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Creative Imagination in Joyce Cary's Trilogies

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Abstract

CREATIVE IMAGINATION IN JOYCE CARY'S TRILOGIES

by E. Christian

This thesis describes Joyce Cary's theories of creative imagination and how the characters in his two trilogies reflect those theories. To Cary, creative imagination is essential for society's improvement. He believes that everyone--not just artists and writers--can have creative imagination, and in his novels he shows the results of living with and without it.

Joyce Cary was born in 1888, in Ireland. His mother died when he was nine, but his close-knit family gave him the security he needed to develop his creativity. As a boy he voraciously read adventure stories and led a gang. Throughout his life he dealt creatively with his problems. In public school, weak from previously poor health, he won his classmates' favor by telling them stories and forcing himself to master swimming, football, and boxing. At seventeen he went to Paris to study art. Unable to concentrate there he moved to Edinburgh, where he studied for two years before realizing that he lacked genius as a painter. Deciding to become a writer, he published a collection of poems, then went to Oxford, where he graduated in Law with the lowest possible passing score, because he was more interested in discussing philosophy and writing poetry than in reading law. Seeking book material, he joined the Montenegrin Red Cross

in 1912, and served in the Balkan War. Back in England the next year, he joined the Nigerian Service, arriving in Nigeria shortly before the beginning of World War I. In Africa Cary's creative imagination flowered as he worked to help the natives build roads and bridges, and encouraged traders to enter his district. He also began many novels, which he could not complete for philosophical reasons. During a furlough in 1915 Cary married Gertie Ogilvie, and by 1919, when he left the service, they had two boys, and soon doubled that number. On selling three stories to the Saturday Evening Post Cary leased a house in Oxford, but the Post's editors came to think his work too literary, and he found himself unemployed. The next twelve years were spent reading philosophy, religion, and history in the Bodleian Library, and honing his writing techniques. In his last twenty-five years Cary completed sixteen novels dealing with Africa, childhood, art, politics, religion, and women. He also published many essays and several non-fictional books. He died in 1957, at the age of sixty-eight.

Creative imagination for Joyce Cary includes not only the sudden perception of objective reality which he calls intuition but the final realization, when the intuition is successfully communicated. He believes that the creator must work from a base of moral and philosophical certainty if he is to be successful. Meaning for Cary is communicated through symbols having the same associations for both writer and reader.

Cary's two trilogies contain some of his best work. By adopting the trilogy form, with a different speaker in each book, Cary shows the subjectiveness of the individual viewpoint, and the difficulty of knowing objective reality.

In the first trilogy, centered upon an artist, the three major characters each show attributes necessary for the successful use of the creative imagination, but none of them are fully creative. Sara Monday, in Herself Surprised (1941), shows a strong sense of duty and the drive to complete projects but is apathetic and ambivalent, unable to make choices. Thomas Wilcher, in To Be a Pilgrim (1942), reveals a sense of tradition which the creative person must have if his intuitions are to be philosophically sound but is so bound to his traditions that he is unable to grow, although he longs to live a life of creative imagination, "to be a pilgrim." Gulley Jimson, hero of The Horse's Mouth (1944), receives strong intuitions but seldom completes the creative process by finishing his paintings. Thus, none of the major characters of the first trilogy are completely creative in ways that Cary would consider acceptable. The most creative person in the first trilogy is Wilcher's nephew Robert, who, although he destroys good things because of his lack of a sense of tradition, has strong intuitions which he successfully realizes.

In the second trilogy Cary writes about creativity in politics. Although he deplores dishonesty, he believes that the truly creative politician will do anything necessary to stay in power, because he has an intuition of how society should develop, and only if he is in power can he realize his vision. Prisoner of Grace (1952) is narrated by Nina, wife of the other two major characters. Nina fears reality and cannot make decisions, and thus cannot be creative. In Not Honour More (1955), Jim Latter, bound to honor as a form of security, is kept from creativity by his inflexibility and lack of imagination. Chester Nimmo, the poli-

tician in Except the Lord (1953), although highly creative, manipulating both people and government to realize his intuitions, is flawed by his lack of honor and reliance on expedience.

Cary successfully shows, in these trilogies, many qualities of creativity, and the value of creative imagination in one's life.

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Each person whose signature appears below certifies that this thesis is, in his opinion, adequate in scope and quality as a thesis for the degree Master of Arts.

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1

An Introduction to Joyce Cary

In the twenty-five years between 1932 and his death in 1957, Joyce Cary completed sixteen novels, ranging from competent to brilliant. Although he had a relatively large audience during his lifetime, he was usually misunderstood by the critics, and only since his death has he begun to receive the critical attention he deserves. A deliberate craftsman, Cary would discard manuscripts if he felt they raised philosophical questions which he could not answer, and spent years honing his technique before publishing his first book. He left nothing to chance, and his novels reflect in their perfection his success in the struggle to fit his intuitions into forms which would do justice to them. These forms reach their maturity in the two trilogies which are the subject of this study.

The dominant theme of Cary's novels is the necessity of creative imagination. In a forward to Cary's Selected Essays, Dame Helen Gardner mentions that Cary talked constantly of "the creative imagination as the fundamental human faculty by which man shapes and changes his world."[1] Every one of Cary's novels present situations in which the characters must use their imaginations if they are to succeed. And to use the imagination is not enough: in order to be truly creative they must carry

[1]Ed. A. G. Bishop (London: Michael Joseph, 1976), p. viii.

their ideas through, reach conclusions, come up with finished products, such as roads and bridges in Mister Johnson, peace treaties and progress in An American Visitor, finished paintings in The Horse's Mouth, and solved political crises in Prisoner of Grace. Of the creative imagination Walter Allen writes:

> Cary is its novelist and its celebrant. His characters are impelled by fantasies personal in the deepest sense, unique to each one of them, which must be translated into action. Life about them is, as it were, so much raw material that must be shaped according to their fantasies, which are never seen as fantasies because they are so fundamental to the characters who are moved by them. And the shaping fantasy, creative imagination, is something belonging to man by virtue of his being man.[2]

In his introduction to Cock Jarvis, an early unfinished Cary manuscript, editor A. G. Bishop identifies "the Cary man, a man . . . who lives by his shaping imagination and who, because of this, is condemned owing to the inevitable clash with the shaping imaginations of others, including that which has become public or official opinion."[3] This is a theme found throughout Cary's books. There is constant conflict, both inside "the Cary man" and between himself and others, the conflict between the need for tradition and security and the need to create one's own world.

When looking at Cary's life, novels, and theories, it is important to remember that creative imagination can take different forms. For the artist or writer the intuition is a perception of objective reality which

[2]Joyce Cary (London: Longmans, Green, 1954), p. 9.

[3]London: Michael Joseph, 1974, p. ix.

must be communicated, and the creative process is the struggle to realize the intuition, to work toward art. With other people the intuition and the creative process may be less evident. Cary believes, however, that everyone can be creative, and shows the results of creative imagination, or the lack of it, in his novels. Sometimes creative imagination is based on a general intuition of how life could be, but at other times it is more specific: an intuition of how a problem or crisis can be solved, and the solution of the problem by realization of the intuition.

The importance of the creativity theme in Cary's novels is due to the importance of creativity in his own life. From childhood, Cary reveled in the joys and terrors of creativity, and his interest in the creative process remained with him until his death. Joyce Cary was, himself, a "Cary man." In a memorial in the London Times shortly after Cary's death, his close friend Lord David Cecil wrote:

> But the man was as memorable as his work. He made a picturesque and exhilarating first impression. His elegant, virile handsomeness, his racy, vivid, appreciative talk, and something at once heroic and debonair in his whole personality, suggested a gentleman rider in the race of life, risking his skin for sport rather than for a prize, and looking on every crisis of existence as a hurdle to be surmounted gaily and gallantly, however many bruises and spills might be incurred in the process. This was a true impression but a partial one. The gentleman rider was also a sage and a saint.[4]

Arthur Joyce Lunel Cary, who came to be called by his mother's maiden name, Joyce, was born in Londonderry, Ireland, on the 7th of

[4]N.d., rpt. Malcolm Foster, Joyce Cary: A Biography (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1968), p. 520.

December, 1888,[5] into an old family of English origin, which had owned land in Northern Ireland for hundreds of years. Although the Carys were considered good landlords, who lived on their land and were kind to their tenants, they were ruined by the Irish Land Act of 1882, which erased the back rent owed by tenants, thus leaving destitute those landlords who had failed to eject tenants for non-payment of rent.

Cary moved with his immediate family to London, where his father found work as an engineer. There were many Cary relatives living nearby, and many more to visit in Ireland, and they were a closely knit family. This seems to have provided Joyce with the security which he later recognized as a requisite to the type of creative work at which he came to excel.

> To us from earliest childhood, in England or Ireland, the fundamental injustice and instability of things, the cruelty of blind fate, was as natural as the air we breathed, and I think now, probably as important to our health. Cromwell House and the Irish households of my various relations had a sense of life, both older and more modern than that of our English cousins. We lived more intensely, and we set a far higher value on what we had of secure happiness. We were more eager in our attachments. We knew, more consciously than other children, what family affection meant, as the one trustworthy thing among so many treacheries.[6]

As an adult, he recalled the joy of discovery he had felt as a child, at bringing order to the chaos around him:

> Children's pleasure in exploring the world, long before they can speak, is very obvious. They spend almost all their time

[5]Unless otherwise noted, all biographical data are taken from Malcolm Foster, Joyce Cary: A Biography (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1968).

[6]Joyce Cary, "Cromwell House," New Yorker (3 November 1956), pp. 45-52, 54, 56, 58, 61, 64, 67, rpt. Cary, Selected Essays, p. 64.

> at it. We don't speak of their intuition, but it is the same thing as the intuition of the artist. That is to say, it is direct knowledge of the world as it is, direct acquaintance with things, with characters, with appearance, and this is the primary knowledge of the artist and writer. This joy of discovery is his starting point.[7]

Cary had rather weak lungs when small, and so was kept in bed frequently. He came to love books, especially adventure and fantasy stories, which probably encouraged his creativity, by showing him routes in which his imagination could travel.

Cary's mother died when he was nine. This was a hard blow for the boy and his younger brother. A young aunt came to live with them, and they took more frequent trips to Ireland. Cary's imagination, even at that young age, was fertile. When he was not reading adventure stories, he was leading a pack of boys across the countryside. A favorite activity was acting in plays, the dialogue invented extempore. Cary and his friends thought themselves quite good until they saw a real play, and realized just how bad they were. He later wrote about the profitability of preserving such juvenile creativity, which might be destroyed by education:

> I doubt if young genius, if the child's intuition, is worth preserving. Child art is charming, and original, but it is very small art. . . . Child art can never be great art. It cannot give any large meaning to the world, any new revelation of the truth, because the child mind cannot have enough knowledge and experience of the world to form any true comprehensive ideas about it. So if we are to have any great painters, any great writers, there has to be education, and that education will have to be largely conceptual, and so destructive of the original intuitive power.[8]

[7] Art and Reality (Cambridge: University Press, 1958), p. 2.

[8] Art and Reality, pp. 50-51.

Joyce Cary, with his younger brother Jack, was educated at English public schools. In 1903 Joyce finished primary school and went off to Clifton College, a secondary school near Bristol. There he discovered that he was very much out of place. His poor eyesight and somewhat fragile health had kept his interest in organized sports weak, and Clifton was highly sports oriented. Rather than developing an inferiority complex or withdrawing into himself, however, he began telling the other boys stories, and was soon established as a great teller of tales, in nightly installments. This ability to invent stories was to stay with him throughout his life. Several boys took him in hand and taught him to play football. He also improved his swimming, and even took up boxing, in which, he later wrote, "the great thing was to have lots of blood and I was a great bleeder."[9] As he was to do throughout his life, Cary chose, as Hamlet would say, "to take arms against a sea of troubles,/ and by opposing, end them." This was a creative solution.

In his fifteenth summer Cary went with an older female cousin on a sketching trip to France. There he became wildly enthusiastic about impressionism, which was not yet popular in England. He also had an experience which he was to write about many times in essays, and even make a central incident in the life of the artist-hero of The Horse's Mouth. He met an old painter, once very popular, who was no longer stylish, and complained bitterly about the terrible painting currently popular, which was keeping him from feeding his family. At the time

[9]"Cheerful Protestant," Time (20 October 1952), rpt. in Foster, pp. 31-32.

young Cary had little sympathy for the man, and wondered how the painter could possibly think his own jaded romantic style superior to impressionism. Later, though, Cary realized that the painter's problem was due to a failure of creative imagination which afflicted most of humanity. Having settled on one style, the man had failed to grow, had shut his mind off from new ways of seeing. Had he been in a position of power, he would have also tried to prevent any such discoveries by others and to repress new work in favor of what was "right." Cary himself refused throughout his life to give up, to stop learning, to stop searching for new solutions and new ways of seeing.

On finishing at Clifton, Cary, then seventeen, talked his father into letting him study art in Paris. He had won school prizes for his drawings and believed that with training he could become an artist of note. He was an intelligent boy with creative potential, and eager to test his capabilities.

Paris in 1906 was a heady experience for a young artist-in-training. Picasso, Braque, and Matisse were there, shaking the art world. Paris was cheap, fun, and invigorating. To the beginner, however, it was not conducive to serious study, and Cary found himself spending more time on the beach and in the cafés than in front of an easel with brush in hand.

The next year he was talked into going to Edinburgh, where he could get a better grounding in the basics of drawing. He was smart enough to recognize that before he could set his individuality free he must master the techniques of those before him. By the time Cary had spent two years in Scotland studying the basics, he knew he lacked the special genius

required of the first rate artist.

Although Cary found that he could not realize his intuitions with a brush, he believed that he could with a pen and he determined to become a writer. He published a slim book of very bad verse, influenced by Celtic romance, the Cavalier poets, and William Blake, which impressed his father and friends a great deal. Feeling the need for a better literary background to draw from, he went to Oxford, where he did not do well. As in Paris, too much time was spent talking, and not enough studying, and he finished the year with a class four degree, the lowest possible passing grade.

Shamed, Cary decided to redeem himself, and gather material for a novel at the same time, by joining the Montenegrin Red Cross during the Balkan War which began in 1912. This was good experience for him, forcing him to use his imagination as he tried to help wounded soldiers on the front lines with limited supplies. He found himself doing everything from "borrowing" food, water, and bandages from peasants to amputating mangled limbs. However, Cary found that war was not fun, and he returned home in the middle of 1913. The Balkan War also failed to inspire him as much as he had hoped it would, although he wrote a book about his experiences which was published after his death.[10]

Later in 1913, desperate to prove himself to his family and the girl he was later to marry, he enlisted in the Nigerian service. He had not yet made a success of himself in any of his aborted careers, but each

[10]Memoirs of the Bobotes, ed. James B. Meriwether (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1962), rpt. (London: Michael Joseph, 1964).

of them had taught him something which would be useful in Nigeria. His art studies would help him draw accurate maps. His work in Montenegro had trained him in first aid and accustomed him to doing without some of the amenities of life. He had spent time studying agriculture and administration and had learned to write clearly. Now, at twenty-five, it was time for him to make something of himself and hold down a steady job.

At that time, recruits to the Nigerian Service received very little training before assuming their responsibilities. Cary was rushed into the bush as soon as he landed in Lagos, and left temporarily in charge of a large area. Even today, judging from my own experience, most of the rural population of Africa is more civilized in appearance than in actuality. Like small children, many of the people are quick to imitate, but, until they have had prolonged contact with education, they are slow to understand mechanisms and principles, or the reasons for actions. One need not walk far from a main road to find children who have never seen a white man. The situation was much worse in 1914. At the top level, the Muslim ruling class, Cary had to deal with the ever present African corruption, which, because of the leaders' greed, threatened to destroy the benefits to the people Cary was working so hard to help. The common people themselves were even harder to deal with. They were a people without imagination: passively accepting as their lot hard work, poor crops, starvation, and sickness. For a thousand years they had not changed, had made no attempt to improve their life, had invented nothing. Rather than take direct action, they prayed and sacrificed so their gods would act for them.

Cary felt that this passivity was due to their environment rather than to a lack of intelligence. In order to solve a problem, it was necessary to believe that the problem could be solved. As the natives were not aware that anyone else had solved problems such as they had, they never dreamed that their own problems could be solved. For example, as they had never seen a bridge, their reaction to a flooding river was to wait for it to subside or to risk being drowned.

Another environmental reason for their lack of creativity was that they seldom thought. They loved to look, and to speculate, but logical thought was rare. Cary believed he had found the reason for this when, wounded during an Army campaign in the Cameroons and forced to march four hundred miles, he had noticed that the combination of monotonous landscape and great exertion had left him relatively healthy, but too tired to think. He theorized that the combination of poor food, sickness, hard work, and monotonous landscape kept the people in such a state that they lacked the mental energy required for logical thought.

His theory seemed proven when boys sent to school returned able to read, write, and, what was more, think and solve problems. Given the chance, they had often developed into creative people.

In Africa, Cary began to see that change was a stimulus necessary for existence. As Foster writes:

> He believed that change was good when old institutions had proved themselves empty or impotent. So long as they were vital, they possessed capacity for good. When they lost their vitality they became stultifying shells, keeping out light and air and life. They crippled people. Yet, inevitably, some people would have vested interests in them, and even more, many would still believe in them not necessarily

> because of vested interests but simply because they were used to these dying institutions; they had been raised among them and their familiarity was reassuring.[11]

World War I broke out shortly after Cary arrived in Nigeria, and he was nearly killed while fighting the Germans in the Cameroons. After recovering in England from his war wound, Cary was put in charge of Borgu territory, the wildest in Nigeria. The closest European was many miles away, and the only means of communication with his superiors was by runner. Unlike those District Officers who were connected to their headquarters by telegraph, Cary was given permission to act as he saw fit, without first clearing his actions. This made him a virtual despot, howbeit benevolent, and gave him more freedom to deal with his situation creatively than he would have had in a more civilized district.

> I saw how lucky I was in an exile that made me my own master. Just because Borgu was remote and cut off, just because I had no wire, I had been given free leave to make quick decisions, in fact to do what I liked. And there was always interesting and practical work at hand, mapping, road-making, bridge-building, the founding of markets and towns, the training of native staff; work I preferred very much to the endless minute writing and form filling of a big station in a rich province.[12]

One of Cary's duties at Borgu was to judge the more important cases, such as witchcraft, kidnapping, political corruption, and murder. Witchcraft trials demanded special understanding, because the majority of the natives were pagan and firmly believed in juju. The judge had to be a teacher too, gradually weaning the people from their superstitions.

[11] Joyce Cary: A Biography, pp. 123-124.

[12] Joyce Cary, "Christmas in Africa," Esquire XL (December, 1953), pp. 101, 208, rpt. Cary, Selected Essays, pp. 94-95.

Cary learned to deal creatively with the legal system. At one time he was having a difficult time controlling the wives of some soldiers temporarily stationed in his area, so he appointed some of the wives as a police force, to catch women who fought and stole and drag them to him. These policewomen turned out to be more useful and vigilant than the regular police force. Reliable information was rare, because only the leaders dared make accusations, and they were so corrupt that they each told conflicting stories. So Cary took to sleeping out in the bush under a mosquito net. There people able to control their fear of ghosts in the night could speak to him unafraid that they would be found out and punished by their corrupt leaders.

At the time Cary was in Nigeria the usual attitude of the British in Africa was indifference. The typical district officer was much more fond of playing polo and drinking gin than in helping the Nigerians. There were a few officers, however, known as "pagan men," who brought their creative imaginations to bear on the problems of the people they were supposed to serve. Cary was one of them. He was fond of "his people," in a paternalistic way. He saw the virtue of some of their traditions, but he knew that to survive they would have to change, and he determined to help them. Education was something they seriously needed, but which he was not in a position to give. He could bring them new ideas though and new sources of income by encouraging trade. To do this he began building bridges and roads, using his own money in many cases and native manpower. Workers were not always easy to get. The natives would work only if the Emir, their Muslim leader, told them

to, and the Emir was afraid that if the traders came, his power would be decreased. Even when the Emir ordered his people to work, they were not enthusiastic about it at first. They could see no need for roads and bridges. They had never had them before, so why then? Even more difficult to understand was why roads had to be higher in the middle than on the sides and have ditches beside them.

The natives were less against roads, however, when the traders began using them, bringing things which seemed new and marvelous: tools and cloth and cooking utensils. They began to see that their immediate area was not the cradle of civilization, nor did it hold most of the world's population. People could walk farther in a day on the new roads than they could in a week by the old, twisting paths. The bridges were of special value during the rainy season, when it was common for many to drown in the flooded rivers. Before long, traders were travelling miles out of their way to use the roads and bridges of Borgu. To encourage them further, Cary had little hostels built at points along the road, where traders could, for a small price, sleep without fear of bandits or wild animals.

Joyce Cary did not spend all his time in Africa judging people and building roads. He also devoted a great deal of time to his writing. This was an apprenticeship of sorts, as he learned to handle themes and characters, viewpoint and perspective. From the beginning Cary wrote in a distinctive way. He would first write sketches of characters, then possible major scenes, and finally fill in the gaps. One of the most perceptive of the critics writing before Cary's death, Walter Allen, has

noted that while most of the great writers of this century have written from a subjective viewpoint, Cary succeeded, like Shakespeare, in submerging his own identity as an author and seemingly _becoming_ the character.

While in Africa Cary started at least ten novels but finished none of them. He knew enough about literature (his favorite writers were Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky, Hardy, Conrad, and Joyce) to know that he was not writing it. Worse books were being published, but Cary was very serious about his craft and refused to publish a book until he was satisfied with it. In fact, he burned all but two of his novels before leaving Africa.

Stories were a different thing, though. In 1919 Cary sold three "pot-boiling" stories to the _Saturday Evening Post_, which paid him more for them than he earned from a whole year of work in Nigeria. Believing that he would now be able to support his family by writing (he had a wife and children by that time), he quit the Nigerian Service and leased a house in Oxford, where he was to live for the rest of his life.

It was not yet time, however, for him to live on his writing. He managed to sell about a dozen stories, but the pot was boiling less and less, and finally the _Post_ editors stopped buying, because his stories were becoming too literary for the _Post_ readers.

Cary was glad to be free to write what he wished, but he missed the money. For the next twelve years, until 1932, he published nothing. He and his family scraped by on savings and inheritances. In the meanwhile, Cary kept on writing, perfecting his art. He developed a very clear,

simple style, which moved quickly.

During much of this time he worked on a novel about a very vital man in Africa, called Cock Jarvis. The book, including revisions, finally reached a half million words. But Cary was not satisfied, and never published it. It finally came out in 1974, however, edited by A. G. Bishop. Sections of the novel were very good, but there was something wrong. It didn't have the solid feeling which a good novel should have. As Cary came to realize:

> All writers have, and must have, to compose any kind of story, some picture of the world, and of what is right and wrong in that world. And the great writers are obsessed with their theme. They're sure they're right, and their message would save the world.[13]

But Cary did not have such a world view at that time. He was still searching for something he could believe in, forming his ideas. As he wrote:

> The writer . . . has to find some meaning in life before he gives it to us in a book. . . . Everyone, not only the writer, is presented with the same chaos, and is obliged to form his own idea of the world, of what matters and what doesn't matter. He has to do it, from earliest childhood, for his own safety. And if he gets it wrong, if his idea does not accord with reality, he will suffer for it.[14]

Bit by bit, Cary made up his mind. He read a great deal of history and philosophy at the Bodleian Library, which was close to his home. He thought. And he saw continually more clearly the importance of freedom, the freedom to use creative imagination, to create one's own world. He

[13] Art and Reality, p. 158.

[14] Art and Reality, p. 5.

saw the necessity of tradition, of a stable base on which to build, of security and love. And finally, although as an adult he never joined a church, he saw the need for God, the greatest security, the greatest ordering principle of the universal chaos. By the time Cary had discovered these things, he was in his forties and ready to begin his career as a novelist.

Cary's novels can be divided into six subject areas: Africa, children, art, politics, women, and religion. His first five novels were all attempts to come to terms with his experiences in Africa, to bring order to his chaotic impressions, and to work out his ideas. The first, Aissa Saved (1932), dissected the African mind, with special attention to its perception of religion. Cary once wrote that "We judge the value of the work finally by its revelation of a moral real. The power and quality of the artist's craft is in the force and authority of its revelation."[15] Cary's books were powerful, because they had that force and authority. They had it because he had worked hard, not only on his style, but on his beliefs. This is not to say that Cary's novels were didactic: nowhere in his books did he preach. He revised each book carefully, excising passages which emphasized a moral. He wrote that he would rather be thought slightly obscure and disorganized than too obvious.

Cary's second book, An American Visitor (1933), looked at different European views on how the Africans should be introduced to the 20th

[15] Art and Reality, p. 150.

Century: not at all, a bit at a time, or all at once. The African Witch (1936), looked at many things, but dealt chiefly with the lack of communication between the English and the Nigerians. Castle Corner (1938), although only partly about Africa, introduced to print the character Cary had been struggling with for fifteen years: Cock Jarvis. The final and best African novel was Mister Johnson (1939), which looked at creative imagination and the African who adopts English ways. In all of these books Cary stressed the necessity of creative imagination, by contrasting creative characters, both English and African, with non-creative characters.

Castle Corner dealt more with childhood than Africa. Many of the incidents were based on Cary's memories of his own childhood, as they were in A House of Children (1941). Again Cary was trying to deal creatively with his experiences. Charley Is My Darling (1940), about a juvenile delinquent aspiring to be an artist, examined the creative imagination in children, and how it could be turned toward the bad or the good.

Cary was very interested in art, where the creative imagination was most readily observed, and this was the topic of his first trilogy. The first book, Herself Surprised (1941), looked at an artist from a non-artistic, but sympathetic viewpoint; the second, To Be a Pilgrim (1942), showed a man who was the opposite of the artist, and afraid to be creative; and in The Horse's Mouth (1944), the artist told his own chaotic story.

For his second trilogy, Cary decided to take a look at politics. During his years in Africa, he had discovered that "a man in real

responsibility for other people's lives and happiness has no scruples about dignity,"[16] and he wanted to explain the creative aspects of politics. As in his first trilogy, the first book, Prisoner of Grace (1952), had for its speaker the wife and lover of the central characters of the other two books. The second book, Except the Lord (1953), looked at the politician's childhood, and the last, Not Honour More (1955), saw him from a conservative, tradition-bound viewpoint.

Between the trilogies came The Moonlight (1946), a reaction against Tolstoy's Kreutzer Sonata which dealt with women as Cary believed them to really be; and A Fearful Joy (1949), about a female counterpart to the hero of the first trilogy. In Cary's final novel, The Captive and the Free (1959), he looked at the virtue and necessity of religion. The book was originally meant to be a trilogy, but, because of rapidly encroaching paralysis, Cary had to settle for a single volume.

Besides his novels, Cary wrote a number of essays in his last decade, on Africa, childhood, writing, and other subjects. In his last few months he put together a series of influential lectures on his theories, published as Art and Reality (1958), in which he emphasized the need for a combination of creative imagination and moral certainty and concern in the writer.

Cary died on March 29, 1957, at the age of sixty-eight. Before his death he completed sixteen novels, in all of which he looked at some form of creative imagination, that impetus to life and major theme in

[16]"Africa Yesterday: One Ruler's Burden," Reporter (15 May 1951), pp. 21-24, rpt. Cary, Selected Essays, p. 87.

his work. His life embodied his belief in the free and creative mind, and his work remains to inspire others.

Chapter 2

Cary's Theory of Creative Imagination

Throughout his life Joyce Cary was fascinated by creative imagination, the "fearful joy" of sudden intuition, the struggle to find a form which could accurately present that intuition. From childhood he was overwhelmed by ideas, by new ways of seeing, but not until he was forty was he able to communicate those intuitions effectively. He came to think creative imagination one of the most important things in life, and in his last decade he set about writing essays to explain his belief. The most important of these are available in Art and Reality,[1] Selected Essays,[2] and the prefaces he wrote for the Carfax Edition of his novels.[3]

Before examining Cary's theories, it might be useful to look at the sources of his ideas. For someone as well read in philosophy as Cary was, he wrote very little about what he read: he is not a philosophical writer so much as a writer who knows that he believes. Neither was his style affected: his writing is never ponderous or obscure, like so many of the philosophers he was acquainted with. One is left to determine his

[1]Cambridge: University Press, 1958. This book comprises six lectures which Cary was prevented from giving at Cambridge by ill health. All further references to this work appear in the text.

[2]Ed. A. G. Bishop (London: Michael Joseph, 1976).

[3]The Carfax Edition, the first volumes of which were published in 1952, is now accepted as the standard edition of Cary's novels.

sources by comparing his theories with those of his predecessors. On doing this, one discovers that he was influenced in some way by many philosophers, although, in most cases, he probably assimilated their ideas unconsciously, as they happened to fit into the order his mind was giving the universe.

Cary agrees with Plato that there is a permanent, enduring reality, that the highest knowledge is absolute, and reached only by intuition. Locke holds that the world is not directly presented to our senses, but represented by them. Cary also sees this and claims that the purpose of art is to go beyond the senses, to present rather than represent reality. For Kant, experience cannot qualify as knowledge until the mind has brought order to it and given it meaning. Cary sees the creative imagination as a means of bringing order to the chaos of life. He also seems, at times, to agree with Thomas Aquinas that ideas enter the unconscious from God.

Cary has little sympathy with the psychoanalytic theories of creation. He would not agree with Freud that creation is essentially wish-fulfillment. Neither would he agree with Jung that intuition is really connection with a theme which has recurred throughout history, rather than a perception of objective reality.

The philosophers who most influenced Cary were Henri Bergson and Benedetto Croce. Bergson was especially influential when Cary was at Oxford, and, as he spent much of his time reading philosophy, it is not surprising that his own theories draw heavily on Bergson. It is interesting that at the time Cary was studying philosophy at Oxford, T. S.

Eliot was studying Bergson at the Sorbonne. Bergson believes, in a different way than those philosophers before him, that there are two kinds of knowledge: relative and absolute. Whereas relative knowledge is gained through symbols, abolsute knowledge is non-verbal, immediate and direct. It is discovered by intuition. Cary enlarged this by applying it to the creative process. Cary also echoes another Bergson belief, that life is an upward, creative movement.

Croce also distinguishes between two forms of knowledge: intuitive, imaginative knowledge, and logical, intellectual knowledge. Cary uses this in Art and Reality, stressing the need for conceptual knowledge as a foundation on which to build intuition. There are differences, however. Where to Croce the important thing is the intuition, to Cary it is the expression of the intuition, for only when correctly expressed is the intuition valuable (Art, p. 26). Croce says that all expression is beautiful, but Cary says that the ugly must also be portrayed and is beautiful only in its necessity to the complete work of art (Art, p. 19). Croce believes that the intuition and the expression are identically true, but to Cary it is only with great difficulty that the expression can fully realize the intuition (Art, pp. 26, 29).

For Cary, creative imagination implies more than just a novel idea. It is a process extending from vision to final revision, from idea to finished product, from intuition to realization. A new medical cure is useless unless it saves lives. A better mousetrap threatens no mice unless it is marketed. Paintings never painted and books never written are not art.

The first step in Cary's theory of creative imagination is intuition. But intuition of what? Cary, like Plato, sees reality as "a world of permanent and objective forms" (Art, pp. 29, 30). Objects may not be what they seem, but they are what they are. A hammer may be seen as a tool, a weapon, a work of art, or pieces of wood and metal, but its real, objective composition is not altered, no matter what name it is given. Many names are given, however, because man cannot look at objects objectively. Because his pattern of thinking is a product of his environment, he always sees reality from a subjective viewpoint. Intuition occurs when a man breaks away from his customary thought patterns and sees an object in a new way, sees in fact, if the intuition is true, an objective, truthful aspect of that object which he had not before observed. This may be only to notice texture in what had seemed a blank, white wall, or the fur on a moth. It may be the sudden perception of a shade of green, or a facet of character. Because of man's essential subjectivity, his intuition can never encompass every aspect of an object, and this accounts for the variation in art. It was possible for both Michaelangelo and Picasso to have true intuitions of the human body, although they chose to communicate different aspects of that truth. It is well that they did, because the artist or author's first duty is coherence, and truth is so complex that it must be simplified if it is to be coherent (Art, p. 116).

Intuition, for Cary, is the primary knowledge of the artist. As he wrote, speaking of intuition: "there is an underlying reality which will always inform the final judgement. . . . great art is always an expres-

sion of a fundamental character in things."[4] Intuition always comes as a discovery, a surprise. There are things which may be done to help it come, such as avoiding prejudiced opinions on what the objective form of an object is and holding oneself in a receptive frame of mind by thought and study, but it cannot be forced to come. There is a feeling of directness when an intuition comes, of connection with reality, with truth, which is perhaps why the Greeks sometimes called the poet vates, or "seer." With an intuition there is also a sudden sense of seeing in a way one has never seen before (Art, p. 1). "Knowledge by intuition is like a flash between two electric poles. It is only after it has taken place that the mind asks, 'What has happened to me?'" (Art, p. 15). This sense of discovery, this "ah ha!" experience, can be felt not only by the artist, but by his audience if he communicates the feeling successfully, and such communication is his purpose as an artist.

An Essential part of Cary's theory is that anyone can practice creative imagination. Creativity is not confined to artists and scientists. Intuition, this sense of direct discovery, occurs to everyone, although such a discovery is not usually thought of as creativity. Any method based on an intuition which successfully solves a problem shows relative imagination. To be cut off from intuition, Cary feels, is to be cut off from the reality of life (Art, p. 25). This is especially true of the artist, for while the average person can live a non-creative life without

[4]Joyce Cary, The Horse's Mouth (1944; rpt. Carfax Edition, London: Michael Joseph, 1951), p. 9.

really being aware of his loss, the artist, being as it were addicted to the creative moment, recognizes its abscence, and this may explain why so many writers avoid anything which may disconnect their creative flow, and sometimes become depressed to the point of suicide if intuitions stop coming.

Although everyone experiences intuitions at times, this is not to say that they all receive the same intuitions, perceive the same aspect of a truth. The intuitions one receives and the use one makes of them depends to a large extent on one's environment and one's knowledge. It is a mistake to think of intuition as the sudden perception of a complete, finished idea, of a work of art. Intuition comes relatively easily, but turning the vision into something which can be shared is very hard work (Art, pp. 2, 3). The intuition for a writer is often only a symbol, a title, an opening sentence, even just a feeling the writer wants to communicate, such as melancholy or fear. From this basic intuition the writer must develop his story, discover the form inherent in his intuition. To turn the intuition into art, the writer must invest a setting, characters, a plot, and in the end, if it is art, the reader must say "Yes, I now understand the truth more completely."

Cary wrote that "The passage from intuition to reflection, from knowledge of the real to expression of that knowledge in viable form" is a translation "from the receptive into the creative, from the purely sensuous impression into the purely reflective and critical act" (Art, p. 27). When the writer receives an intuition he must be in a receptive, passive state, his mind quiet and clear. He cannot force an intuition

to come, although he can hold it back, prevent it from coming. Receiving an intuition does not require creativity. Only when reflection occurs, when one attempts to put the intuition to use, does one become creative. Such reflection is a critical act because the intuition must be analyzed critically, tested for truth, as must the product of the intuition, for fidelity to its source. Only when the intuition is transformed into a work of art can creativity be of value. The ability to complete a work of art in a lucid, coherent manner is a distinguishing factor between the artist and the often wildly creative lunatic. It is possible to find, in transcripts of schizophrenic soliloquies, passages which seem insightful, but on closer examination are found to be random, accidental, and too incoherent to be considered art.

The transformation into art is not merely the application of brush to canvas, chisel to stone, or pen to paper: it demands educated guesswork and a firm grounding in technique.

> Your form is your meaning, and your meaning dictates the form. But what you try to convey is reality--the fact plus the feeling, a total complex experience of a real world. If you make your scheme too explicit, the framework shows and the book dies. If you hide it too thoroughly, the book has no meaning and therefore no form.[5]

Intuition is "a piece of the real whose whole force is in its objectivity and universal truth. And [the author] has to use his brains to translate the effect of this real into a symbolic form which gives

[5]John Burrow and Alex Hamilton, "An Interview with Joyce Cary," Paris Reivew, II, 7 (Winter 1954-1955), pp. 63-78, rpt. Writers at Work: The Paris Review Interviews, Volume I, ed. Malcolm Cowley (1958; New York: Penguin Books, 1977), p. 55.

the same effect to another person" (Art, p. 30).

Cary sees art as "the means, and almost the only means, by which we can express ourselves in forms of meaning and communicate those meanings to others" (Art, p. 11). This is not to say that all talking is art, but that the communication of intuition is difficult and rare. "Art is creation of meanings for the senses and the sensibility, the whole man. [It transports] us from the mechanical and blind existence of material causation into the world of personal value, of personal achievement, of meaning for action" (Art, p. 147). Art, thus, is the best way to instruct, to guide the development of others. It is the point of contact between people, a common link.

> We are not alone in feeling, in sympathy, but we are alone in mind, and so we are compelled, each of us, to form our own ideas of things, and if we want to convey these ideas and our feelings about them, we have to use art. Only art can convey both the fact and the feeling about the fact, for it works in the medium of common sympathies, common feeling, universal reaction to colour, sound, form. It is the bridge between souls, meaning by that not only men's minds but their character and feeling (Art, p. 9).

If art is so important, then the writer should do everything possible to make his work effective, to make it art. However, great art depends on intuition, on a perception of reality. If few books can be correctly called art it is because few books are based on intuition. "Though writers write from an idea (and, as I have said, everyone, not only writers, must have such an idea, merely in order to manage his life), ideas for living need not be based on any intuition. Many have as little relation to any fundamental experience as a timetable; and this is true of many writers who can't be said to have any themes at all" (Art, p. 105).

The hardest part of the creative process is getting the intuition down on paper, then polishing it until the intuition has been realized, until it has become readily comprehensible to others. Sometimes when the intuition comes it is not yet ripe, it is too fragmentary, not yet rich enough to be worked. In that case it should be pushed back into the unconscious, left to distill into a more essential truth, much as Wordsworth stored up his "powerful feelings" until they could be "recollected in tranquility." Gully Jimson, the artist-hero of The Horse's Mouth, often has to do this, because he has found that the idea which seems so brilliant at first lacks something the next day: "Pretty good idea it seemed to me and kept that leg quiet. But I didn't look at it long. It had come up too quick. Ideas that shoot up like that won't bear the sun. They need time to make a root."[6]

When Cary was in Africa he developed a way of dealing with intuition which he was to continue using throughout his life. When he had a sudden inspiration, he would write it down. An interesting person observed on the street would often lead to a character sketch of several pages, with sometimes an entire life based on a few moments of careful observation. These notes were filed away in the attic, both of his house and of his mind, and often left untouched for years. These rough characters then popped up again when needed, and were further developed to meet the needs of the book he was writing. Most of his books began with a sketch of a

[6]Cary, The Horse's Mouth, p. 19.

character in a situation.[7]

Writing the intuition down was useful, but not sufficient. For the intuition to truly become a product of creative imagination, the sketch had to be turned into a finished portrait.

> For the novelist, in fact, there is not only a huge gap between intuition and concept, the first raw statement, but between that statement and its working out in a story, a fable. It is easy for a philosopher, seeking a harmonious whole, to say that the two last processes are the same, that having expressed the situation for himself, the artist has taken the essential step--that he has his work of art and that any further operation is simply recording. This is simply not true in professional experience (Art, p. 85).

One reason why Cary is so adamant about the importance of the last step of the creative process, realization, is the ease of losing the sense of discovery inherent in the intuition. Keeping that sense demands hard work, dedication, and talent. "The moment the artist expresses his intuition in any formal terms, this expression tends to destroy for him the force of his intuition" (Art, p. 57). When an intuition is written down, the author usually recalls the intuition in relation to what has been written, and it is difficult to make sure that the intuition has been successfully realized. Although he may realize that he has not successfully communicated his vision, there is often a deeply seated antagonism to revision, a feeling that what is in writing is somehow right. This is a case of form dictating meaning, and to the extent that it causes a loss of directness, and prevents the apprehension of the truth of the intuition, it is bad. There are times, of course, when the

[7]Joyce Cary, "Unfinished Novels," "The Way a Novel Gets Written," rpt. Cary, Selected Essays, pp. 111, 117, 119.

constraints of form can amplify the intuition, reveal even more truth about an object, such as when a phrase chosen for its rhythmic effect is found to shift the writer's intuition, yet in a way which makes it more pertinent.

One of Cary's methods of translating the intuition is through symbols. To him, the symbol is not a word with a rigidly implied meaning, but a word with richly connotative associations, a word which brings other words to mind. These associations may shift with the audience, and because of that Cary never makes a book's meaning contingent on symbols. "The Artist's invention of new symbols is simply another aspect of the everlasting battle between the concept and the intuition. It is an attempt to overcome the primary defect of all concepts, all symbols, that they are mere things, that they live only by the associations we give them, and die by the same fate" (Art, p. 57). The snake is a common image in The Horse's Mouth. The hero sees snakes in many things, and includes them in many of his paintings. But his attitude toward them varies. At times there are evil associations, at times sexual, at times merely the intuition of the snake's beauty. None of the associations are crucial to the meaning, but each one makes it richer.

One reason why Cary avoids hard and fast symbols is that different generations make different associations, and Cary writes for posterity. Different environments also vary the associations. To a veteran of World War II the word "quisling" is associated with betrayal, and to Norwegians these associations are even stronger, but the generation under twenty has no conception of the word's meaning. To the man in his late

twenties November 22, 1963, probably brings to mind many associations and possibly remains the most vivid day in his life, but few teenagers associate the date with the assassination of President Kennedy.

Joyce Cary worked hard on his books and always made major revisions before publishing. He was unusually conscious of the technical aspects of fiction: when a character was becoming too strong or needed to be built up, when the meaning was too obvious or too obscure, how a change in tense or viewpoint would vary the meaning. He felt that nothing was settled for an author until every possibility of a character had been explored (Art, p. 89).

This need to explore his characters led him to write "a trilogy which was designed to show three characters, not only in themselves but as seen by each other. The object was to get a three-dimensional depth and force of character. One character was to speak in each book and describe the other two as seen by that person."[8] The result was, as Cary wished, the realization by the reader of the subjectiveness of experience. When he reads the first book of either trilogy he feels sure that he understands all of the characters, but after finishing the trilogy he has seen three convincing views of each character, three interpretations of each character's actions, and he does not know which, if any, is true. Cary might say that each in its way is true, but only part of the truth. Thus, the trilogy form brings home the complexity of our world, even though each book, taken separately, has a simple

[8]Joyce Cary, Herself Surprised (1941; rpt. Carfax Edition, London: Michael Joseph, 1951), p. 7.

viewpoint. Although the viewpoint is simple, Cary's main characters are not. The undertones of the book, the associations of certain words, give the characters a richness and complexity, even when they are describing their own life. The reader feels at every page that what he is reading is the truth.

This consciousness of truth which a work of art should leave with the reader comes most easily when a book is clearly written. Everything in Cary's books aims toward clarity, and contributes to the total meaning. Every useless word or paragraph has been cut. In The Horse's Mouth Cary cut out what he felt to be the best chapter, because its brilliance overshadowed the rest of the book and caused the reader to forget the meaning he had been building toward. He cut a 50,000 word chunk from A Fearful Joy because he felt it was going obliquely to the rest of the book.[9]

Cary aimed his books at a specific audience, neither scholarly nor illiterate. The "ideal" reader, he wrote, the trained amateur reader, should never be left in doubt about the meaning of a story (Art, p. 114). As the purpose of art is communication of an intuition, the book which is incomprehensible to anyone not willing to study it in depth is, to a large extent, a failure. A writer should also have a meaning he wants to express. If he does, then he must write lucidly, so he will be understood. If he does not have a meaning he wants to communicate, it will be obvious in the book.

One way Cary increases the clarity of his novels is by limiting

[9]Cary, "The Way a Novel Gets Written," Selected Essays, p. 119.

their scope. With the exception of Castle Corner, which is usually considered a failure because it tackles too much, his books are not "sweeping." Although most of the books in the trilogies cover a period of many years, they are simplified by having only a few major characters, and only one point of view in each book. Cary's first published novel, Aissa Saved, has over seventy characters, but is still simple because the action takes place mostly in a few dramatic incidents spaced over a period of only a few weeks, in an area perhaps forty miles across. A novel is necessarily a partial view of things: there is simply not room to include everything, even if it were possible. Cary has noted that the wider the scope of a novel, the less its power and significance, and gives as examples the longwinded if fascinating War and Peace, with many major characters and viewpoints, spread out over years and the great expanse of Russia, contrasted with the pent-up, ever building energy of The Brothers Karamazov (Art, p. 115).

Another reason for Cary's adoption of the trilogy form was his consciousness of the problem of time in the novel. "Feelings that should be simultaneous must be invoked in succession."[10] The fact that words must be read sequentially limits the reader to a building up of images, rather than the cluster effect possible in painting. By using his trilogy form, Cary could not make feelings simultaneous, but he could show that they were meant to be so. To make the build-up of images faster, he avoided complex sentences in favor of the compound sentence, and more

[10]Cary, "The Way a Novel Gets Written," Selected Essays, p. 120.

> necessary partner and her first problem. Her success, like all success, is forever balanced on the edge of disaster. Sara was infinitely cunning in the management of her men, and the only man she loved broke her nose and deserted her. He did not want to be looked after. Yet the everlasting enterprise which was her undoing was also her salvation. She was still making a world for herself, a home, a family, when she was cut off. As for the moral and aesthetic revolutions which had been tearing other people's worlds to pieces during her whole life, she was scarcely aware of them. Her morals were the elementary morals of a primitive woman, of nature herself, which do not change; and she was supremely indifferent to politics, religion, economics. She was a female artist who was always composing the same work in the same style; but it is a style which does not go out of fashion.[3]

Sara is a simple person, and to emphasize this, Cary has her tell her story chronologically. She also seems to see her life chronologically, as a progression of time rather than as cause and effect. This is why she fails to learn from experience--despite her assurances that she has, she repeats her mistakes as soon as she gets out of prison--and continues falling for men who need her but can give little in return.

She writes with a very high percentage of simple sentences, just as one would expect from a poorly educated cook. Her vocabulary is simple, but she has a poetic streak which breaks out at times with vivid metaphors drawn from cooking and housekeeping, such as "corn as ripe brown as a duck's egg, and the barley as white as a new-washed hairbrush. And three larks at a time trilling and tweeching as if the sun had got into their brains and made them glorious" (Herself, pp. 28-29). "It was about sunset with a sky like a kitchen fire, all sparkles below and blue ash on top" (Herself, p. 30). She sees carriage spokes "twirling like an

[3]Cary, "The Way a Novel Gets Written," Selected Essays, p. 126.

egg beater" (Herself, p. 12), "trees as green as lettuces" (Herself, p. 36), and "clouds like muslin sleeves on a washing day" (Herself, p. 57). "The sun was as bright as a new gas mantle . . . and the sand as bright gold as deep-fried potatoes. The sky was like washed-out Jap silk and there were just a few clouds coming out on it like down feathers out of an old cushion, the rocks were as warm as new gingerbread cakes and the sea had a thick, melty look, like oven glass" (Herself, p. 92).

Sara in the kitchen is Sara connected with the absolute, Sara filled with ideas and using her training and technique to bring them alive. She comes closest to intuition at these times, although her insights lead her only to appreciation, rather than to any concrete action based on them, as the writer or painter would take.

Largely because of her naïvity and lack of education, Sara has a constant sense of wonder and surprise. For example, when the prison chaplain tells her "know thyself," she is astonished by his good sense and cleverness, thinking he has made up the phrase himself (Herself, p. 9). Sara realizes that she has missed life's subtler meanings, but thinks that now, at last, in prison, she is beginning to know herself, yet she does not really, for the knowledge does nothing to change her when she gets out of prison, and is thus superficial, and not based on intuition.

As with most of Cary's books, the title Herself Surprised has several meanings: first, the readers are surprising Sara Monday at her thoughts; second, she is herself surprised by the things she discovers as she looks back on her life; third, she lives so totally in the present throughout her life that she is surprised by each new event. To her,

everything which happens is mysterious, without cause or antecedent. She can remember the past if she wishes but she has no sense of history. She does not notice parallels between what has happened and what is happening, as Wilcher does.

Throughout Herself Surprised, Sara seems incurably lower class. This is evidence of Cary's success, for he shows her to be what she is rather than telling the reader what she is. Her view of reality is strongly colored by the environment of her youth, as are her actions. This is seen from the very beginning of the book, when, although a cook, she marries her employer, Matt Monday, a hen-pecked bachelor in his forties. Her account of learning to be a lady are hilarious:

> So I was in terror that Matt should wake up, especially when I mistook in conversation. For though I could speak very well, like any farmer's daughter in those days, I knew very little of geography, or music, or languages. I remember in my first month I asked a lady who had been on the Rhine about the Russian food, thinking she had been in Russia. But the worst thing was when I saw Matt turning red, I went on to mistake things which I knew quite well, and said: "Oh, I didn't know Russia was in Germany," and so on; trembling at my poor Matt's feelings and yet going on with my nonsense, only to make the women think me more ignorant than I really was (Herself, p. 11).

Her lower class origins are also seen in her delight with noise, traffic, and vegetable gardens, which deserves an extended quotation:

> It is true Bradnall town was nothing much except for the Cathedral and the close; just shops and streets as dirty as you please; but Woodview, which was the Monday's house, stood two miles out at the Green. It was not too quiet either, but right on a main road, with carts and carriers passing all the morning, and in the afternoons always some good carriages. I could see the coachmen's hats from my kitchen window, coming up the hill; then I would often go down to the back gate to see them trotting past on the level. I always loved a good carriage and pair, with its shining horses going up

> and down like rockers; and silver on the harness; and spokes twirling like an egg-beater; and the coachwork so bright that you could see the hedges and sky in it.
>
> Then the village was close, and it was a good village with five or six real shops and a real draper, I mean one that sold only drapery and could find you a draw-ribbon or match your wool, at the last minute.
>
> The house was very pretty, too, all covered with trellis in front, for roses, and creeper behind. It reminded me of a picture out of Mrs. Ewing, with its high chimneys and trellis roses, except that it was not really old. But then again, if if had been old, it would not have had such good sinks and hot water laid on, and a porcelain bath that cleaned with bath brick; and looked clean when it was done.
>
> Woodview had a good garden, too, and especially a good kitchen garden. I always like to see a kitchen garden in a house, to know that my vegetables are fresh, and to walk in. For servants can use a kitchen garden, and what I feared to miss most, in service, was a garden. All my friends in service said the same, that they had no garden. You might say that country girls do not set much store by a garden when they have one, but then, country girls at home have the lanes and the fields. But a girl in service can't run about the lanes in her kitchen print or her uniform. Everyone can recognize her a mile away and say: "There's Minnie or Millie again, running after young So-and-So," and it will soon come to the mistress. The very names of hay cock and housemaid, put together, will terrify any mistress. But in a kitchen garden a maid can walk and look at the world, I mean the growing world, and sometimes even bring out a kitchen chair and shell her peas or shred up her runners, and feel the open air, a feeling which you don't have walking in a road (Herself, pp. 12, 13).

From the above quotation it is obvious that Sara is writing for an audience of women like herself. She is full of good advise: telling young servants how to avoid the anger of their employers, and keep themselves out of trouble. The book is full of this heavy moralism, which Cary uses in a humorous way. Sara uses this form because it is what she is used to reading. She says that she first learned to love reading by reading missionary stories, which are full of moralizing (Herself, p. 13).

Her favorite books are the highly sentimental novels by women writers of the 19th Century. These books seem cheap melodrama today, but Sara identifies very strongly with the heroines, who often deal creatively with the worst problems, such as feeding a dozen children, many of them sick, without a husband to bring home food, or even worse a violent alcoholic for a husband. These women deal with problems with which Sara also is not unacquainted.

The main thing which keeps Sara from showing much creative imagination is a strange ambivalence which keeps her from action, keeps her from making decisions she wants to make. When Wilcher fails to decide, it is because of his sense of the complexity of life and every decision, but Sara is passive from a vague fear and a belief that nothing she does will matter, because things happen no matter what she does.

> I knew my books as well as my kitchen and could open Heartsease at the very page where Miss Yonge says of Theodora Martindale: 'Many thoughts floated through Theodora's mind; but whether the better or worse would gain the advantage seemed rather to depend on chance than on herself.'
>
> It might have been written for me. (Herself, p. 35).

She is often apathetic also. When she looks in a mirror in Paris and discovers that she is a "fat, common trollop of a girl with a snub nose," she does not try to change herself but merely thinks "If I am a body then it can't be helped, for I can't help myself" (Herself, p. 10). Sara takes the same attitude when Matt Monday asks her to marry him: "I was afraid to marry a gentleman, with all their rules and manners. But he would not take no. He kept on asking me every day; and one day, when he asked me if I could not like him enough, though I meant to say no, yet

the words came out of my mouth that I would try. . . . All that evening I was surprised at myself. Yet it seemed to me that I could still draw back, and that it was all a kind of play" (Herself, p. 16).

When Sara makes mistakes, which she frequently does, she often realizes that she is making them before she does so, but makes no attempt to stop herself. Once married, she buys gaudy clothes, just as a working-class girl would be expected to do if she had money, despite realizing that her husband and his friends think the clothes in bad taste.

> Poor Matt did once try to make me wear something more ladylike, but I pretended that I did not know what he meant. "I like a little colour," I said. But I knew quite well that I was making an exhibition of myself and that everyone was saying: "There goes the girl poor Monday married--she was a cook and doesn't she look like it" (Herself, p. 20).

She risks her home and happiness because of her refusal to control herself. Sara is a cook through and through and not made to be a lady. She is not happy as a lady, because she can no longer do many of the things she has enjoyed previously, such as sit in the vegetable garden or cook dinner. She enjoys the power being mistress of the household gives her over the other servants, but is never comfortable with people above her social status.

Sara's refusal to change despite her realization of what she is doing seems attributable to her ambivalence: she is not really sure if she wants to do what she is doing, and so accepts her fate passively. She even realizes that her passivity can be a form of action, if it causes other people to act for her. She applies this to her marriage of Matt Monday, whom she has at first blamed for making her marry him:

> The worst battle with Miss Maul was when she told me, in anger, because I would not change my style of dressing, that I had set my cap at Matt and caught him. This made me angry, too, and I was going to tell her how I had fought against him, when it came upon me that perhaps it was true. For though I had run away from him and told him to let me be, and kept out of his way too, all these could be for leading on as much as putting off. Hadn't I played that very trick on the village boys, when a girl, running off from them, when, God pity me, my aid was only to drive them mad and take them away from their own belles; and to be caught at last and kissed. But what before all confounded me with Miss Maul was that at that very moment, I was playing upon my poor dear man. For the more I loved him, and I had never loved him so much as then when he had to stand up for me before the world, the more I held away from him, and pretended to be nice and ticklish. Day and night I held him away, making him dancing mad for me and to fall down before me in worshipful gratitude for what was his by right and justice and all the time I wondering at my own luck and the sweetness and goodness of that dear soul, which I tried so much (Herself, p. 21).

Sara's whole life is a series of mistakes which destroy the nests she builds, after which she goes away and builds another one. She seems, when given a choice, to go to the man she thinks needs her most, oblivious to her marriage vows or the ostracism of society. This is closer to osmosis than choice: she simply goes wherever the vacuum of need is greatest. Married to Matt, she refuses him her bed, but lets herself be seduced by the millionaire Hickson, whom she feels sorry for because his wife will not sleep in his bed.

By the time Sara is twenty-four she has three children, and is quite happy in her nest with her children until Gulley Jimson comes to stay with her and her family. Jimson has been commissioned to paint a mural in the town. Sara describes him as "a little bald man with a flat nose and a big chin. His head was big and hung over so that his face was hollow in the middle. He was much older than we expected, getting on for

forty; very shabby too, and had a front tooth missing" (Herself, p. 41). Given a commission to paint Matt Monday, Jimson paints "his nose so big and his forehead on a slope and his chin so little, that he looked like a goose peeping out of a jug" (Herself, p. 48). Jimson's style leads to other problems. For his mural, he paints the men green and the women red, which makes Sara wonder if he is a real artist.

However, she comes to think that he needs her more than Matt does. Soon, Jimson has talked her into posing nude for him, and then seduced her. Finally, he is forced to move out of Monday's house, but Sara continues to visit him. When Jimson's wife dies, he asks Sara to go away with him, but she is not able to make up her mind to do so until her husband dies, even though she loves him. She is a tough and practical woman when it comes to running a household, but incapable of making major decisions.

Sara considers herself a very religious woman, but morality to her means strict church attendance and not playing tennis on Sunday. She says of Jimson's wife, "You would have thought her a Christian except that she never preached and never thought evil" (Herself, p. 52). She seems to have no compunction against adultery, nor petty theft, if she thinks the stolen object is no longer of use to the person she steals it from.

Her daughters grown and her husband dead, Sara, now nearly forty, moves in with Jimson, determined to make a real artist of him. In her attempt to bring order to the chaos of his life, she takes care of the business end of the painting, finding commissions for him and pressing

him to complete them. She also sits for a series of nudes which she pretends to think nasty, but really loves. These paintings end up as Jimson's most popular paintings. Sara never understands why Jimson occasionally "taps" her in the nose, breaking it once, but she sets it down to the devil in him and does not complain. She does not realize that her compulsive homebuilding stifles Jimson's creativity, although it increases his output.

Finally, after a number of years, Jimson leaves her, and, after cashing several bad checks, she is thrown into jail. When she gets out, she looks for a place to build another nest. She is able to find work only with Thomas Wilcher, a miserly lawyer with a reputation as an exhibitionist. In her first descriptions of Wilcher, Sara emphasizes these things, but she comes to see him as a little boy who needs mothering. She never understands why he is as he is, just as she does not understand Jimson, because she has no sense of history or of cause and effect.

Sara is able to build another home with Wilcher, because he recognizes her good qualities. He sees her as a symbol of earth, a comforting mother, purely body without the incertainties of mind. He wants mothering, and so lets her have her way. Back in the kitchen, Sara is happy. She is where she belongs. After seven years cooking for him, she becomes Wilcher's lover, and, when he asks her to marry him, rather than profiting from her earlier mistake with Matt Monday, she decides to let fate take its course. Rather than becoming his wife, however, she is thrown into jail for stealing a few little things from him which she has planned to save in case her situation should change. Her nest-building has once

again been her downfall, because she has not combined it with the other necessary elements of creative imagination. Her sense of duty makes her a good cook, a good home-builder, but more is needed.

Herself Surprised ends as it begins, with Sara in jail. This is not, however, the end of her story. In The Horse's Mouth the reader finds that she once again builds a nest, this time with a working man, younger than herself. She is happy here until Jimson comes along and gives her another "tap," this time a bit too hard, and she dies. She has not learned anything from her experiences. She has lived in the present, seeing the past as a collection of memories rather than as experiences to profit by, and the extent of her concern for the future ends with the gold pieces sewn into her stays, which are meant to pay for her funeral. Although she sometimes deals creatively with life, her indecision, her apathy, her ambivalence, along with her other faults, keep her from true creative imagination.

Where Sara remembers the past, Wilcher dissects it. He has a rich sense of history, seeing it as a still living thing. He is able to skip around in time, so he does not tell his story chronologically, as Sara does, but reveals his life slowly, by a series of flashbacks set off by contact with rooms, pieces of furniture, trees, any object which brings back memories of the past. Where Sara lives in the present, Wilcher lives in the past, lives his life in retrospect.

Like Sara, Wilcher never learns to make decisions of importance, but waits until a solution is forced upon him. Unlike Sara, who is willing to let go of the past when a decision is made for her, Wilcher

clings tightly to the things he loves. He writes, "I have always been a lover rather than a doer; I have lived in dreams rather than acts; and like all lovers, I have lived in terror of change to what I love."[4] This is the voice of tradition, not of creative imagination. A sense of tradition is important to a full realization of creative imagination, but there must also be intuition, and the intuition must be fulfilled.

Wilcher is intelligent and self-aware, although his awareness does not lead to action. His understanding of history is typical of his perception, and might even be called an intuition: "History does not move in one current, like the wind across bare seas, but in a thousand streams and eddies, like wind over a broken landscape, in forests and towns. At one place, through some broad gap, it makes straight forward; in another, among the trees, it creeps and eddies. It flies through the cold sky at gale force; on the ground, a breeze scarcely turns the willow leaves" (Pilgrim, p. 138).

It was not easy for Cary to write To Be a Pilgrim. He had a sense of tradition as Wilcher had, and he knew the value of the family, and loved the country, but still Wilcher presented problems. To many readers, he would seem an old fool who should be moved out of the way, but he had to be a sympathetic character. Cary accomplished this by emphasizing Wilcher's intelligence and showing how he got to be what he was. Unlike Sara or Jimson, Wilcher writes with a large proportion of compound and

[4]Joyce Cary, To Be a Pilgrim (1942; rpt. Carfax Edition, London: Michael Joseph, 1951), p. 333. All further references to this work appear in the text.

complex sentences. Cary does an excellent job of characterizing Wilcher, a man in his seventies, subject to palpitations of the heart and fainting spells, who sees his dead brothers and sisters and talks to them, hovering on the brink of senility or insanity but not quite over the edge yet.

Cary calls Wilcher a "man of political and religious intuition. The tragedy of such a man is that he sees the good for ever being destroyed with the bad; especially that irreplacable good, those graces and virtues of life that depend on tradition, on example, on that real education which lives only from mind to mind" (Pilgrim, p. 8). It is in part the complexity Wilcher sees in life which keeps him from acting.

Gulley Jimson describes a no less true aspect of Wilcher in The Horse's Mouth:

> Wilcher was a rich lawyer, with a face like a bad orange. Yellow and blue. A little grasshopper of a man. Five feet of shiny broadcloth and three inches of collar. Always on the jump. Inside or out. In his fifties. The hopping fifties. And fierce as a mad mouse. Genus, Boorjwar; species, Blackcoatius Begoggledus Ferocissimouse. All eaten up with lawfulness and rage; ready to bite himself for being so respectable (Pilgrim, p. 183).

The title of Wilcher's book, To Be a Pilgrim, is drawn from the hymn by John Bunyan, which includes the lines:

> No foes shall stay his might,
> Though he with giants fight;
> He will make good his right
> To be a pilgrim (Pilgrim, p. 20).

The title is ironic, for although Wilcher spends most of his life dreaming of being a pilgrim, of being free and purposeful and living the life of creative imagination, he never becomes a pilgrim, because of his great need for security and his sentimental attachment to his possessions. He

carries too much baggage to be a pilgrim. Man, he feels, was not meant to put down roots, but to wander. The really good people such as his father, an old army man who calls his mansion a camp; his sister Lucy, who marries an evangelist and travels constantly; and Sara, who also moves from place to place without anxiety, feel no need for the security of the past. His brother Edward becomes a successful and creative politician, only to throw his career away because of love, which is also, to Cary, a form of creativity. These, Wilcher thinks, are the people who are saved (Pilgrim, p. 16).

Wilcher speaks eloquently of creation in a letter he writes to Sara, and seems to speak for Cary too:

> "Unless life be made, it is no life. For we are the children of creation, and we cannot escape our fate, which is to live in creating and re-creating. We must renew ourselves or die; we must work even at our joys or they will become burdens; we must make new worlds about us for the old does not last," etc. "Those who cling to this world, must be dragged backwards into the womb which is also a grave.
>
> "We are the pilgrims who must sleep every night beneath a new sky, for either we go forward to the new camp, or the whirling earth carries us backwards to one behind. There is no choice but to move, forwards or backwards. Forward to the clean hut, or backward to the old camp, fouled every day by the passers," etc. (Pilgrim, pp. 36, 37).

As the book progresses, Wilcher reveals that he was the youngest child in a well-to-do family and that his insecurity is due to his original sickliness and inability to compete with his older siblings. His dreams of adventure either never materialize or end up paltry shadows of the original. He follows his brother Edward to Oxford but fails to distinguish himself scholastically or to make friends with the students of genius.

While at Oxford, he decides to take a mistress, but lacking courage, he puts it off for ten years before finally taking his brother's cast-off woman.

Wilcher is no fool, however. While he lacks the genius for politics which his brother Edward possesses, he has other talents. His very insecurity makes him an excellent manager of his extravagent brother's expenses, and he finally takes over ownership of the ancestral house, Tolbrook. Tolbrook is falling down with age: the walls and ceilings crumbling, the fine furniture in poor repair, the fields barren. Tolbrook House comes to be seen by Wilcher as a symbol of his life: "how senseless to spend all one's life in patching up these old walls" (Pilgrim, p. 12). "My whole body like Tolbrook itself was full of strange quick sensations. My veins seemed to rustle with mice, and my brain, like Tolbrook's roof, let in daylight at a thousand crevices" (Pilgrim, p. 14). He eventually comes to feel that the house has been a "Delilah," robbing his strength and purpose, keeping him from a life of creativity (Pilgrim, p. 301).

The pilgrimage, for Wilcher, includes more than just creative imagination. He sees the pilgrimage as an entrance into faith and courage, and realizes that his ties to his possessions prevent him from having as much faith as he should.

> The soul which is deprived of its essential activity, in works of faith and imagination, quickly corrupts. Like all spiritual things, enclosed within the prison walls of fear and doubt, it grows quickly monstrous and evil. It is like a plant shut away in darkness, which, still living and striving, throws out, instead of green leaves and bright flowers, pallid tentacles, and fruit so strange, so horrible that it is like a phantasm seen in a dream; something at once comic and terrifying. The dumb stupid creature appears suddenly to be possessed of a devil's imagination (Pilgrim, p. 308).

Although a minor character, Robert shows more creative imagination than anyone in the first trilogy. He is the son of two "pilgrims": the dynamic preacher Matthew Brown and Wilcher's fiery sister Lucy. Although he lacks the sense of tradition necessary for a properly balanced creative imagination, and indeed rejects his past, he has learned from his family how to impose order on his universe, and sets out to succeed. When he comes to live with Wilcher at Tolbrook, he has an intuition of how the estate could be transformed, made profitable after being a liability for many years. He cuts down trees, plows fields, buys machinery, and in the end realizes his intuition.

Sara, who becomes Wilcher's housekeeper when she is forty-six, and his lover several years later, has a major influence on him. She seems to bring him to life. Before meeting her, he writes, "I knew nothing and nobody real, only knowledge about things. I knew no living soul, not even Lucy, until I knew Sara, and found in her the key of my own soul" (Pilgrim, p. 21). Sara gives Wilcher a new outlook on life, helps him see more clearly the necessity of the pilgrimage, makes him feel again the joy of life.

However, this intuition which Wilcher has does not result in action, and so does not live up to its potential. Wilcher is fond of talking about the progress to be made in the future, but when his nephew Robert, a very creative man determined to make Tolbrook a profitable estate once again, tries to get permission to cut down trees around Tolbrook, plant new fields, and use new methods, Wilcher refuses to have improvements made. His ties to the past are too strong to give up. Yet when Robert

makes the improvements anyway, Wilcher makes no disturbance and even seems relieved. He discovers that his participation in these improvements, even though passive, gives him a feeling of life and usefulness.

> I sit in the armchair, a tattered bergère, in white and gilt, last of the drawing room furniture; and the very ruin of this beautiful room is become a part of my happiness. I say no longer "Change must come, and this change, so bitter to me, is a necessary ransom for what I keep." I have surrendered because I cannot fight and now it seems to me that not change but life has lifted me and carried me forward on the stream. It is but a new life which flows through the old house; and like all life, part of that sustaining power which is the oldest thing in the world (Pilgrim, p. 328).

Wilcher is not essentially creative, although the way stories spring from his contact with objects of sentimental value shows that he has the capacity for creative work. What success he makes of his life is due to his laissez-faire policy rather than to any creative action. He writes that "petty worries . . . have wrecked my whole life and prevented me from all achievement, all happiness; from men and from God" (Pilgrim, p. 23). He realizes that "the way to a satisfying life, a good life, is through an act of faith and courage" (Pilgrim, p. 55). He longs to give way to his creativity, to make his world flower, but he does not dare.

If Wilcher's creativity is not often revealed by action, it often is by word. His prose style is cultured and flowing. His metaphors are vivid, drawn chiefly from nature: animals, plants, the sea.

> The trees, creatures so sensitive and quick, stood now motionless to their topmost leaf, dozing on their feet like horses. The wheat was as red as a fox's back, and the barley quivered as if transparent clouds of steam were passing over its awns . . . even the blue of the sky is tainted like the water of a cow pond, enriched but no longer pure. It is as if a thousand years of cultivation have brought to all, trees, grass, crops, even the sky and the sun, a special quality belonging only to

> very old countries. A quality not of matter only, but of thought; as if the hand that planted the trees in their chosen places had imposed upon them the dignity of beauty appointed; but taken from them, at the same time, the innocence of freedom. As if the young farmer who set the hedge, to divide off his inheritance, wrote with its crooked line the history of human growth, of responsibility not belonging to the wild hawthorn, but to human love and fatherhood; as if upon the wheat lay the colour of harvests since Alfred, and its ears grew plump with the hopes and anxieties off all those generations that sowed with Beowulf and ploughed with Piers and reaped with Cobbett (Pilgrim, p. 135).

Although Cary believes that everyone can be creative in their own way, creative imagination is most easily seen in the artist, and the third book of the first trilogy, The Horse's Mouth, has for its central character an artist, Gulley Jimson. Where Wilcher's mind and world are ordered, Jimson's are chaotic. His mind is constantly churning: discovering similarities in seemingly disparate elements, seeing and painting in new ways, careening across creation without fear. Jimson needs no home: he goes where he pleases in whatever way he wishes, so long as the money holds out. Wilcher is lost in the past, and Sara sits solidly in the present, but Jimson pays little notice to what goes on around him. His mind lives in creation, which is to say, the future, always searching for, dreaming of, working on new ideas.

As Jimson tells his story, it is obvious where his interest lies. Sara tells her story straight through, chronologically. Wilcher skips around in his life, from present to past and back again. Jimson gives very few pages over to his biography, and what he does give is in non-chronological bits and pieces, often much exaggerated, if Sara and Wilcher are to be believed.

Jimson's discovery of intuition is presented vividly. As a young man, he is determined not to become an artist, finds an office job, and is quite contented until he spills some ink and becomes fascinated by its possibilities as he pushes it into different designs. He knows he has to be an artist, and abandons his wife and children in order to devote all of his time to art. No place is home, no woman is permanent, his great love is art.

Jimson is educated and well read, and especially enjoys William Blake's poetry. He has been trained as an artist and can do very accurate drawings should he wish to. But he does not wish to. He has a very vivid imagination, and where some artists paint what they see or feel, Jimson paints whatever he thinks might be fun to paint. This leads the reader to wonder to what extent his paintings arise out of intuition, and to what extent out of whimsy. For example, strolling through a market, he sees fish piled for sale. Later that day he wants to paint flowers in the foreground of a picture, but somehow ends up with milk bottle shapes. Suddenly he remembers the fish in the market. The image catches his fancy, and he paints a row of fishes in the flower garden. There seems to be no reason for it, no meaning behind it. He paints milk bottles by accident or laziness or curiosity, and the milk bottle shapes remind him of fish. This is not creative imagination, for his fancy has caused him to neglect his intuition.

Jimson also worked to develop symbolism in his pictures, but seems very unsure about what the symbols mean, except that they interest him. Sara thinks it terrible that he paints his women red and his men green,

but Jimson is fascinated by the play of textures and colors, the various possible shades of red and green. Trees and serpents are frequently recurring images in his paintings, and the legs of his people even sometimes become solid and treelike.

When Jimson is excited, which is nearly always, his sentences break into short fragments, streaks of metaphor. Sara's metaphors are of household things, and Wilcher's come from nature, but Jimson uses everything from demi-gods to dumptrucks, his metaphors flowing joyously in his great, bubbling stream-of-consciousness:

> Sun in a mist. Like an orange in a fried fish shop. . . . Low tide, dusty water and a crumpled bar of straw, chicken-boxes, dirt and oil from mud to mud. Like a viper swimming in skim milk. The old serpent, symbol of nature and love. . . . The sky feels too big for the ex-prisoner . . . But I liked it. I swam in it. I couldn't take my eyes off the clouds, the water, the mud. . . . Tide pouring up from London as bright as bottled ale. Full of bubbles and every bubble flashing its own electric torch.[5]

The pain of working in continuous chaos, without reward or appreciation, has been repressed, and in its place Jimson has an irrepressible humor which leaves the reader wondering just what he really means. He seems bitterly ironic when he writes about modern art "Creeping about everywhere, undermining the Church and the State and the Academy and the Law and marriage and the Government--smashing up civilization, degenerating the Empire" (Horse, p. 26). But perhaps he is not, for these things are all transformed by creative imagination. He refers to his source of

[5]Joyce Cary, The Horse's Mouth (1944; rpt. Carfax Edition, London: Michael Joseph, 1951), pp. 11, 13. All further references to this work appear in the text.

intuition as "the horse's mouth" (Horse, p. 29), thus the title of the book, and this disrespectful title seems to refer sometimes to himself and sometimes to a source outside of himself. On the outside, Jimson is always joking either about his work being just a way to fool the public or about the great value of his art, but he asks himself if his art is "genuine intuition of fundamental and universal experience in plastic forms of classical purity and simplicity, or a piece of barefaced pornography. . ." (Horse, p. 26). Too often the intuition seems to be lacking.

Most of the people who see Jimson's paintings seem to think them pornographic. His figures are almost invariably naked, but nudes have been popular for hundreds of years, so there is more to it. From his own descriptions of his paintings, one gains the idea that his people are graceless, ugly grotesques, forced onto the canvas with anguish. It is ironic that Jimson's reputation comes to rest on a series of nudes of Sara, which he disparages as too traditional. They are his best work because he understood and loved Sara's body, and had a real intuition, which he successfully rezlized, successfully communicated. This is practically the only work Jimson completes in the book. Most of his works are either abandoned or destroyed.

In his preface to the Carfax Edition of The Horse's Mouth, Cary writes about Jimson's creativity:

> Jimson, as an original artist, is always going over the top into No Man's Land, and knows that he will probably get nothing for his pains and enterprise but a bee-swarm of bullets, death in frustration, and an unmarked grave. He makes a joke of life because he dare not take it seriously. . . .
>
> He is himself a creator, and has lived in creation all his life, and so he understands and continually reminds

> himself that in a world of everlasting creation there is no justice. The original artist who counts on understanding and reward is a fool. . . . For he has to create not only his work but his public (Horse, p. 7).

But Jimson does nothing to ingratiate his public. His manners with customers range from wildly comic to insulting, and as a result of this and his style, he seldom paints on commission. Even when he does have a commission, he does not often finish it. And it is not enough to be creative if the creations are never finished. Day after day, year after year, Jimson paints, often with stolen paints, only to scrape off the day's work and start over again. Sara's influence on Jimson is important here. She is a major influence in his life: she symbolizes womankind to him, and brings him alive (Horse, p. 264).

However, with her mothering and her urgings for him to complete paintings, Sara stifles his creativity, or so he thinks. Jimson does not mind a little physical and spiritual comfort, but he is not interested in the constant cleaning and nagging, and the pressure on him to pay his bills, so he beats her, "in a friendly way," to make her keep her distance. But he is wrong, for he does his best work with Sara, his finished work. It is not enough to paint a "Raising of Lazarus" and become so enamored of the feet of the onlookers that he covers the whole wall with them. There must be control, there must be unity, there must be realization. An artist cannot be judged by his dreams, but only by his accomplishments.

Joyce Cary holds neither Sara Monday, Wilcher, nor Jimson up for emulation in the first trilogy. He believes that man should be creative and that creation must yield fruit. All of these people show some

necessary facet of creative imagination, but none of them is entirely creative. The ideal, it seems, would be a combination of the three. There should be a balance between body, mind, and spirit. One should be at home in past, present, or future. It is fine for one not to need possessions, but it is also good to be able to make any place a home, and a sense of security and roots helps stabilize civilization. Finally, the truly creative person must have Jimson's imagination and sense of wonder, his visionary gleam; Sara's sense of duty and drive to see work completed; and Wilcher's sense of order, unifying and organizing the vision into a work of art, into a work of creative imagination.

Chapter 4

Creative Imagination in Cary's Second Trilogy

In Art and Reality Joyce Cary wrote that "We live in an everlasting battle, an everlasting creation which produces the endless revolution of politics and ideas that perplexes the morning papers" (p. 8). As in his other books, Cary sets out in the second trilogy to show the necessity of creative imagination, by showing the positive effects it can have, and the negative effects caused by its lack. He also wants to reveal the "art" of politics, and how the creative politician constantly shifts his stance, despite seeming hypocritical to some, in order to wield the greatest influence over the masses, bring order to the newest political chaos, and save the country by whatever means seem expedient.

In order to show the complexity of his subject, Cary once again chose to write a trilogy, using a different speaker writing in first person viewpoint in each book. The first book of the trilogy was Prisoner of Grace (1952), whose speaker is Nina, wife of the speakers of the other two books. Nina tells her story from childhood until the year before she dies. This book was followed a year later by Except the Lord (1953), in which the politician Chester Nimmo tells of his early life. The final book was Not Honour More (1955), in which the soldier-gentleman Jim Latter tells of the events surrounding the last weeks of the lives of Nimmo and Nina.

The trilogy form is very effective. With each book the reader feels

that he discovers the truth, but by the end he realizes that, as always, the truth is neither simple, nor easily established. The result is a feeling of chaotic reality, to which the reader applies his own creative imagination, and imposes his own order and meaning.

> "The writer," Cary wrote, on the need for order in his own craft,"has to find some meaning in life before he gives it to us in a book. . . . Everyone, not only the writer, is presented with the same chaos, and is obliged to form his own idea of the world, of what matters and what doesn't matter. He has to do it, from earliest childhood, for his own safety. And if he gets it wrong, if his idea does not accord with reality, he will suffer for it" (Art, p. 5).

Each of the writers in the second trilogy suffers because of the order he tries to impose on his world: Nina is continually torn between retreat and conciliation; Jim Latter's stubborn insistence on honor and honesty ruins his life and costs him his life; even Nimmo, one of Cary's most truly creative characters, must pit political expediency, the greatest good for the greatest number in the long run, against the Decalogue, the injunctions against lying and killing he was taught as a child.

As the subjective narrator cannot see all sides of an issue, he is necessarily biased. Cary increases this bias, as he does in the first trilogy, by making each narrator write with the aim of swaying public opinion. Although each book seems very believable, the reader always wonders how much is exaggerated. Nina writes to support the reputation of her ex-husband Lord Nimmo, late British Minister of War during World War I, not from the moral viewpoint, for she does not hesitate to describe his sexual practices, but as a political genius who saves England by his ingenuity. Nimmo himself is trying to prove that he is

a religious man, from a working class background, and he does this by telling of his early life, showing his influences and support of labor unions. By proving this he hopes to be reelected to parliament. Jim Latter is writing to expose what he sees as the hypocrisies of Nimmo, and explain why he has killed Nimmo and Nina.

Nina can be a supportive wive and lover, but she is not very creative. Like Sara in Herself Surprised, Nina is very passive, but her intelligence helps her understand what is going on around her better than Sara can, although she does not really understand what Nimmo does as a creative politician. She begins her story with her childhood and proceeds chronologically. She tells of her life as an orphan living with her Aunt Latter. Aunt Latter delights in giving young men money, thus, as Cary would say, giving them the freedom as well as the liberty to be creative. Nina's dominant character trait, her fear of reality, is obvious from the first. She spends most of her time wandering across the moors or buried in some romantic novel. Whenever possible she retreats into her fantasy world, running from responsibility, dreaming of what will never be.

Running from reality may sometimes be a creative act, if the alternatives are worse, but in Nina's case it is unnecessary, and a flaw which ruins her life. Along with the retreat from reality goes extreme passiveness and a fear of decision making. Nina floats along throughout the book, content to be pulled from one side to the other, to do what she is told, so long as it is not painful. She lacks the moral character to say no, or even, usually, to say yes. Instead, she says, "Whatever

you want to do." This, she seems to think, puts the moral burden on the other person and absolves her from guilt. Cary, so adamant about the necessity for people to make use of their freedom to act, shows in Nina the results of refusing to choose, letting someone else make the decisions.

Nina is afraid to be emotionally moved, afraid of passions which might pull her from the security of her fantasy world only to abandon her. Nina feels love and hate quite strongly at times, but never really lets herself go. This is, perhaps, a reaction to the loss of her parents, which left her without the security she needed to develop creatively.

Growing up alone with a rather eccentric aunt, Nina does not seem to develop the moral sense expected in a girl raised in Victorian England, and this contributes to the peculiar relationships she has with Nimmo and Jim Latter. At the age of ten she begins sleeping with her older cousin Jim when he is home for his school holidays. At first, this is ostensibly because she is cold, but soon seems to be because of her need to be held, another retreat from the lonely world around her. Nina and Jim finally fall in love, but by this time they cannot be married because Jim is an army officer and not allowed to marry. When Nina is seventeen, Jim demands that she prove her love by having intercourse with him. She submits, passively as usual, and becomes pregnant.

Meanwhile, Chester Nimmo, in his thirties and just beginning his political career, has been lurking in the background. To Nina he is a too handsome little man twice her age, who will, she realizes when she hears him give a speech, be a great man someday. All the same, she does

not like him. When he finds that she is pregnant (although after their marriage he denies knowledge of it), Nimmo begins pressing her to marry him, but she refuses. As usual, she can only say no to something which threatens to destroy her secluded happiness. Inevitably though, as her pregnancy continues, she has to marry him to avoid hurting herself even worse. They go off to Europe, and when they return their new baby boy is claimed to be premature.

For the rest of her life Nina is torn between Latter and Nimmo, and this leads to stormy relations. What she and her men do not seem to realize is that she is a polyandrist. She finds it impossible to be faithful to only one of her men, but she is faithful to the two of them together. If Nimmo and Latter could accept this, their problems would be solved. Since they cannot, they hate each other, and alternately love and hate Nina.

Nina's best trait is loyalty. She is quick to see which of her men needs her most and goes to him, giving him what he needs, whether mental or physical. Thus Jim, about to leave for Africa, sires her second child behind some bushes in her garden, while Nimmo waits unknowing in the house. Nina is thrilled by Nimmo's early speeches and works hard to support him, quickly learning the role of the politician's wife. However, she is not really interested enough in politics and politicians to be a really good hostess to politicians.

Nina is writing Prisoner of Grace not so much about herself as about the men in her life, in their best years. Nimmo is highly creative, and Nina realizes that he is an instinctive politician, who loves the

power of the well-used voice, and loves to hear himself talk. It is difficult, however, for her to reconcile herself to the sacrifices of truth and honor which politicians must make, to the theory that the end justifies the means.

Nimmo has been raised as an Evangelical and, for several years before marrying Nina, has actually been a preacher. Preaching and politics seem, to him, almost the same profession, and although he is not so severely religious as he grows older as he has been in his younger days, Nimmo never loses his faith in God or his faith that God is on his side. His belief is the base on which he builds order out of the chaos around him.

From the time they are married, Nimmo insists that Nina kneel beside him as he says his prayerss before they go to bed. Nina kneels, but refuses to pray. She is afraid of "conversation," afraid of anything which might threaten her with new ideas, afraid of anything demanding that she reach out, take the first step. Instead, she tries not to listen to Nimmo's prayers.

Nimmo, before becoming a preacher, had been a labor agitator. Nina finds that there is, for Nimmo, little difference between agitating and politics. She is appalled by the tactics Nimmo uses, for Nimmo is a highly creative politician and realizes at once that a stirring voice and sympathetic stance will win more votes than a reputation for honest hard work. Nina does not understand that Nimmo is absolutely certain that what he believes is right, and that his very creativity lies in his manipulation of the people who vote for him, elect him, and thus put him

in a position to realize his intuitions of what must be done, of what the world should be.

Nimmo plans his career according to how he can best win votes, and in this his creative imagination is obvious, as he sets out to realize his intuition of how the country should be. He is at first a radical and gives inflammatory speeches at meetings, hoping there will be a riot and thus a mention of him in the papers, bad mention being better for an unknown politician than no mention at all. Nina wonders about the accusations Nimmo makes against the government. She knows they are not true and knows Nimmo realizes their falsehood. Likewise, she sees that Nimmo's plans, as he states them to the uneducated crowd, are not likely to work. But she, like them, is swayed by the voice. How can a voice like that be wrong?

Nimmo promises the masses whatever they want, whether it is good for them or not, whether it is possible or not, in order to get their votes. Once he is elected he will try to do what is best for them. As Cary wrote about his own political duties in Nigeria, "A man in real responsibility for other people's lives and happiness has no scruples about dignity."[1]

After causing several riots and having his reputation spread by the resulting news stories, Nimmo wins the city assembly election. As an elected politician, he sets off on another tack. It is fine to condemn the party in power when one is not, but once elected a different strategy

[1]Joyce Cary, "Africa Yesterday: One Ruler's Burden," Reporter (15 May 1951), pp. 21-24, rpt. Cary, Selected Essays, p. 87.

is called for. He quickly learns to capitalize on his small accomplishments, which the public will approve of, and explain away the frustration of the public when he does something they do not like. He also magnifies any mistakes of his competition out of all proportion to their seriousness, causing the politicians embarrassment at the least, and at most their jobs. He knows when to dissociate himself from old friends and when to ally himself with his enemies. Nina is shocked by this. She does not know quite what to think. She hates the hypocrisy of the man, but also recognizes the good results of his work. What seems immoral to her is really the only way in which most creative politicians can put themselves in a position where they can remake society according to their intuitions.

For the rest of her life Nina is torn between love and hate of Nimmo. Nimmo seems interested in her only to the extent that she serves his purposes. This inability to see people as individuals is a flaw which keeps him from being as effective as he might otherwise be. Nina keeps his house, entertains his guests, supports him at political rallys, and sleeps with him. Nina hates him because he treats her badly. At times he acts like he is trying to get her vote. At times he ignores her, making her feel worthless, or even berates her. But then there are the times when he holds her and tells her that he would be nothing without her and acts like he means it.

And there is no doubt that at such times he does mean it. Nina's body, throughout their marriage and even after, is a source of strength to him. But he sometimes forgets that she is a part of the solid base,

along with his faith, that allows him to be creative. This base, this place to come home to, is necessary for him, because his protracted spurts of imagination demand great energy. All too often his work is not appreciated, and when he is with Nina he can recuperate from his exertions. Prayer also gives Nimmo this sense of comfort. But Nimmo never really trusts Nina, although he needs her. Always she seems to be at least part enemy, because she has been born to the upper class of society, while he has had to work himself up from the bottom. He often despises her for this and tells her so. He may be a highly creative politician, but he is selfish, and lacks the love for others which would make him a better man.

Nimmo is a clever man. He realizes that Nina loves Jim Latter and that Jim is the father of Nina's children, but he will not admit it to anyone, not even Nina. If such a thing got out it would ruin his political career. Nina is frustrated by this hypocrisy and hates him for it.

Nina is a very loyal woman, but not to just one man. She must be loyal to all of her family: to Nimmo, Jim, her son, and her Aunt Latter. She examines the needs of each person, discovers who needs her the most, and goes to him. This is not a matter of love or creative imagination, but an unwillingness to see people suffer as she has. It is also due to her unwillingness to say no. Thus, it is not strange that she can commit adultery in the bushes with Jim, then return to solace Nimmo, whom she hates at that time. When she is comforting someone, she puts aside her enmity. The same thing happens years later, for when she has divorced Nimmo and married Jim Nimmo returns as a permanent house guest, and she

satisfies him sexually as he dictates his memoirs, then returns to Jim at night.

Nina has a similar love-hate relationship with Jim. She has loved Jim as a child and almost never fails to do his bidding. However, Jim often treats her badly. He abandons her when she is pregnant, yet sometimes despises her for marrying Nimmo, although she had little choice. But she is not the type to carry a grudge. She is too passive to do so. She mentions "Aunt Latter's angry remark, that I was a woman who excused everyone and everything because I did not want the trouble of condemning."[2]

Nimmo is by far the most creative person in Prisoner of Grace. Not only does he have ideas about how the country should be run but he knows how to put these ideas into effect, how to realize his intuitions. Because of this, Nimmo soon becomes a Member of Parliament, then joins the Prime Minister's cabinet, and finally becomes Minister of War during World War I, nearly working himself to death in his struggle to save Britain. Throughout this period, he cleverly shifts alliances, doing whatever is necessary to retain power. After the war, however, he is stunned by the lack of gratitude from the people who, anxious to forget the war, vote him out of office. He has helped save the country with his creative imagination, but the people remember only his arrogance, his lies, and his mistakes.

Jim Latter occasionally shows creative imagination, but is so tradidion bound that he cannot develop very much. As a child, he has been

[2]Joyce Cary, Prisoner of Grace (1952; rpt. Carfax Edition, London: Michael Joseph, 1954), p. 277.

abandoned by his father, who has taken a mistress and moved to France after the death of Jim's mother. This leaves Jim with very little security on which to base any creativity. Searching for security, Jim finally discovers honor and tradition, which, if impersonal, at least seems to him unchanging. Honor becomes the center of his life, which makes him a perfect candidate for the army, but the inflexibility which often goes along with honor prevents him from growing, from changing with the times.

Latter's least honorable act in Prisoner of Grace is his desertion of Nina when she is pregnant. He seems to rationalize this away by claiming higher devotion to his duty as an army officer, and even names his book, Not Honour More, after a poem by Richard Lovelace, "To Lucasta, Going to the Wars," in which the speaker confronts a similar situation:

> I could not love thee, Dear, so much,
> Loved I not Honour more.

In his scrupulous fairness and honesty, Latter seems the stereotype of the British officer, but he has his failings. His frequent, and dishonorable, overtures of love to Nina while she is married to Nimmo are due to his belief that she was stolen away from him by Nimmo. Although he and Nimmo are friendly at times, he has no understanding of the necessities of politics and considers his rival an hypocrite and liar. He does not want any change in society, preferring the status quo.

When Latter leaves the army, he is too sportsmanlike to refrain from gambling and too honorable to run away from his gambling debts, but, as he has no money he is finally forced by his relatives to join the Colonial Service, and shipped to Nigeria.

What creativity Jim has finally flourishes in Nigeria. A district officer in a remote and uncivilized area, with no other white man for a hundred miles around, just as Cary himself had been, Latter is forced to use his imagination to solve disputes and help the natives. Where the politics of a Nimmo might turn to guile, Jim's honesty and sense of fairness make the people love him, and he is able to keep them from fighting, teach them better agricultural methods, and show them how to prevent illness, while his sense of tradition makes him leave the most important structures of their society intact. This is another case of the creative imagination flourishing when put in an atmosphere of freedom, when put where there are problems which it can solve.

Latter falls into a trap, however, because he has no great intuition of what the natives could become. He comes to see "his people" as noble savages, the happiest he has ever seen, and fights to keep them that way, without the "benefits" of civilization. He is not able to deal with the complexities, with the business concerns, miners, and traders who want to develop the area. A truly creative man, like Cary, would see the inevitability of development, and rather than try to halt it try to push it in the least harmful direction. But Latter cannot do this, and refuses to let miners and traders into the country. Because of his fighting, he gets into trouble with his superiors, and his refusal to give in to anything he consideres dishonorable causes them to transfer him to another station. Still angry, he resigns the service, and spends his inheritance trying to help "his people," whom he then finds do not want his help, but would rather try European ways. Latter's inability to shift when

necessary, to see into the future, to base his actions on a true intuition of life instead of on tradition, keep him from being truly creative, and cause his downfall.

Back in England, Jim is determined to marry Nina. But she hesitates. As Cary wrote, "The book was called Prisoner of Grace because Nina was held to her husband by her sense that he was on the whole a good man. She recoiled from destroying his career because she felt that he was trying to do right" (Prisoner, p. 6). Nina is also a prisoner of Nimmo's prayers, or "graces," as he continues his prayers for her, because she is unwilling to act and refuses to be converted or reformed. When Nimmo is finally out of office, Nina decides that divorcing him will no longer hurt his career, and, taking what seems to her the path of least resistance, she finally does divorce Nimmo and marry Jim.

Never having developed her own values, Nina is finally happy married to Jim. She finds his stability comforting after the seeming shiftiness of Nimmo. She does not claim to love Jim--seldom can she give in to love for more than a moment--but she claims that he loves her more than ever, and that is comforting to her. Soon, though, Nimmo returns, faking a heart attack in her house as an excuse to stay overnight and then to stay indefinitely. Jim is furious at the ruse, but Nina senses Nimmo's need and is unable to turn him away. She writes, "I did not love Chester and I had never loved him, but now, more than ever, at the end of his life, I was in his power" (Prisoner, p. 400). The book ends in a stalemate. Both men want Nina. She senses their need and is unable to turn either away. She is intelligent enough to understand her problem, but not

creative enough to find a solution and ease the tension.

When Nimmo is finally defeated after thirty years as a politician, he has a sudden realization of his mortality. After years of being almost invincible, he discovers that he is an old man, no longer loved by his countrymen, deserted by his wife. However, this, he writes, "did not bring me desolation but a fearful start of energy--it did not hurl me into the shadows of despair but the appalling light, the challenging brutality of truth."[3] This is the truly creative response to adversity, and Nimmo begins writing his memoirs. The book, Except the Lord, is meant "to show something too easily forgotten by statesmen and their critics alike--the mystery which lies beneath all history, all politics--the mighty and everlasting pressure of the soul seeking by ways unseen, and often unsuspected, its own good, freedom and enlightenment" (Except, p. 155). To do this, Nimmo ignores his adult life, and concentrates on his childhood and adolescence, which have influenced the direction of his adult life.

To some extent, creativity develops in response to external pressure. In Prisoner of Grace, Nina's response to this pressure, the death of her parents and the lack of affection, is uncreative: she runs away from reality. By contrast, the young Nimmo confronts reality and overcomes his problems. This is in part because he comes from a close-knit family, and a strong religious background. These things give him a strong, secure base on which to build. As the psalm from which the book draws its name

[3]Joyce Cary, Except the Lord (London: Michael Joseph, 1953), p. 155.

says: "Except the Lord build the house, their labour is but lost that build it" (Except, p. 284).

One question interferes with the reader's belief of Nimmo. If one has not read Prisoner of Grace, every word of Except the Lord seems true, and the reader is not on guard against Nimmo's bias. It must be remembered, though, that Nimmo hopes that this book will reassure the voters that he is still a staunchly religious person and persuade them to vote for him in the next election. One also remembers Nina's disgust at Nimmo's hypocrisy as he dictates pious statements from a behind a screen at the same time as he molests her. Nimmo, though, is a politician, and whether or not his memoirs are true, they are revealing, and they do explain, in a likely manner, how a creative person might develop.

Prisoner of Grace makes no mention of Nimmo's family, so it is with surprise that one discovers that he has, in fact, grown up in a family. From his speeches and his taunts about the class difference between himself and Nina, one expects that he has been raised in the most abject poverty. Actually, though, Nimmo has been raised in a poor but not starving family. His mother has been quite well-educated, and his father, a small farmer, is also an Adventist preacher. Until Nimmo is five, the family have their own farm and are quite comfortable.

When he is still very young, Nimmo's family suffers financial reverses, and along with his parents, brother, and two sisters, he has to move to a tiny house in town. For the first time he knows poverty, and this experience gives him a great drive to get ahead. He also knows sorrow when his dearly loved mother dies. Despite their poverty, Nimmo's

father is anxious that his boys do well, and sends them to school. Nimmo finishes several years of school, and his brother Richard, with the help of a scholarship from the landlord Slapton, actually graduates from a university.

Meanwhile, by hard work and aptitude, Nimmo's father becomes the foreman of a large farm, and his sister Georgina is put in charge of the dairy. The Nimmo family refuses to despair when problems arise. Instead, they deal with them creatively, fighting their way out of the problems, and showing themselves able to adapt. However, some things cannot be fought against. When Nimmo's father, old and crippled with rheumatism, loses his job, the family is forced to move into a damp stone hovel, where he dies, followed by Georgina, who dies of tuberculosis.

One reason for the lost jobs is the friends Nimmo is making. He becomes interested in the plight of the working man and tries to start a union among the farmworkers. However, when the farmers find out, many of the union members are fired, Nimmo among them. He is trying to deal creatively with his problems by organizing and demanding higher wages rather than simply complaining, but he does not yet know enough to pull off a successful strike.

Now in his late teens, Nimmo has lost his faith in God. He has also learned to lie over the years, to keep from hurting his father. He decides that honesty that wounds is bad, and that there is no such thing as honor when one is hungry. He goes through an empty, lonely stage until he discovers Communism. Once again he has something to believe in, a way to deal with the problems around him. Soon he becomes a professional

union agitator, with a decent salary, but it is not long before he finds that Communism is not the answer. The proletariat, he discovers, knows nothing about organization or economics. Experts are needed to run things--men of creative power, men of imagination, like himself. He feels the superiority of men like himself, who can change the world through imagination. He also discovers that he is a good speaker, that he can sway men's opinions and fire their emotions.

This does not last long, however. He becomes an important man in the union, but he realizes that he is living a lie. By calling a strike, he is hurting the union men more than he is helping them, and he sees that he is not leading them toward a good end and is thus a failure. When things go wrong, and he is expelled from the union, he feels more relieved than disheartened and determines to change his life.

The change is for the better. He regains his faith, becomes a preacher, takes over his father's old congregation, and finds a steady office job. Once again his creativity has overcome hardships which would send the non-creative person to the workhouse. The book ends at this stage of his life, when he is full of energy and about to marry Nina and devote his life to politics. He has learned the basic facts of human nature which will help him succeed in life as a great politician. He has emerged from a difficult childhood with hope and faith, things which will give him strength to reach the top.

Not Honour More is written by Jim Latter as a confession and explanation of the murders he has committed. The book covers the events of the last several weeks of Nina's life. Nimmo, still a house guest, is trying

to get back into power by both instigating a general strike and, when the time comes, breaking it. This is typical Nimmo creativity, a move to get back into the place where he feels he can do the most good. Jim, however, can only see the misery Nimmo is causing. He considers Nimmo's lying dishonorable, even if it is meant for the public good. He considers Nimmo one of "the talky boys . . . the politicos, . . . the jabberwocks. Who think they can talk themselves out of all responsibility while they play the tickle and grab game."[4] The dishonor touches even closer to home when Jim discovers Nimmo trying to make love to Nina in Jim's drawing room. Honor demands revenge, and Jim attempt to shoot Nimmo with a .22 rifle, but Nimmo, who is really quite spry although he pretends to be sickly, leaps backwards through the window and receives only a slight wound.

Jim is shocked when Nimmo refuses to press charges because of the attendant bad publicity, but it is just the Nimmo creativity at work, doing what it can to realize the intuition. As the book proceeds, virtual war breaks out because of the strike, and while Nimmo plays both sides, trying to bring down the government and have himself appointed Prime Minister, Jim has reluctantly taken charge of the special constables charged with keeping order during the strike. However, Nimmo's political games keep Jim from doing his duty throughout most of the book.

Jim finally realizes that men with his special type of creativity, based on honor rather than expedience, are no longer appreciated in

[4]Joyce Cary, Not Honour More (London: Michael Joseph, 1955), p. 43.

England. He makes up with Nina and decides to take a job in Africa, where courage and honor are still needed.

Before leaving, however, he waits for the trial of one of his men, framed by a coalition of Nimmo and the Communists, Nimmo going along to win their votes. When the man is sentenced to three years in prison, Jim is shocked by this dishonor. Returning to his house, he finds Nimmo in Nina's bed. Outraged by Nimmo's infidelity to truth and country and his adultery with Nina, Jim scares Nimmo into a heart attack. He sees that Nina must go too, even though he loves her so much:

> I say I never loved this sweet woman so much as now when I knew she had to die. Because of the rottenness. Because of the corruption. Because all loyalty was a laugh and there was no more trust. Because marriage was turned into a skin game out of a nice time by safety first. Because of the word made dirt by hypocrites and cowards. Because there was no truth or justice anywhere anymore. Because of the grabbers and tapeworms who were sucking the soul out of England (Honour, p. 220).

In the last sentence of the book he slices Nina's throat with a razor, then waits to accept his punishment honorably.

Once again three characters with varying amounts of creative imagination are contrasted. Nina's indecisiveness is not creative, but her loyalty and willingness to put aside personal feelings and help those who need her are good traits for the creative person to cultivate. Jim Latter is too bound to tradition to be very creative. Needing security, he would prefer to leave things the way they are, rather than take a chance of making them worse. But a sense of honor is, again, something all creative people must have, if they are to avoid hurting others. Nimmo lacks this, and as a result, he constantly hurts people as he works

toward a better world. But Nimmo is a creative person: he has true intuitions of what the world could be and works until his intuitions are realized. There are times when the ends justify the means. The creative politician, although loyal and honorable, must also dare, not only to dream but to act. He must do everything in his power to bring order and peace to a chaotic world.

Because of the security of his childhood, and the encouragement he received from those around him, Joyce Cary developed into a very creative person. His interest in creation led him to study the creative process, and over a number of years he developed his theory of creative imagination, in which he stressed the importance of completing the work of art, as well as having creative ideas. In himself he embodied creative imagination, completing sixteen novels and many non-fictional books, essays, and short stories.

In this thesis I have tried to show how Cary's creativity developed, what his theory of creative imagination is, and how it is reflected in the major characters of his trilogies. Having demonstrated Cary's belief that creative imagination develops only on a firm base, that it is a process running from intuition through the working-out of the intuition to the realization of it, and that everyone can be creative, I have, in the last two chapters, tried to show why each of the major characters in the trilogies is or is not creative. The following graph explains this.

In his trilogies, Cary shows that to lead a full and fulfilled life, one must use creative imagination. That so many of his characters are not successful at life is due to their lack of creative imagination.

Through his novels, Cary is showing his readers the part creative imagination plays and encouraging them to develop their own.

Character	Base	Intuition	Process	Realization	Reservations
(Cook) Sara Monday	lives in present only.	nesting instinct based on need for security rather than intuition of truth.	Sense of duty. ability to complete projects.	Able to bring order to chaos around her, build a new nest wherever she goes	failure to learn from past mistakes & lack of real intuition prevents creative imagination
(Lawyer) Thomas Wilcher	lives in past only. Insecure childhood.	intuition of need for being a pilgrim, for being active and creative.	Inability to act or change because of need for security of past.	No realization	No creative imagination because need for security prevents action.
(Artist) Gulley Jimson	lives in future only, although trained in traditions of art.	Usually fancy rather than intuition. Intuition of objective reality when there is sufficient empathy with object, such as Sara.	lack of control usually prevents completion of creative process.	Almost never completes his paintings.	lack of control, failure to base work on intuition & tradition keeps him from often showing creative imagination.
(Farmer) Robert Brown (Wilcher's Nephew)	lives in present & future. tradition of creativity in family.	Intuition of how run-down farm can be brought to life.	Ability to act, although without regard for past	Achieves his intuition.	Shows creative imagination, but lack of tradition causes him to destroy the good as well as the bad.
(Wife) Nina Nimmo-Latter	Continual compromise retreat to fantasy world.	Glimpses Nimmo's purpose, but no original intuition.	In ability to act. Takes course of least resistance.	No realization.	Passiveness, unhealthy need for security, & inability to act prevents creative imagination.
(Soldier) Jim Latter	Honor, due to need for security.	based on honorable action rather than perception of objective truth.	preference for tradition prevents action.	Limited realization while in Africa.	strong ties to tradition & honor prevent creative imagination.
(Politician) Chester Nimmo	strong family security, religion, tradition of creativity in family, at home in past, present, & future.	strong intuition of how society should be.	does whatever necessary to effect goals.	realizes his intuitions by changing society & solving crises.	Shows creative imagination, but lacks sense of honor & the importance of the individual.

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