakespeare's Caliban is, after all, his dwelling place. The most blatant error that Shakespeare is supposed to have committed is that he has portrayed Caliban in such a way that put inside the dramatic space of illusion the latter appears out of place. Here we have to notice that the name of Caliban is used for two different modes of existence. The "audience" protest to the the dramatist in the following stylistically half hesitant yet strongly accusing tone:

> Are we not bound to conclude, then, that whatever snub to the poetic you may

> have intended incidentally to administer, your profounder motive in so introducing Him to them among whom, because He doesn't belong, He couldn't appear as anything but His distorted parody, a deformed and savage slave, was to deal a mortal face-slapping insult to us among whom He does. . . ? (330)

Two Calibans can be recognized here: the "original" that lives among the "audience" in their daily lives, and the "parody" that is the represented image of the "original." The dilemma here is that the distortion was necessary for the "original" to find itself in the dramatic space while it is this very distortion that makes its presence in the drama so obtrusive. The nature of the distortion is well worth noting: it has nothing to do directly with the dramatist's intention, which is responsible only for a decision as to whether Caliban should or should not be introduced; instead, what is considered to be its cause is the difference in the natures of the two realms in question. In fact, it is remarkable that Caliban's presence in the world of drama is described as initiated by the dramatist's admitting his entry, not by his act of composition. For example, the dramatist is blamed for "the incredible unpardonable treachery of bringing along the one creature" it is destructive, "at the front door [or] at the back, to admit" (327); or the fact that "He [Caliban] . . . manage[d] to get in" is attributed to his "conscious malice" (327); still more explicitly, he "inveigl[ed] Caliban into Ariel's kingdom" (330).

In point of fact, it was of course the dramatist who created the character as he is. But to regard the quoted phrases merely as superfluously rhetorical references to the dramatist's art is to miss their point. On the contrary, the independence of Caliban's transformation or deformation from skills in representation, the emblem of which is the mirror, lends his existence a special status. The metaphorical way of speaking of the moving between the two realms on each side of the mirror serves to give the "original" and "parodied" Calibans an illusion of continuity despite the distortion that is interposed between them. What this means is that the distortion is not due to the gap that inevitably intrudes between an external object and its representation through an artistic medium. The "audience" are well aware that the mirror of dramatic representation presents a negative image of our life:

> on the far side of the mirror the general will to compose, to form at all costs a felicitous pattern becomes the *necessary cause* of any particular effort to live or act or love or triumph or vary, instead of being as, in so far as it emerges at all, it is on this side, their *accidental effect*. . . [.] (330)

As long as Caliban is on the far side of the mirror, he is an artistic image of something on this side. In fact, he is even described as "the represented principle of *not* sympathising, *not* associating, *not* amusing" (327), that is, a personification of these negative characteristics. But if he is an artistic representation, what the "audience" find offensive about his negative personification is significantly that he embodies the negation, not of values in the realm of life, but of the raison d'être of the dramatic

representation of life: "sympathising," "associating," and "amusing" are not spontaneous acts that we on this side may or may not do according to our dispositions, but imperative for characters on the other side. Caliban's deformity lies precisely in this point. The "audience" are not objecting to the world of artistic representation given in *The Tempest* as a whole, which, if we may say so, is a result of some distortion of reality, but to the licentious distortion of dramaturgy that Caliban embodies.

There is no denying that this analysis of Caliban as a principle of disorder agrees with Auden's own view in "Music in Shakespeare" that *The Tempest* "is not one of the plays in which, in a symbolic sense, harmony and concord finally triumph over dissonant disorder" (1963, 526). But to stay content with this conclusion is only to narrow our understanding. The most important point about "Caliban to the Audience" is that it problematizes the reception of artistic representation. Therefore, our concern is to evaluate the analysis above in the context of the reader's relationship to the speaker. As already observed, Auden has the speaker echo the thought of the audience rather than giving them their own speech. In this situation, what the speaker says the audience think does not have to coincide with what they actually think. The effect of making the entirety of "Caliban to the Audience" objectively a speech spoken by one speaker, even if it is practically extremely difficult to stage it, is that the reader is not prevented from feeling that he/she is directly addressed by the speaker on the stage, in other words, he/she is invited to consider him-/herself a member of the audience. If a proper speaking part were assigned to the audience, the reader might detachedly view the exchange between them and the speaker. But paradoxically, in order for the reader to actively respond to the text's invitation to identify with the represented audience and posit a speaker standing face to face with him/her, he/she must imagine an audience passively listening, which implies that the echo of their opinion that the speaker claims to speak may, far from being its exact reproduction, possibly be a fabrication of their reaction made to suit his preoccupations that he wants to expound on in the rest of his speech.

The theatrical framework of the text therefore obliges us to connect the "quotation" of the "audience"'s opinion with the speaker's own account of Caliban, who he himself is supposed to be. We have seen that the former defines the character called Caliban not at all as a dramatically fully developed one but nothing more than a name that makes it possible to refer to the otherwise purely aesthetic aspects of the text as if they constituted a personality. Does this definition also apply to the latter? The answer depends on the way we read the narrative framework of the text. We have discussed in detail the question of the speaker's position in terms of the two levels of fiction that arise for the reader. Our interest here is the relation between the second-level fiction that includes the description of Caliban's behavior and the formal structure of the text as a quasi-dramatic speech. That "Caliban to the Audience" is structured like a speech is, strictly speaking, independent of the first-level fiction of the theatrical

space; it is not the only possible mode of presentation: for example, a narrator could novelistically introduce Caliban into the theater as if he were the creature that we see in *The Tempest*, and quote what he said. Furthermore, if we regard the second-level fiction as the main source of the definition of Caliban's nature, the theatrical framework can even be superfluous, or at best ornamental, making the form of the speech rather an obstacle. Therefore, before we can relate the second-level fiction and the form of speech, we have to locate the first-level fiction in relation to the form. And if the first-level fiction and the form have any strong relation at all, the former must have called for the latter, for otherwise, the latter will be pointless.

There is nothing about the text to help the reader decide clearly whether the two levels of fiction are vertically or horizontally located. But this is exactly how the text can problematize the reader's decision. The decision makes a decisive difference in the appreciation of the next passage:

> Now it is over. No, we have not dreamt it. Here we really stand, down stage with red faces and no applause; no effect, however simple, no piece of business, however, unimportant, came off; there was not a single aspect of our whole production, not even the huge stuffed bird of happiness, for which a kind word could, however patronisingly, be said. (1976, 340)

The "it" refers to "[o]ur performance—for Ariel and I are, you know this now, just as deeply involved as any of you—which we were obliged, all of us, to go on with and sit through right to the final dissonant chord" (340). The important point is that by putting himself in a parallel position with Ariel—this is why the insertion should not be neglected—the speaker seems to be identifying himself as Caliban, and moreover the audience who are addressed here are also treated as his equals. The latter fact is natural, for "our performance" actually means life metaphorically viewed as a stage. But a question remains as to how Caliban is related to "our performance," if it must always be paraphrased as life when we read it, for have we not learned that Caliban can find himself only in the world of representation?

The question can be reformulated: where is the "I" who is built within the speech? There is no denying that "Caliban to the Audience" is so made that we are listening to someone who is speaking in front of us. As argued above, one way to connect this formal structure of the speech to the context is to consider it subservient to the setting established in the first-level fiction. On the other hand, the metaphorical representation of life as a stage—"our performance"—belongs to fiction at the second level. It is here that the reader's decision about the relationship of the two fictions becomes a key to defining his/her relation to the text as a whole. Reading "our performance" as our life in which "all of us" are participating, the reader is obliged to measure his/her distance toward Caliban who is featured in the performance. Now, if the two levels of fiction are regarded as continuous, the theatrical framework does not have to be the larger frame that contains Caliban as a character. On the contrary, Caliban

can be completely independent of the theater and it is only belatedly that he finds himself speaking in it — recall the speaker's embarrassment at the beginning of the speech. Under this condition, the speech form need no longer be subordinate to the theatrical framework. Thus, when the speaker says that he is "down stage" it can really mean down stage, though the speech itself continues without any outward change in the circumstances.

It is not that the speaker is referring to his own fictitiousness, and thereby foregrounds the theatrical framework: he never says that he is acting Caliban; the theater is not a material reality but has always been fiction. We could persist in considering that "down stage" only exists as part of the reality established in the second-level fiction that includes what the speaker presents as "our performance." But does the awareness of Caliban as a mask clarify the purpose of the metaphorical picture of "our performance"?

Let us consider the nature of "our performance" more closely. If we take "Here we *really* stand" (emphasis added) in isolation, it can mean that we have waken up from the dream offered by the play and are facing the mundane reality. But the preceding sentence openly contradicts this reading by saying that the performance was not a dream. "We" have always stood there, only "we" did not realize it. The essence of the performance is not pretending or imagining: "red faces" indicate that it is physically exacting; "no applause" can mean not only that the audience were not moved by the performance but that there are no audience at all. The performance did not work as a theater business which entertains the audience with illusion.

Even though "our performance" is a metaphor for our quotidian existence, we can hardly read "Now, it is over" as meaning that our life is over, for the moment signals our illumination as to the true nature of living as acting. Then, what is over now? It is our erroneous notion that our acts have effects only in the world of fiction called life, that is to say, that "our performance" consists only of imagining that we are living. What is over is the consciousness that we are only illusions.

It is not that we can lead an authentic life when stripped of illusions. As long as we compare life to stage, illusions are all we have got in our life. Illusions are illusions to the audience who look at the proceedings on the stage as a self-contained world of art. But for actors the world they are involved in is the reality they are living. In a real stage performance an actor pretends to be a character. In the worldly stage we do not have any "original" identity besides the one we are playing the part of. If we were not playing, we would not exist. For actors to be aware of their deeds on the stage as pretending is as good as turning them into members of the audience. We can speak of life as stage but to be aware of life as stage is an entirely different thing. The speaker continues:

> Yet, at this very moment when we do at last see ourselves as we are, neither cosy nor playful, but swaying out on the ultimate wind-whipped cornice that

> overhangs the unabiding void . . . There is nothing to say. There never has been . . . There is no way out. There never was,—it is at this moment that for the first time in our lives we hear, not the sounds which, as born actors, we have hitherto condescended to use as an excellent vehicle for displaying our personalities and looks, but the real Word which is our only *raison d'être*. (340)

As long as living is viewed as acting, we cannot avoid "playing a role." As we have just seen, the "playing" embodies a viewpoint from outside the stage of life. To be "cosy" or "playful" we must have a detached attitude to the role we are given in life. But such a way is explicitly dismissed as "displaying our personalities and looks." It is not that there is an alternative way of acting. We are "born actors" performing on the stage of life from which "There is no way out." If we are not speaking the speeches allotted to us, "There is nothing to say." Pretending or not, we cannot but speak our speech. We are deceived in our feeling that our awareness of our involvement in the action of the drama of life will enable us to speak in more efficient ways than we actually do: "our shame, our fear, our incorrigible staginess, all wish and no resolve, are still, and more intensely than ever, all we have" (340).

We must not forget that it is the metaphor of life as stage that makes it possible for us to speak about life in this way. But where did the metaphor come from? One of the definitions of life as performance goes like this: "the original drama which aroused his [the dramatist's] imitative passion" (339). A drama is written in imitation of life. If we can compare life to a drama in general, it is this resemblance that justifies it. But calling life a species of drama is more than just a comparison. It comprises a reversal of the hierarchy of values through the mirror of the metaphor. In the world beyond the mirror—in this case, the theater in the speech—drama is the tenor, not the vehicle. As the "audience" maintained, the causality on one side of the mirror works in the opposite direction to that on the other side. The causalities concern the way we describe the world. There is a certain way of describing a chain of events on this side of the mirror, and another on the other side, but both are equally legitimate ways of grasping aspects of life. It is not a question of life versus art but one of the contrast between description of life in the way we are daily accustomed to and artistic representation of life. What it means is that a neutral description of our experiences, which is in any case impossible as long as we use the kind of language we have, is not an original of the metaphorical version we meet in the text. If we do not find the text straightforwardly descriptive, it is because we are already familiar with a different linguistic model according to which we think we grasp reality in a more straightforward manner.

The strength of the artistic representation is that it can represent something that cannot be represented through other modes. The speaker refers to his present engagement as something he shares with the dramatist:

> Having learnt his language, I begin to feel something of the serio-comic embarrassment of the dedicated dramatist, who, in representing to you your condition of estrangement from the truth, is doomed to fail the more he succeeds, for the more truthfully he paints the condition, the less clearly can he indicate the truth from which it is estranged, the brighter his revelation of the truth in its order, its justice, its joy, the fainter shows his picture of your actual condition in all its drabness and sham. . . . (339)

The reason why the audience's knowledge of their actual condition is inadequate even if they had it prior to watching the dramatist's picture through another means is that it is without awareness of relationships to the "truth." If there is anything only the dramatist's art can give, it is not necessarily a faithful picture of reality as the audience know it, but a picture of their condition as always in want in relation to the "truth" which they do not possess. But this does not necessarily seem to imply that the "truth" is completely inaccessible. The problem is that the revelation of the "truth" can be positively harmful by the allurement of its picture.

The dramatist must steer clear of the two extremes. What is expected of him is this:

> . . . what else exactly *is* the artistic gift which he is forbidden to hide, if not to make you unforgettably conscious of the ungarnished offended gap between what you so questionably are and what you are commanded without any question to become, of the unqualified No that opposes your every step in any direction? (339)

The line of argument makes it clear that "what you so questionably are" is the condition of estrangement and "what you are commanded without any question to become" is the "truth." But in spite of the terms of the definition, approach to the "truth" is actually forbidden, or at least the dramatist must reinforce the "gap" that lies on the way, which has in fact been "offended," that is, braved by audiences who fetishistically thought that the "truth" in its immediacy could be had.

The point is that art's true service is not to represent the "truth" in perfect order even if it is not quite impossible. References to the state of untruth and the truth must coincide in one picture.[8] This is why "our performance" of the actual condition and "that Wholly Other Life" (340) of the "truth" are both described in terms of the same analogy between life and stage. It helps us infer what the "perfected Work" (340) is like. Even when we have realized the nature of acting, the imperfection of our performance remains as it was. There is no room for improving our acting because the stage of life does not allow us to play our part in any other way than we actually do. "Improving" does not mean getting adept at historionics. The purpose of this analogy is not to give the "perfected Work" a symbol. We are not talking about whether the "perfected Work" is mentionable or representable, because the "Work" is already a representation as much as our stage of life is. If what the

"Work" is supposed to refer to is beyond the reach of speech, so our life must be, for neither would be quotable without the analogy in question. Representation here does not mean realistic representation or adequate symbolization, but provisional formulation. But it is not the reason why we should not make use of artistic representation.

Thus what is important in appreciating artistic representation is not an awareness of its artistry but the workability of the picture. If it is possible for Caliban to exceed the theatrical framework, it is not because as a principle of reality he is aloof from the world of art, but because as an artistic representation he lays bare the force of art.

Notes

1. Replogle, for example, concedes that "the separate remarks about life and human nature in most speeches can be understood without a Kierkegaardian gloss," but argues after all that such a reading "will yield a similar, though *small*, message" (1969, 76; emphasis added).

2. It was shortly before the composition of *The Sea and the Mirror* that Auden "found" and was engaged in studying Kierkegaard. See Carpenter 1982, 285. Carpenter also records some facts about the composition of "Caliban to the Audience," which testify to its special status and may justify discussing it separately from the rest of *The Sea and the Mirror* (325-28).

3. There are so many critics who take the trouble to name James without developing any further argument that McDiarmid feels a need to account for the appropriateness of doing so (1990, 32).

4. For instances of critical attempts at rationalization of this contradiction, see Bahlke 1970, 109 and McDowell 1964, 145.

5. But Auden's reading of *The Tempest* is not particularly extraordinary. As to his response to Caliban, Orgel argues:

> [T]he view of Caliban as a familiar European wild man or wodewose is symptomatic of a widespread critical attempt that is prompted by the play itself, to humanize and domesticate Caliban, to rescue him from Prospero's view of him—to succeed with him where Prospero has failed. Auden was responding to the same impulse when, in *The Sea and the Mirror*, he made Caliban the embodiment of suffering humanity. (1987, 26)

While Auden seems to think his own Caliban is an allegorical figure, he reads the character in *The Tempest* not in terms of its functional role in the picture of harmony that the play aims at presenting, but more as a realistic character ideologically endowed with an aesthetic appeal.

6. Auden is quoted as saying that *The Sea and the Mirror* is "really about the Christian conception of Art" (Carpenter 1982, 325).

7. Without regard to what the mood of a sentence actually is, Auden says that "most verbal statements are in the subjunctive mood" (1984, 80). What it means is that language establishes a logical world of its own without referential relationships with the world of objects.

8. Read in a Kierkegaardian context the truth must mean religious truth, but the simultaneous presence of truth and untruth reminds one strongly of Heidegger's analysis of art (Heidegger 1993). Auden was probably ignorant of this particular part of Heidegger's thought, but what the resemblance in their views shows is that Auden's analysis is basically existentialist rather than Christian if we ask which aspects of the two he inherited more from Kierdegaard.

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