

**Awfully Affecting: the development of a sentimental
tradition in the lyrics of British and North American
popular song**

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Abstract

This study starts by offering an account of the multi-faceted origins of sentimentality, and its importance as an innovative and influential cultural force. The origins of commercial popular song and the high period of sentimentalism are contiguous, and it is argued that a sentimental tradition in popular song develops alongside those in the more familiar areas of literature and painting. The sentimental song tradition includes both secular and sacred lyrics, and it is shown, significantly, that modern hymnody (which has informed much subsequent secular popular music) has sentimental roots.

The tradition is traced sequentially via the work of the key sentimental lyricists until the mid-nineteenth century when the increasing volume and variety of British and American popular song makes such a historical approach less feasible. The thesis then analyses favourite sentimental song lyric motifs as they occur in different types of popular song at different times, and two particularly well-defined aspects of the repertoire - the Irish sentimental song and lyrics about the hereafter - are explored in terms of how they offer alternative realities.

Sentimental song, because of its didactic origins, has always been concerned with achieving effects - typically producing tears - rather than being original. Its use of a limited pool of stock themes to this end makes it a cultural product that is easy to 'manufacture', and it has a ready audience because it affords a pleasurable indulgence - often a characteristic 'happiness in unhappiness' - while at the same time giving proof of sensibility (and, in the eighteenth century, proof of moral and aesthetic probity).

The continuing appeal of sentimental popular song is explained in terms of its aptness in extreme social and personal situations, as well as its ability to offer a heart-warming alternative to more objective or despairing views of the world.

*O ye tears ! O ye tears ! till I felt you on my cheek,
I was selfish in my sorrow; I was stubborn, I was weak;
Ye have giv'n me strength to conquer, and I stand erect and free,
And I know that I am human, by the light of sympathy.*

(*'O Ye Tears !'*: Charles Mackay [words], Franz Abt, [music], mid-19thC)

*Back before the Blues were blue
When the Good Old Songs were new;
Songs that may no longer please us
'Bout darkies, about Jesus...
...'Home! Sweet Home!' and 'Aura Lee',
These were songs that my daddy taught me -
'Camptown Races', 'Susannah Don't You Cry' -
'Gentle Annie' still brings a tear to my eye:
Some said 'garbage', others cried 'art'
You couldn't call it 'Soul', so you had to call it 'Heart'.*

(*'The Worksong'*: Kate McGarrigle [words and music], 1982)

*These were not the most popular... These were songs which made Kipling and
educated men like him cough and blow their noses in embarrassment. They had
such titles as 'The Roses 'Round the Door Make Me Love Mother More' ...*

(*'Death's Men - Soldiers of the Great War'*: Denis Winter, 1978)

Otto: *You favour sentimental popular music, Miss Buck?*

Kate: *I do not. I like..Motown, a little Disco, this and that.*

Otto: *The sentimental are always duped...I prefer jazz to pop. It resists false
notions of a single shared experience and is therefore unsentimental...*

Kate: *So I'm supposed to buy a Thelonius Monk tape and that'll fix it. I don't
think so.*

(*'The Strip'*: Phyllis Nagy, 1995)

*In the true sense of the word, sentimentality was Tin Pan Alley's meat and
potatoes.*

(*'Introducing The Song Sheet'*: Helen Westin, 1976)

*When you've got your very last drink in your hand
And your friends are so stoned they can only just stand
There's a song that is heard in each pub in the land
It's the 'The Five to Eleven Waltz'.
It's all about sweethearts and 'My Mother Dear'
A love that is lost, a love that's sincere
But most of the lyrics are drowned in the beer
That's 'The Five to Eleven Waltz'...*

(*'The Five to Eleven Waltz'*: John Junkin and Denis King [words and music]
1969)

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Chapter 1

Parameters and Procedures

Parameters - words and music: equal partners, but unequal signification

Mrs Oscar Hammerstein, so the story goes, once overheard someone praise 'Ol' Man River' as a "great Kern song." "I beg your pardon," she said, "But Jerome Kern did not write 'Ol' Man River'. Mr. Kern wrote dum-dum dum da; my husband wrote ol' man river."

(Furia 1990, 3)

The story above notwithstanding, popular song is of course about the conjunction of words and music: as a sometime performer of sentimental song no-one is more aware of this than me. My decision to limit this study to the lyrics of the songs might seem therefore at best eccentric, at worst insufficient - yet the reasons for doing so are, I believe, compelling. At the heart of this is the question of the relative intelligibility of words and music: there are severe limits on determining the signification of sounds we call 'music' as opposed to the sounds we call 'words'. The key point here is not that music is devoid of meaning (plainly untrue: it is hugely powerful), but that its meaning is obscure, variable. Meaningful discourse - speech, Ph.D. theses - rely on a consensus about meaning; words have that, music doesn't. (You understand what I signify when I sing *Old Shep, he has gone where the good doggies go...*; the melody and chords 'supporting' those lyrics have far less unequivocal meaning. Both *doggies* and a G7th augmented chord convey things; there is simply much more agreement on what *doggies* conveys. Because of this we can talk easily and sensibly about the former, but not the latter.)

Problems: philosophical.

Put at its most stark - words aspire to communicate fixed meanings, music does not. Attempts to draw comparisons between language and music at the phonetic and syntactical level point out the difficulties in establishing musical 'meaning': *What is musical meaning? Specifically, how does the listener derive a meaning from music?...Language is based on understanding the interaction of its phonetic, syntactic and semantic levels. And while music conveys meanings, its semantic level*

is not as uniformly defined as that of language...In language, the specificity of the semantic component provides information. Indeed, verbal communication cannot take place if the listener does not understand the semantic meaning. But in music this is not necessarily the case. Although the meaning is enhanced by our knowledge of musical styles and practices, musical meaning remains both pluralistic and personal (Aiello 1994, 54-55).

Even if one accepts that music is 'referential' - that is, capable of having meaning by making reference to non-musical things outside itself (rather than being 'absolutist', deriving meaning only from within itself in intra-musical terms) - what it can convey unequivocally rarely extends beyond the most obvious or clichéd. Beyond this, capturing meaning in music is like netting smoke: you may fancy you see 'meaning' in the whorls of smoke, but they resist 'capture' (and are anyway only ever capable of personal - as opposed to social - interpretation). Language by contrast is, *vide* Wittgenstein, necessarily social: we may use it therefore to 'contrast and compare' effectively precisely because it lacks music's 'strengths' (ambiguity, subjectivity and simultaneity). These 'strengths' of course derive precisely from music's non-representational character: if it could express thoughts like words these 'strengths' would cease to exist. The aesthetician Eduard Hanslik pointed out the crucial link between thoughts and feelings: *...music can never present the thought that forms the core of a feeling or emotion, and, consequently, music can never represent a definite feeling or emotion* (Budd 1983, 23) or put in formal proof:

(i) Music cannot represent thoughts.

(ii) Definite feelings - hope, love, sadness - contain certain thoughts.

Therefore

(iii) Music cannot represent feelings or emotions.

He thought we can satisfactorily differentiate between musical dynamics: *...speed, slowness, strength, weakness, increasing and decreasing intensity* (quoted in *Ibid.*, 23), but whilst this might deliver some emotional message, there will never be consensus as to what that message might be. Noël Carroll (1988) has suggested in film music what occurs on the screen gives a specificity of meaning to what otherwise would be an essentially ambiguous (if 'dramatic') score. Similarly one could argue in popular song that it is the words that provide the music with a specificity of emotional meaning: before the words are heard the music can only convey a dynamic - as above - and, for those educated to recognise it, a style. When the words tell us the song is about the demise of a faithful dog then the tune

'becomes' a sad one. Before hearing the words we might have recognised the tune as being slow and not very 'vital', or from a genre like Country music that is associated with sad songs, but we don't get 'sad' for definite until the lyrics start. [Indeed one commentator has suggested that music's rôle in this particular style is always secondary, an unobtrusive framework for the words: *country music...has long been characterized by its lyrics and a melody designed to transport and complement the lyrics, not to clutter or hinder those messages...Most observers agree that the lyrics overshadow the melody and interpretation of the melody in a country song...* (Rodgers 1989, 15). Similarly comments on Parlour song point to the centrality of the text, and the need for simple tunes with harmony and accompaniment *...remain(ing) plain and in the background* (Tawa 1985, 10). This is also the practitioner's point of view: (Kristofferson 1998, radio interview).] The fact that many celebrated popular songs like *Stardust* and *San Antonio Rose* started life as little-known instrumentals, and only achieved acclaim after lyrics had been added, likewise points to the relative dominance of text over music.

Problems: cultural

What might be thought a suitable musical accompaniment to a sentimental lyric differs considerably, not only across time, but within different song styles at the same time. Lyrics, by contrast, remain largely constant regardless of chronology or musical genre. Thus in the Irish sentimental song tradition a germane similarity of lyric between Tom Moore's Regency pieces and the classic Irish-American songs of Chauncey Olcott and Ernest Ball is obscured by the fact that they are 'framed' by tunes obeying quite different musical conventions. Even if one simplifies 'sentimental' to simply equal 'sad' notions of what would count as musically appropriate vary alarmingly: Regency drawing-room 'sad' isn't Music Hall 'sad'; Music Hall 'sad' isn't Nashville 'sad'. And our own cultural and historical references affect how we hear music: the simple pentatonic settings of Moore's songs don't sound especially sorrowful to us, schooled as we are in more insistent and ornate conventions; similarly the over-the-top chromatic harmonies of *You'll Never Walk Alone* would be impenetrable to Moore.

Conversely, linguistic meaning does stay the same: Moore's *The Last Rose of Summer* was the progenitor of hundreds of pathetic flower songs, including a minor 1925 hit, *A Rose in a Garden of Weeds*. Despite the century separating the songs there is a striking textual similarity in the prosopopoeic 'loneliness' of the roses in

both songs, indeed a line from the 1920's song, *When the night sheds its dew That's a tear shed for you...* uncannily echoes a prosopopoeic couplet from another Moore song, *But the night-dew that falls, though in silence it weeps...* There are however no musical similarities between the plain tune of the Moore song, and the baroque 'Barbershopisms' of the 1920's song.

Music therefore subverts comparison: lyrics encourage it. As my aim here is to trace a continuing tradition (across centuries) it is therefore perforce to the lyrics that I shall address myself.

Recommendations: precedent

Studies which do consider both words and music of sentimental-inflected popular song solve the problem of altering musical styles and 'dialects' by tending to limit themselves to specific periods (where musical conventions aren't fluctuating) or to the work of particular artists (Tawa 1985, 1990, Vinson 1997, Brackett 1995).

By contrast, work concerned with a broader picture - as this work is - eschews musical reference. Todd/Forrell (1982) in their discussion of English Congregational Hymns make no mention of music and Rogers (1989) 'realizes' his title, *The Country Music Message*, solely in terms of reference to song-titles and lyrics. (And Francis Child, concerned with another broad - if very different - tradition in his *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, made the text *all important* [Tawa 1985, 7].)

Recommendations: the comparative

I will be arguing that an examination of lyrics of popular songs provides evidence of continued deployment of sentimental themes and tone to the extent that one can posit the existence of a 'tradition'. This thesis is informed by existing work on both the theory and imaginative expression of sentimentality; because that (extant) work - the philosophy of Shaftesbury, the novels of Mackenzie - is expressed in the same semantic medium as the song lyrics, it can be usefully related to it in an unambiguous and pertinent way. Comparison even with non-linguistic sentimental expression, as in the 'plastic' arts, is possible (assuming the expression is not abstract). Thus the illustration on the sheet-music cover of *Old Shep*, the genre painting of the pet's cemetery, the magic lantern slides telling the story of *Greyfriars*

Bobby, although from different times and cultural contexts, can be said to be about the same 'thing' as the lyrics of a sentimental Dog song. (Music as an abstract form cannot usefully be compared with anything.)

Recommendations: the pragmatic

The decision to concentrate on lyrics alone means in practical terms more ground can be covered. Even if one ignores the problems of musical meaning a consideration of words and music in tandem substantially reduces the scope of any study, and breadth of reference seems axiomatic in the task I've set myself. Similarly a sustained discussion of related areas like performance would limit attention given to the texts; comments are made where relevant, but the main focus is always the lyrics.

Parameters - elucidating definitions

'sentimental'

It might be objected that most popular songs except those of obviously inimical function - comedy songs, dance songs - are sentimental in the broad sense in that they are concerned with the summoning and enjoyment of feelings. My concern here however is with the specifically sentimental, not the generally sentimental: such work is characterized by an unreconstructed use of particular themes to summon a decidedly immoderate tone. The adjective 'sentimental' - and its noun 'sentimentality' - has undergone changes in connotation over the past two hundred years, most notably in becoming increasingly pejorative. These changes are examined in due course, but these words - and related ones like 'sentimentalism' and 'sensibility' - are used here in their original technical (non-judgemental) sense. Similarly 'pathetic' is used non-disparagingly as the adjectival form of 'pathos'.

It is impossible however to escape the condemnation implicit in current usage of 'sentimental', and my choice in telling the story of sentimental popular song is partially intended as a corrective: the smart end of the popular song repertoire has always had more than its share of apologists.

'a tradition'

To delineate the origins of the sentimental popular song tradition it is necessary to go back over three hundred years. Both the conditions that gave rise to the songs and the early songs themselves are much removed from the milieu and material we normally associate with 'popular song' - yet this is where things started, and this distant material is the source of all that followed. Part of my aim is to show that both sentimentality and its adoption in the lyrics of popular music happen earlier than might be supposed; because we are less familiar with eighteenth and early nineteenth century popular culture, the prevalent perception of the sentimental is often of a mid or late Victorian phenomenon (see for instance Smith 1975). Certainly, later nineteenth century culture has a greater 'visibility', and we probably feel a greater affinity with it.)

It is possible to trace the main sentimental song writers sequentially from the earlier eighteenth century to the mid nineteenth century; thereafter both the proliferation of popular music and the hegemonic status of sentimentality make it more useful to adopt a thematic approach. This stress on the initial development of sentimental song necessarily limits the amount of coverage given to more modern material (though this is mediated by the fact that the more modern songs are both more familiar and more extensively commented on).

'British and North American'

There is a significant overlap between British and North American popular song: we have always sung each other's songs and the 'key texts' in this study like *Home! Sweet Home!*, *Last Rose of Summer*, *Old Folks At Home* have been enjoyed equally on both sides of the Atlantic. This is reflective of the significantly British origins of the Republic, reflecting shared ideals and values as well as a shared language. However, whilst there has always been an interchange of popular music across the Atlantic, all the major North American historians of pop, Spaeth, Hamm, Sanjek and Tawa, note the dominance of British songs in the U.S. certainly up to the first third of the nineteenth century. Tawa notes that up to 1840 *The bulk of the music issued in America, however, still continued to come from composers working in London* (Tawa 1985, 5) and Sanjek notes that *To begin with it was imported songs such as 'Auld Lang Syne' and 'Home, Sweet Home' that were the most well known in the early nineteenth century* (Sanjek 1988 vol.1, 18). This was surely aided by the fact

that British ...songs...could be copied by American publishers and sold here (in America) without a royalty fee... (Crawford v) and, more profoundly, that in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century North America *The great majority of...amateur musicians traced their lineage back to the British Isle. Not surprisingly they shared a fondness for parlour songs with their peers across the Atlantic.* (Tawa, 18)

This was reinforced by visiting British performers: *The American purchasers of sheet music would have been the ones attending the performances of visiting British singers. They bought scores of the parlor songs common in England into their homes particularly during...1780-1840* (Ibid.) and all the early North American musical periodicals featured excerpts from British books and periodicals...(and)...information on British song style and performance, and on London musical life...(Ibid.) indeed up to somewhere around mid-century a high percentage of items published in America would have emanated from London (Gammond, 1991, 462).

For nearly all the period of our most detailed study British influence is predominant. (This is also clear in religious 'popular song' where English non-conformist hymnody formed the basis for congregational musical practice on both sides of the Atlantic.)

From the mid-century onwards, with the phenomenal success of Stephen Foster and the influence of Minstrelsy the situation gradually reverses; by the second decade of the next century (American) Tin Pan Alley has become the dominant force on both sides of the Atlantic.

In the last analysis however the country of origin of a popular song - an 'inauthentic' commercial product - counts for less than an understanding of its conventions: some of the best Irish sentimental songs have been written in New York, and British writers who have never been west of Reading have produced popular Cowboy songs. (After all, does it matter if a Ford is made in Detroit or Dagenham?). The sentimental tradition in lyric writing is indeed one such definite, enduring and thoroughly transatlantic popular song convention.

Procedures

The nature of the song quotes

Because the volume of pertinent song lyrics far exceeds the space available to quote them, part of this project is necessarily editorial. Another part of the impetus for what follows is archival: to access and present historical material. From a plethora of possibilities I have strived to select engaging examples derived from my own collection and specialist libraries to illustrate points under discussion. Given the immense volume of material originally published this is not actually hugely obscure work: whilst the songs may be unfamiliar today and long out of print many titles nevertheless crop up repeatedly in junk shops, job-lots and public and private collections indicating a past popularity - and the very fact that a piece of old sheet-music has survived suggests healthy original sales. (Titles with limited print runs - 'misses' not 'hits' - don't come down to us at all.) The songs therefore tend to be the *more* successful of *less* familiar, the 2nd or 3rd XI of archival pop. I have not gone to historical song lists to artificially boost my 'Mother' or 'Dog' song count: that, to quote Ranger Doug. B. Green, 'would be the Easy Way but not the Cowboy Way'.

A complete lyric is presented where the situation demands it - where the song is a narrative one, or where its effect is cumulative. Elsewhere selective quotes tend to do the job more succinctly, and the majority of the song quotes given are excerpts.

Even after this editorial process there is a considerable volume of song lyrics quoted. Whilst they are my 'raw material', my primary source, it is hoped they will be read faster than the main text - they are best skimmed for 'tone' or 'story-line'. To facilitate this process they are put in single-spaced italicized text.

A complete song concordance giving country of origin, date of publication and writers is given at back. Because of this, and as another aid to uncluttered reading, song information given in the text is selective. In the 'historical' chapters song titles alone are given in brackets after the lyrics (author and date are frequently implied). In the chapter on motifs - by definition 'un-historical' - date of publication and country of origin are also given. In the sections on particular repertoires - Irish sentimental song and Country gospel - country of origin is clear from the text, but writers and date of publication are now relevant, and are given with the title. Finally where additional details would clearly distract from the text, they are omitted: readers are again referred to the song concordance.

Titles are given as originally published, even if this is at odds with the way they are referred to subsequently (for instance J. H. Payne titled his celebrated song *Home! Sweet Home!*, but it is usually designated *Home, Sweet Home*). In some cases, even after consulting standard sources like the Performing Right Society or the British Library, it has been impossible to provide full details for the song concordance: where possible educated guesses are made based on available data. Particularly where no date of publication is available, clues can be sought from the style and subject matter of the piece, typographical and printing characteristics of the sheet-music and/or the design of any accompanying artwork and, if authorship is known, period of that writer's other work. (Generally speaking, more recent work affords more such hints, allowing for a more specific supposition - '1930's'; earlier undated songs tend to be ascribed a wider time-frame - 'late 18thC'.)

Layout

A choice has been made to italicize quotes within the text (to prevent excessive use of quotation marks); this ties-in with the italicized song quotes used throughout, and hopefully makes for a more streamlined and easily-read text. Consistency in layout is occasionally sacrificed to avoid an awkward page break.

A complete bibliography is provided at the end, and bibliographic references are given in the text in the usual way; aesthetic considerations lead to the use of a comma rather than a colon between authors' name and page number thus preventing multi-dotted infelicities like: (Ibid.: 39). Where reference is made to several works by the same author they are identified by their publication dates; where only one work is referred to publication date is given only on the first citation.

Categories (Home, Mother) are capitalized, as are repertoires (Dreams of Heaven) and genres (Music-Hall, Parlour). Frequently-used terms are given subsequently in shortened versions e.g. 'Alley' rather than the more complete, but prolix 'Tin Pan Alley'.

Chapter 2

Introduction - A Present Perspective: *Amy Johnson's Last Flight* and the Problem of Sentimentality

'Amy'

I gained a certain local notoriety in the mid-sixties performing a sentimental song about the final flight of Amy Johnson. The song had actually started life in the 1930's as an 'event song' about the disappearance of Amelia Earhart by an eccentric Cowboy singer, Red River Dave McEnery - but in the interests of chauvinism I'd substituted Amy for Amelia. (After all they'd both vanished mysteriously in 'planes, and telling the story of an Englishwoman better suited my quasi-Jack Buchanan *diseur-ing*).

It was apparent to me even at the time that material about the demise of a pioneering aviatrix was not - as we used to say - 'where it was at' and despite its favourable reception people expressed much bemusement at the song. I was, for instance, taken to task for being wilfully eccentric: why not follow the existing and successful trends in popular music of the time? Those trends - the 'where it was at' - were largely home-grown derivatives of black Rhythm 'n' Blues or Soul; the black originals formed the basis for the sound of British Beat Groups generally as well as a core repertoire to be reproduced by home-grown Rhythm 'n' Blues revivalists. Either way it was hugely popular. People wondered therefore at my contrariness in bucking the trend, failing to 'buy into' prevalent musical modes: the demand was there for more Chicago blues; I could do that (sort-of); therefore why did I not do it?

The first thing that struck me was that for all the apparent quaintness of my repertoire, wasn't it a good deal more peculiar for beat musicians - young, largely college-educated, white Englishmen - to appropriate the music of a black urban American underclass performed by men old enough to be their fathers? Now that was strange. Geography, class, race, age - everything - seemed to separate them from the originals. By contrast for me, a white middle-class Lincolnshireman, to be singing about Amy, a white middle-class Yorkshirewoman, seemed by comparison entirely appropriate.

So why the unease with the Amy Johnson song? It seemed less to do with aptness of my material than its tone. It was this, not the fact that I sang about an aviatrix rather than a hoochie-coochie man, that stood in such marked opposition to

the zeitgeist; this over-rode the absurdity of hundreds of inept Howlin' Wolf impressions served up by British art students. I was singing sentimental, they were singing 'low-down'; I was singing white, they were singing black; I was Europe, they were America. It is a profound difference: the gap between Robert Johnson at the crossroads selling his soul to the devil and Amy Johnson over the Channel flying into oblivion - between a hard, disquieting story and a soft, sad story - popular song as challenge and popular song as consolation. Psychologically it was about the summoning and enjoyment of very different sorts of emotions; historically it reflected the difference between pre-twentieth century popular music and the popular song of our own century - 'the old songs' scarcely touched by Black forms like ragtime, jazz, blues and soul, and 'our' songs that wouldn't exist without them.

The fact that I *was* singing sentimental was never in doubt: the McEneaney original had been spiced with (unsubtle) musical prompts: plangent Barbershop chords positively dripping syrup, and an arrangement that included mournful solo harmonica and 'heavenly' *oohs* and *aahs* in the back-up vocals. At the climax of the song the lead voice switched from singing to talking. (An old but trusty way of upping the emotional ante; see pp.191-2.) It was the text however that set the sentimental agenda; the song started:

*A ship out on the ocean,
A speck against the sky.
Amy Johnson flying sad that day...*

And the chorus set the seal on things:

*There's a beautiful, beautiful field
Far away in a Land that is fair.
Happy landings to you, Amy Johnson:
Farewell! First Lady of the air.
(Amy Johnson's Last Flight)*

It was this sentimental mood - histrionic, excessive with a manipulative savouring of sadness - that seemed to evoke disquiet in people. Sentimentality, especially 'full-strength' sentimentality as in this song, wasn't quite...nice - and I, as someone with a college education, should know better. (My corruption had started earlier: at school I'd insisted on interpolating Jimmie Rodgers's *Hobo Bill's Last Ride* into worthy Woody Guthrie medleys.) There was a feeling that if I must do material like this the only civilized way to countenance it was as a piece of amusing period kitsch. But why was the tone of *Amy* suspect when, for instance, the

menacing sexual braggadocio of *Hoochie Coochie Man* - one of the anthems of the time - was not?

The answer is less to do with the relative attractions of Rhythm 'n' Blues ('authentic' black sensibility as an attractive oppositional mode in youth culture; a relatively 'easy-to-learn' improvisational form where even tyros might appear virtuosic; and the simple Nietzschean pleasures of cranking an amp. up very loud) than with a general resistance to sentimentality. I gradually realized the problem of *Amy Johnson's Last Flight* was essentially that of The Problem of Sentimentality.

The Problem of Sentimentality

Among the politer terms of abuse there are few so effective as 'sentimental'.

(I. A. Richards 1929, 255)

It is generally agreed that there is something unwholesome about sentimentality...

(Mark Jefferson 1983, 519)

The fact that over fifty years separates these two quotes indicates a consistency in the resistance to sentimentality. What then is the basis of this widespread disapprobation? Richards was a literary critic, Jefferson is a philosopher, and their disciplines have been foremost in articulating and analysing the objections to sentimentality. It might be that they only speak for academe; it might be that they offer a formal, 'thought-through' account of what most people think.

The essence of Richard's argument was that sentimentality hampered - indeed was inimical - to the development of a refined and discerning critical appreciation. This was because of three things: first it is imprecise and coarse; secondly it misrepresents the way the world really is; thirdly it seeks artificially heightened emotion, emotion that is excessive for the situation causing it. Richards also noted that most of us (himself included) turn sentimentalist in certain situations: when we've had a drink or three, when we're fevered, when we're caught up in the crowd. In these situations our critical faculties are compromised by physiological changes that favour an excessive emotionality. But however deeply felt, our sensations in such states are unrefined and vague: *violence of emotion...does not imply value...*

Further, the fact a piece of writing or music produces strong emotion means nothing: *Poems which are moving may be negligible or bad* (Richards, 259).

A sentimental reaction produced by either bad art or too many drinks could be seen for what it was after the correct application of an engaged critical faculty (of the sort Richards hoped to encourage). The musician and psycho-analyst Theodore Reik reports being extravagantly moved when hearing a song from his youth about his hometown:

*Wien, Wien nur du allein
Sollst stets die Stadt meiner Träume sein*

*(Vienna, Vienna, you alone
Will always be the city of my dreams.)
(‘Wien, du Stadt meiner Träume’)*

But Reik realizes such an immoderate response is only possible when discrimination is suspended: *The ripple of homesickness was short and has ebbed away...My critical faculties are restored and my resistance against the cheap sentimentality of those songs is growing* (Reik 1953, 112).

Thus, correct critical discernment will lead us towards the worthwhile - that with substance and integrity - by comparison with which inferior forms like the sentimental, with its noisy emotionality, will be seen for the shallow thing it is. This was the complaint with *Amy Johnson's Last Flight*: I'd had an education that sought to instil Richardian critical faculty, yet wilfully chose to ignore it; I liked dross. Like the classic H. M. Bateman cartoon situation, I was the man at the poetry reading who scandalized the company by admitting he preferred Patience Strong to Shelley.

Richards' position has been extended and amplified by other (literary) critics like Monroe Beardsley and Laurence Lerner. Beardsley stresses the lack of proportion in sentimentality: the sentimental response is always *greater than what the situation deserves or demands* (Beardsley 1970, 107). Lerner is particularly exercised by how limited sentimentality is. He sees it as a class of partiality: life is complex but sentimentality never admits this, favouring a lurid selectivity. It is thus unobjective and it is 'untrue', because the sentimentalist *...is blinded by his own warm tears* (Lerner 1960, 81).

The critics are therefore unanimous in seeing sentimentality as a flawed aesthetic stance. As Lerner says *All critics agree sentimentality is a fault...* (Ibid.),

and this is borne out by how much of a critical common-place some variant of: *X manages Y without resort to sentimentality* has become.

Philosophers go further, and in exploring the ramifications of these objections, moreover find sentimentality morally flawed. For instance Mary Midgely defines being sentimental as *misrepresenting the world in order to indulge feelings...*(which she identifies in the next paragraph as *soft feelings*); this *distorts expectations (and)...can make people unable to deal with the real world...* (Midgely 1979, 385). She gives the example of how difficult it would be for someone with only sentimental notions of children to deal with real children (a theme used more than once to hilarious effect by Richmal Crompton in the *William* books). Mark Jefferson also makes this point in saying sentimentality *...involves us in expectation warping fictions...* (Jefferson 1983, 525). Jefferson also invokes the notion of 'emotional economy', and says *We cannot afford to be emotionally spendthrift* - exactly the thing that sentimentality encourages. Further, in grossly simplifying things sentimentality encourages a 'fiction of innocence', which might actually hide much darker things; this is perhaps the most serious moral charge.

The jury therefore has plainly delivered its verdict: sentimentality is a Bad Thing. According to the critics it is an affront to discerning taste; according to the philosophers a cause of ethical distortion. Seen thus the extent of sentimentality's rout - so successful, so unanimous - would seem to preclude objection and raise questions about the viability of further serious study. As Raymond Williams put it: *Nobody who asks the meaning of the word 'sentimental' is met by a polite and serious stare* (quoted in Park 1996, 127).

Yet this is only a partial verdict, the verdict of academe, which would seem at odds with the opinion of the court of public opinion as reflected in the huge popular appetite for the sentimental, in Mills and Boon, in Soaps and in popular music. Although the guardians of the flame - teachers, artists, *bien pensants* - inveigh against it the groundswell of public opinion seems in favour not just of sentimental cultural products but of sentimentality itself. *As in Art, So in Life (Only More So)* would seem to be the motto when one considers the people's predilection for sentimentalising everything from pets to princesses. Despite the imbalance between popular and erudite verdicts on sentimentality, suggesting more people are 'for' sentimentality - maybe a majority - than might be thought, 'serious' writing on popular music inevitably reflects the academic verdict: scholarly writers, after all, tend to be formally educated and part of that education is about the discernment and study of *The Worthwhile* (as determined by Richardian standards, the standards of the Academy). As we have observed, *The Sentimental* is seen to stand in opposition

to The Worthwhile. This poses problems for an area like popular music research where much of its 'raw material' past and present is tainted by this despised sensibility. The challenge then is to examine and explain work - and a seemingly large body of work - informed by a tone so scorned as to preclude serious discussion. In studying sentimentality (as much as in singing it) one is met with a McEnroesque 'You-Cannot-Be-Serious' reaction: for the educated taste at least, sentimentality is beyond the pale.

Sentimentality and the popular song literature

That said, serious writing on popular song has included commentary on sentimental material, if in an often predictably unsympathetic way (as we shall see). However the limitations of extant studies, whilst certainly reflecting general distaste for sentimentality among academics, also reflect another key fact - the simple pragmatic one that sentimentality has been peripheral to the main axes of popular music research. Serious writing on western popular music is a comparatively recent phenomenon, and like any other study has been informed by intellectual currents. The dominant trends at any time help determine both what are deemed relevant areas of study as well as the methodologies thought appropriate for their investigation. Rather than review all literature that has touched on the sentimental in pop it seems more fruitful (and concise) therefore to see how such work is accommodated - or in this case not accommodated - within the ideological preoccupations of the subject. This approach derives from a paper by Charles Hamm who, having had a career in this field, sought to put all extant writing in some wider theoretical context. Drawing on Foucault, Hamm argues: *The intellectual and ideological climate of the modern era encouraged writers to construct meta-narratives: broad, all-encompassing schemes purporting to yield some 'special mode representational of eternal truth'* (Hamm 1995, 1).

These schemes ostensibly centre on scholarly choice, but when viewed from a distance - anthropologically as it were - are also seen to reflect extra-scholarly factors. That is, behind all writing there is ideology: agendas of all sorts, professional and personal, acknowledged and un-acknowledged determine what is written. Hamm argues that the meta-narratives are intrinsically partial, in that any such model will favour work in some directions at the expense of others, and popular music studies

are no exception: *These narratives have common features. As befits their origins in modernist thinking, each is hierarchical and exclusionary, tending to privilege some genre or repertory over others* (Ibid., 2).

Hamm then proceeds to isolate the main meta-narratives - 'protocols' - in the field. These can exist concurrently, although very often one 'narrative' will be dominant; many will remember a time when what Hamm calls the Narrative of Mass Culture was prevalent. This saw popular music as a product of capitalist endeavour; in the pursuit of economic advantage it inevitably responds to the lowest common denominator. Because of this all popular music is morally and aesthetically inferior to 'serious' music. In other 'Narratives' judgement is equally partial. There have for instance been two 'Narratives of Authenticity'; in the first, Black music forms - ragtime, jazz, blues - were held to be more substantial than white forms - operetta for instance - and therefore more worthy of study (echoes here surely of the preference for *The Hoochie Coochie Man* to *Amy*). In the second, the musics of politically or socially oppositional groups are seen to be most worthwhile; such a neo-Marxist approach has informed much recent research argues Hamm, producing work on Chilean freedom songs and Punk (but not Jim Reeves or *Amy Johnson's Last Flight*). Another 'Narrative' asserts the existence of 'classic' popular music, positing that certain songs display a wit or inventiveness that makes them superior to the average, and therefore worthy of serious study. (Good for Gershwin and Porter - see Wilder (1972) and Furia (1990) - but again not so good for Jim or *Amy*). It is perhaps unnecessary to present all Hamm's 'protocols': my (unsurprising) point is that existing Narratives do not accommodate the serious consideration of sentimental popular song, and when encountered it is usually as a debased form in opposition to preferred styles. Thus Edward Lee's *Popular Music in Great Britain* (1970) sees sentimental song as a stilted bourgeois product, feeble and uninteresting, beside the robust vigour of proletarian folk music or the artistic integrity of 'art' music. A similar prejudice is aired in much work on earlier British pop: class defines the agenda - Music Hall is preferred to Drawing-Room (and sentimentality, which appears in both, is seen as a bourgeois corruption). Thus Colin MacInnes's study of Music Hall, *Sweet Saturday Night* (1967), whilst the first modern survey of the field, repeats the familiar prejudices: *Great art, of course, is never sentimental...* (33).

Of course.

It might be thought that a resolutely historicist approach to popular music - 'simply' telling the story - might be less partial. Sentimentality now, however, is marginalised by being represented as a purely local phenomenon, something that occurred at a

certain time and place, and then ceded to newer influences. This is the implication in Hamm's own *Yesterdays* (1979) and Ian Whitcomb's *After The Ball* (1972), as well the more detailed studies of Nicholas Tawa (1985 and 1990). (Whitcomb's theme is of 'peppy' modern American syncopated music driving out sleepy European sentiment; Tawa isolates the sentimental as being able to flourish only before the cynicism and selfishness of urban life became the norm.)

This sequential historicist interpretation - of one thing giving way to another - although ostensibly less value-laden, is still another partial Narrative: in favouring a linear, tidy view of things it tends to oversimplify. In such an account for instance Rock 'n' Roll drives out Slush (as Syncopation killed Balladry). However truth is less obliging: Ken Dodd's revival of *Tears* topped the charts at the time of the Beatles greatest success.

Ironically, the only detailed and comprehensive work produced on specifically sentimental popular song suffers from a quite different drawback. Sigmund Spaeth wrote *Read 'Em And Weep* in 1926. Subtitled *The Songs You Forgot to Remember*, an impressive body of material is assembled that is largely (though not totally) sentimental. Spaeth's approach to his material, however, is apparent from the first paragraph of his preface: *This is not in any sense a scholarly work. Its chief object is entertainment, and its material is limited almost entirely to what, in the opinion of its editor, is either consciously or unconsciously amusing* (Spaeth 1926, xiii).

And he concludes: *'Read 'Em And Weep' or laugh, as the case may be. And if you don't believe it, look up the originals, for these things actually happened.*

Underlying this is the assumption of Hamm's 'Narrative of Mass Culture' about popular song's limitation: of course it's inferior to serious 'art' music, yet even within its formulaic ephemerality it might be quaintly amusing. Spaeth is the exemplar of the cultural dilettante who presents for our ironic contemplation songs that are so bad they are good. There is an unpleasant line in 'presentism' in this: *did Granny and Grandpa really take this stuff seriously?...what an absolute hoot!* - the implication being that we're so much more advanced now. It is perhaps worth mentioning in his mitigation that Spaeth was representative of a generation of essayists like Alexander Woolcott and Dorothy Parker who were self-consciously 'modern' in their hard-edged wit. (This is less worrying than the general tendency to consign to the status of 'camp' or 'kitsch' anything that doesn't accord with contemporary sensibilities; this more often than not was the line on *Amy* when I sang it in the 1960's.)

Spaeth does have a genuine love of his material, but unfortunately insights are always subsumed in the search for an easy laugh - *Being sorry for yourself has always been one of the great American indoor sports* - and it is not long before his non-stop levity (reflected also in jokey footnotes and picture captions) starts to grate. For all that the initial success of *Read 'Em And Weep* was such that he produced a second volume, *Weep Some More My Lady*, the following year. By now he had learnt to modify his wit a little: ...*the editor feels a bit less inclined to ridicule than when he first dipped into the muddy stream of American song literature* (Spaeth 1927, xv).

But the superior and archly droll tone still subverts any serious commentary. It is therefore as an assiduous archivist of sentimental song that Spaeth is best remembered: his breadth of reference was always impressive (a fact that became apparent in his 1948 classic, *A History of Popular Song in America*) and in the two earlier books he assembled a body of less well-known but engaging material that might otherwise have been lost.

Spaeth's tone of wry amusement masking considerable knowledge finds an echo here in the work of Maurice Willson Disher (*Winkles And Champagne* 1938, *Victorian Song: From Dive To Drawing-Room* 1955). Of a similar generation - one that could remember nineteenth century pop - and prepared at least to consider the sentimental he was, like Spaeth, essentially a gentleman *littérateur* - and both men's work shows the idiosyncratic stance of the occasional essayist for whom being serious for any length of time is bad form. A similar tendency is found in the essays Michael Turner produced to accompany his two anthologies of Parlour ballads (1972, 1975). Turner assembled these following his success in introducing Parlour poetry to a modern audience, and whilst his enthusiasm and knowledge is welcome his often shrewd commentary is always at the behest of an intrusive whimsicality.

Back in academe, recent research on repertoires and styles with a strong sentimental component has done something to raise the profile of sentimental song: Derek Scott's *The Singing Bourgeois* (1989) is an affectionate and detailed historical reclamation of a definitively sentimental form, the Parlour song, whilst Bill C. Malone's studies of popular music in the South of the U.S.A. (*Country Music U.S.A.* 1968, *Southern Music American Music* 1979, *Singing Cowboys and Musical Mountaineers* 1993) are also about repertoires with strong links to sentimentality; Malone seems generally less embarrassed than European writers about this (and hence less likely explicitly or implicitly to make value-judgements about sentimental songs). It is perhaps no accident that both Scott and Malone also perform the material they write about:

having some emotional affinity with their material (whatever their 'rational' aesthetic or ideological reservations about it) at least ensures it a hearing. And one that is presented with some engagement and passion (rather than the more familiar sniffy disdain).

Less specialized scholarly writing on popular music too is showing the beginnings of a more even-handed stance on the sentimental: David Brackett's recent multi-disciplinary book (Brackett 1996) studies in detail the stylings of the un-hip Bing Crosby as well as those with the imprimatur of 'cultural O.K.-ness' like Hank Williams. There is an implication that Williams's robust authenticity is preferable to Crosby's mannered ersatzness, yet such a stance is only tenable by taking a partial view of Williams' work (for instance ignoring the stupendously sentimental stuff he recorded in the persona of 'Luke the Drifter' - material that Williams himself rated over his hits, as was noted by his steel guitarist, Don Helms: *Hank was more committed to the Luke The Drifter recitations than to his regular songs* quoted in Escott 1994, 125).

A similar selectivity is seen in comments on Jimmie Rodgers: a great artist to be sure (an advance on serious commentary in earlier decades which had simply ignored him) but a pity about those Mother and Home songs (See for instance Middleton 1990, 263). Interestingly 'popular opinion', Rodgers' wife Carrie for example, has no problems with such material (see Rodgers 1975, 60). This severely qualified recognition of the sentimental by specialists becomes familiar: Sam Charters' discussion of Lonnie Johnson's work in his liner notes to the Mose Asch's 'Folkways' sessions is typical (*My Mother's Eyes*: sentimental: feeble-regrettable/ *Mr. Trouble*: Blues: powerful-estimable). Performers share the scholarly line: the singer Geoff Muldaur tells how with other Blues enthusiasts he had coaxed Johnson out of 'retirement' in the early 1960's and arranged for him to play for Boston's poetry and folk crowd. The company was not best pleased when Johnson started his set with *Harbour Lights*, a sentimental British Tin Pan Alley confection; *it was not exactly what we had in mind...* commented Muldaur. A similar situation occurred with the promotion of Leadbelly by John and Alan Lomax in the 1930's: dressing the singer in 'brace and bib' and encouraging him to perform Blues and Work Songs the Lomaxes hoped the fact that Leadbelly's favourite singer was Gene Autry and his favourite song *That Silver Haired Daddy of Mine* wouldn't become too apparent. Blues and Work songs of course fitted within favoured Narratives of political and social authenticity; *That Silver Haired Daddy of Mine* did not. Alan Lomax was guilty of even more gross acts of 'Repertoiral Selectivity' in his song collecting: pursuing *an imagined folk tradition embodying an essential American character* (Lader 1997, 14)

he simply ignored material he judged inappropriate. Charles Todd and Robert Sonkin were sent by him to record the migrant Okies' musical lore, but showed no interest in what they, the Okies, wanted to play: *When they began to record in July 1940, they got highly accomplished renderings of 'Dream Boat' and 'On the Beach at Bali-Bali'... 'Very well done', their field notes report, but this was not what they had come for...* (Ibid.). This recalls Cecil Sharp's failure to 'hear' Music Hall songs on his field trips to Somerset in the last century.

When it becomes absolutely impossible to deny the existence of 'inappropriate' material - typically a commercial sentimental song - there is one further ploy left the critic or scholar. He or she may use 'The Artistic Transformation Trick'. In this illusion (that might be called 'The Billie Holiday Effect') what is initially perceived as toe-curling dross - typically a commercial sentimental song - may be transformed ('before your very eyes and ears') into something of substance by The Performance of a Great Artist (especially a Tragic Great Artist like Holiday). This was the only way Colin MacInnes could countenance *soppy* and *trite* sentimental Music Hall songs: *a serious spirit redeems (a) meagre theme* (1967, 33). (See also Ned Rorem: *...they* ('popular' artists) *interpret mediocre works by completing them.* [in Watson 1994, 276])

Serious commentary therefore, despite some good intentions, is not at ease with sentimentality, and feels the need to qualify or ironise. Existing academic popular music discourses have little place for sentimental song - it is 'inauthentic', 'bourgeois', 'formulaic' - and whilst its existence is now more likely to be acknowledged and charted there has been little appetite to investigate further. One cannot help but feel that this is related to the general vilification of sentimentality - so ably performed by the critics and philosophers - that effectively puts any of its manifestations beyond serious consideration. Small wonder then that sentimental song is so often mocked (as by Spaeth) or ignored (as by Lomax); the best it can hope for is consideration in purely historical terms (where it can be reduced to a [regrettable] local phenomenon).

The wider context: a way forward?

Given therefore the severe reservations that existing popular music literature has about the sentimental it becomes necessary to look elsewhere for any sympathetic elucidation. Existing writing that makes the most useful contribution to 'The Problem of Sentimentality' paradoxically makes no mention of sentimental songs at all. This is work that considers the nature and development of sentimentality within a non-parochial eclectic analytic framework. I believe that this work, that places sentimentality in its widest cultural context, actually does the best job in explaining its most specific expressions (like *Amy*) (see Todd 1986, Dwyer 1990, Brissenden 1974, Bredvold 1963, Campbell 1987). These writers acknowledge both the diversity of sentimentality's roots and the variety of ways in which it found expression (thus rescuing it from rejection as a largely literary oddity). Sentimentality was a child of Enlightenment optimism and was informed by current thinking on philosophy, theology - even physiology - as well as reflecting historical, economic and sociological changes. It was a way of 'doing things' that was singular and brand new. The high period of the sentimental movement was short, and is traditionally associated with the drama and the novel, although this possibly reflects academic precedent rather than the true extent of things. The predominance of a literary perspective on sentimentality may simply represent the relative dominance of 'Eng. Lit.' in our academic life: the less 'visible' disciplines of art history, history of science, philosophy or theology - (or popular music studies) - can all produce evidence from their fields to temper the perception of sentimentality as something manifested mainly in imaginative writing. As well as finding specific expressions of sentimentality in a wider range of areas than might be supposed, its general influence in injecting a new, softer, note into eighteenth and nineteenth century life is underestimated. As John Dwyer has commented: *for good or evil, we still live with the results* (Dwyer 1990, 1041). Sentimental philosophy has played its part in the formation of many aspects of life we now take for granted: attitudes to our families and homes, our communal bond to those less fortunate than ourselves and to other species, and the way we seek and experience emotion (especially sad emotion).

The rise of specifically-composed popular song (or rather, as we shall see, 'songs') in Britain and America, coincides exactly with this 'sentimentalizing of society.' Writers who take a wider view have specifically pointed out how the sentimental found wide expression in popular cultural forms like the Gothic novel and Melodrama, following the demise of its comparatively limited expression as an

elevated cultural force. (See Todd 1986, 147; Bredvold 1962, 77 ff.) The link with sentimentality and the rise of the English congregational hymn has been noted (Todd and Marshall 1982), if in a highly technical and confined way, and there is little if any mention of its influence on secular popular song. Yet the birth of composed popular song and the period of sentimentality's high prestige are contiguous, and the crucial first sixty years in the development of a sentimental popular song tradition (c.1790-1850) is also the time of the establishment of a general sentimental hegemony - that is to say the incorporation of sentimentality as a significant strand in life on both sides of the Atlantic, a widely accepted (if unconscious) cultural 'narrative'.

Sentimentality's persuasiveness - its continuing attraction despite critical obloquy - is considered in the conclusion. But no sense can be made of such wider issues without first considering its derivations, the 'where-it-all-came-from'.

A consideration of sentimentality's genesis also helps us put in perspective the criticism it attracts: for instance, by realizing its origins as an essentially didactic phenomenon, we see how pointless it is to lament the failure of its various manifestations to reach the standards of mimetic art that define so many of our present notions of the culturally worthwhile (à la Richards). Indeed we find the things that are anathema to current notions of worthy art - the manipulative, the formulaic, the immoderate - are actually sought by the sentimental in its pedagogic mission of teaching correct emotional response. Why these curious facts are so, and how they came about, are explained in the next chapter; it is they that determined the character of *Amy Johnson's Last Flight*. If that is indeed as peculiar as audiences found it in 1965 it is because, viewed with any sort of detachment, sentimentality itself is pretty peculiar.

Chapter 3

An Enlightenment 'Good Idea': where sentimentality comes from

...(the) sentimental ethic (had emerged) ...which a hundred years before 1750 would have been frowned on...by representatives of every school of ethical or religious thought.

(Crane 1967, 189)

Derivation

This work starts with an emphasis on the cultural context of the development of sentimentality and the route that development took. This is the better to delineate the power and influence of the sentimental 'revolution', a cultural shift of considerable complexity and significance and not, as is often suggested, a minor and regrettable literary phenomenon (see for instance Watt 1972).

Understanding the nature and extent of this 'revolution' is central to the understanding of the subsequent adoption and expression of the sentimental in popular song. Far from being *a movement...dismissed...as...vapid and insipid...significant only as a prelude to a more highly charged and piquant Romanticism* (Dwyer, 1029) it is, as one commentator says *...a socio-ethical movement of great importance* (Campbell 1987, 13) and another: *a revolution in the scientific approach to the study of man took place in the eighteenth century and sentimentalism was in the heart of this revolution* (Brissenden 1974, 37).

Background and progenitors; the new viability of pity and self-pity

A viable account of any aspect of sentimentality must first consider the genesis of that term. Once one begins to do this two things become apparent. First, the number of dimensions encompassed by the term: it includes moral, psychological, theological, aesthetic, even physiological components. And second, the novel, revolutionary nature of these notions - together with the speed and voracity of their uptake in the late seventeenth and earlier eighteenth century.

Both this eclecticism and originality make it a typical product of the Enlightenment. Indeed it is perhaps not going too far to say that many of our

problems with sentimentality are to do with its perceived eighteenth century 'flavour' and they are part of a more general set of reservations that we moderns - with our post-Freudian, post-industrial perspectives - have with the Enlightenment. I will return to this point later, but in an effort to guard against cultural 'presentism' and to put the genesis of sentimentalism in its cultural context, it is worth saying something of the Enlightenment *Weltanschauung*.

Firstly, it is impossible to avoid noticing the optimism that pervades the age. This surely must stem from the fact that it was, as Isaiah Berlin notes: *the last period in the history of Western Europe, when human omniscience was thought to be an attainable goal* (Berlin 1956, 4). The application of rigorous, quasi-mathematical methods, had delivered precise, unambiguous knowledge in the philosophy of Descartes and the Rationalists, and now Newton was succeeding even more spectacularly: *By making it possible, by means of relatively few fundamental laws of immense scope and power, to determine, at least in principle, the properties and behaviour of every particle of every material body in the universe, and that with a degree of precision and simplicity undreamt of before.* (Ibid., 15) These notions set out in his *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica* of 1687 offered *a synthesis of stunning generality* (Westfall 1994, C.D. Rom - no page given).

Now if the workings of the natural world could be revealed so elegantly, surely it was not unreasonable to hope that universal laws governing human behaviour might be discovered by similar rigorous application of method. Indeed David Hume subtitled his *Treatise on Human Nature* (1739) *An Attempt to Introduce the Experimental Method of Reasoning into Moral Subjects*. Alas, with hindsight we now know that Newton's mechanistic model of the universe is not the perfect exemplar of method it was thought to be at the time, for it offers only a partial, rather parochial, explanation of things. Equally, we know the wholesale application of the methodology of the Natural Sciences to the Social Sciences to be deeply problematic (see Winch 1958; Ryan 1970). However, at the time everything seemed possible: *Nature and Nature's Laws lay hid in Night/ God said, Let Newton be! and all was light* and very different writers in very different fields inspired by the '*incomparable Mr. Newton*' were united in the conviction that *all problems were soluble by the discovery of objective answers, which, once found - and why should they not be? - would be clear for all to see and valid eternally* (Berlin, 28).

The formation of notions of sentimentality were fuelled by this energetic intellectual optimism, typified by a quest for knowledge pursued across a very broad front. This unselfconscious eclecticism was surely the second main characteristic of the age, for divisions between disciplines and specialists we regard as crucial did not

exist then, and sentimentality derives from components found in very different areas of erudition. Thus: *It is perhaps not surprising that the term 'philosopher' should have enjoyed at this time a much wider range of reference than it does today. To be philosophical was to be, in the most basic and the most general sense sceptical, critical, enquiring - at once scientific, humane and omnivorously curious* (Brissenden 1974, 35). And the luminaries of the time reflect this. Diderot wrote: *It is very difficult to think cogently in metaphysics without being an anatomist, a naturalist, a physiologist, and a physician* (Ibid., 45).

Similarly, the distinction between an objective study of mankind of the sort the social scientists and philosophers espoused, and the subjective imaginative insights provided by novelists and poets, was less apparent: *The naturalistic novel, primarily an English invention, grew up at least partly out of the attempt to provide supporting evidence for what we should now describe as sociological theories...The work of the novelist often complemented the work of the philosophical or scientific enquirer in a remarkably close and fruitful manner. Often, indeed, the one person operated in both fields: Diderot, Voltaire and Rousseau are novelists, playwrights, poets - and 'philosophes'...* (Ibid., 34).

Interestingly, many of the great imaginative writers of the age had a specialised professional knowledge of the social fabric. Smollett was concerned with public health, Fielding was active in police reform and development and Sterne, in his varied pastoral work, might be regarded as a proto-social worker.

It is against this background of energetic and comprehensive intellectual endeavour that sentimentalism was born. Even in an age of mental wonders this is a remarkable story: that a set of notions not only largely original, but in many ways specifically contrary to previous ideas, achieved in so short a time such hegemonic force.

That they were new there is no doubt: *sentimentalism was not a philosophy which the 18th century could have derived full-fledged from ancient or Renaissance tradition. It was something new in the world - a doctrine, or rather a complex of doctrines which a hundred years before 1750 would have been frowned upon, had it been presented to them, by representatives of every school of ethical or religious thought* (Crane 1967, 189). Yet: *Through literature and the popularisation of moral philosophy, sentimental theory and art became extremely widespread in England, touching the perceptions of most literate and semi-literate people* (Todd 1986, 3).

And: *'Sentimental' concepts form part of what Steven Marcus...has characterised as the 'fantasies' of period, that 'mass of unargued, unexamined and largely unconscious assumptions'* (Brissenden, 21).

This constituted what might now be termed a 'paradigm shift', and had much to do with the timeliness, the resonance of the sentimental message - it would not have been such a 'hit' had it not so successfully addressed current concerns. But first, its genesis. We are told, for instance: *Many influences converged to produce it and each of the several principal aspects would properly involve a wide range of intellectual and social history* (Bell 1983, 2). This seems as uncontentious as it is unilluminating. As an alternative schema I would suggest a definite chronology for the development of sentimentalism. Put succinctly, this concerns a shift in perception about feeling and philanthropy, which found expression in both lay and religious activity in the latter part of the seventeenth century. This was then formalised and disseminated in the eighteenth century in a wide range of imaginative and theoretical writing.

Changes that were happening in religious life from the mid-seventeenth century onwards were central to the establishment of a climate sympathetic to the uptake of sentimental ideas as well as furnishing specific proto-sentimental notions. The power and extent of religious influence in the seventeenth and eighteenth century was great, extending as it did to most areas of society, and acting as a key factor in shaping culture. The main moral dimension in most people's life was religious, and therefore changes in religious practice changed behaviour at a fundamental level. As a central source of meaning, religion was a uniquely powerful agent of social change.

These changes find their clearest articulation in the work of a liberal, (or 'Latitudinarian') group of preacher/theologians named the Cambridge Platonists. United *In a detestation of the darker aspects of the puritan code* (Crane 1967, 193), they offered an alternative to the rigidity and bleakness of pre-destinational principles that *had guided Christian theology since St Augustine's time* (Ibid., 109). The process was two-fold: academic theological discussion would then find popular expression in preaching which *moulded the thoughts of ordinary Englishmen from the pulpit* (Ibid., 190).

The Cambridge Platonists' view of man was essentially Idealistic, and, as befits their name, Platonic. Man partakes of the form of goodness of the ultimate Being, God, in the same way earthly examples of beauty partake of the sublime form of (absolute) beauty. Spirituality becomes, therefore, an interior business of realising one's godliness rather than an external conformity to ecclesiastical dicta.

This 'internalisation' of religious experience is absolutely essential: private witness is now valued over public dogma. An internalised response is necessarily an

individual response, and as such represents a substantial shift from a uniform acceptance of external authority (as exemplified in extreme form by Calvinism).

As each individual was thought to partake - albeit in a very attenuated form - of divine benevolence, the problem now arose of how best to realise this potential. Here, the Cambridge Platonists stressed the primacy of the practical over the doctrinal: doing good was the thing. Thus virtue was best realised by practising universal benevolence (God Himself providing the exemplar for this by being impartially benevolent to all). Benevolence most readily found expression in acts of charity: charity was the Cambridge Platonists' favourite theme, a general kindness to all men (as men). They saw it as: *The supreme quality and proper manifestation of Christian faith* (Todd, 22).

Thus far this theology is rational, centred on the intellectual Platonic premise of man partaking of the Divine. It was suggested we incline towards the good - to feelings of charity - simply because that is the nature of things: men *naturally tend to the good and welfare of mankind* (Samuel Parker quoted in Crane, 206).

But the exercise of this charity, suggested the Cambridge thinkers, is best prompted by feeling - by the exercise of sympathy: benevolence was to be felt. Indeed it was suggested that *there can be no effective benevolence that does not spring from the tender emotions of pity or compassion, and so far from suppressing these emotions we ought to look upon them as the marks that distinguish men of genuine goodness from those who are merely righteous or just* (Ibid., 200).

This appeal for the exercise of feelings, especially pity, becomes central in sentimentality. It is a 'hot', involved response much different to the then prevalent 'cool' Stoic notion of dispensing justice without involvement. Crucially it contained its own reward because doing good itself felt good: *There no sensual Pleasure in the World Compared to the Delight and Satisfaction that good man takes in doing good* (Ibid., 210). Thus 'charity' and 'benevolence' had a double sense, connoting not only serviceable and philanthropic actions which a good man performs, but still more the tender passions and affections which prompt to these actions and constitute their immediate reward (Ibid., 197).

Emotion, therefore, prompts the benevolence and is at the same time the reward for its exercise.

It was this final 'plank' of the Cambridge Platonists' theology that had the most direct link with sentimentality: if charity was to be invoked through sympathy (feeling) rather than justice (reason) surely a heightened emotionality would further such a response? Thus the Cambridge Platonists stressed a 'soft', feminised response

when confronted with misery or suffering (see Ibid., 200). This response, with its lowered threshold of arousal, is archetypally sentimental.

Benevolentist theology, therefore, which we may define as 'the exercise of charity prompted by a feeling heart' was a key factor in the establishment of sentimentalism. Its implication of a philosophical position, Platonic Idealism, realised by psychological means, 'the feeling heart', was new and striking. Definitionally it founded a firm framework for the exercise and enjoyment of pity.

Less novel, but another important dimension in the establishment of the sentimental world view, concerned the modification of existing modes of generating and expressing self-pity.

Now the exercising of pity might be emotionally turbulent, but always in a beneficial way, as when, in looking outwards from one's own situation, one partook in another's troubles: *...can we not relieve those that are in misery, unless we mingle our Sighs with their Sobs and Groans, and our Cries with their Tears?* (Isaac Barrow quoted in Campbell 1987, 121). Self-pity, by contrast, appears only selfish. Its emotional turbulence is morbid and it is by definition inward-looking. But this is not to say it does not have its own rationale and - crucially - its exercise, like pity, can give pleasure. Self-pitying emotions - helplessness, grief and despair - exist as a psychological dimension in much organised religion, Christianity as much as any. In the more virulent forms of seventeenth century Puritanism, however, their exercise was not merely a part of the religious spectrum of life, but a buttress to the very foundation of belief itself. This exercise centred around the need to find clear signs of grace or redemption. The way this happened was as follows: lacking overt indications as to who was elect and who was not, the Puritans, especially the Calvinists, searched for anything that might constitute a covert sign of grace. Thus, the pursuit of driven commercial achievement - famously described by Weber in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* - gave a template for achievement of profitable work-in-the-world that was nonetheless godly - and therefore possibly indicative of redemption.

Alternatively, signs of grace might come from within through the examination of one's internal life, one's feelings. It was thought: *emotional states had a special spiritual significance and consequently certain displays of feeling were to be considered as signs of godliness. Specifically: 'a melancholy demeanour and emotionalised self-debasement' were the 'outward signs of godliness within'; and even that a 'longing for death and a musing upon it' was overt proof of election* (John Draper quoted in Campbell, 131).

As pity was to be prompted by a charitable consideration of the less fortunate, so self-pity was prompted by a panoply of doomy *aides-mémoires*. These included a daily imagining of one's own funeral, the sporting of death's head rings and a general focusing on disease and disaster: *periodic descents into the Slough of Despond, with its accompanying bouts of sadness, gloom, degradation, grief, self-pity and despair* (Ibid., 124) were something the devout Calvinist was advised to espouse.

Now, because expressing such mortification might itself be an indication of grace, the ostensibly unpleasant emotions involved might - perversely - be expressed as pleasurable. The enjoyment of 'feeling bad' thus receives indirect legitimisation, and here one sees the beginning of the psychology of 'pleasing melancholy' inherent in all aspects of sentimentality.

A parallel occurrence at this time - the latter seventeenth and early eighteenth century - was a gradual shift to a more concerned awareness of the less fortunate. The impulse, again, was derived from Idealism: all men partake of the godly, and regardless of their circumstance are therefore all members of the same brotherhood. This form of social benevolence, a sort of theoretical philanthropy, spoke to disadvantaged groups previously shunned or ignored. We may consider the case of two such groups, the aged and the slave. (Both categories, of course, became and remained key parts of the sentimental lexicon, endlessly invoked to elicit a sympathetic tear.)

For the aged, although almshouses existed for the completely indigent, there was little provision for the destitute elderly. 'Andrew Moreton' (possibly Defoe writing pseudonymously) comments in *The Protestant Monastery, or A Complaint against the Brutality of the present Age: There is nothing on Earth more shocking, and withal more common in but too many Families, than to see old Age and Grey Hairs derided and ill-used. The Old Man or the Old Woman can do nothing to please...and is look'd on as a burthen to their Issue* (quoted in Atkinson 1965, 106).

His recommendation was in effect to establish an Old Folks' Home: *Joint-Stock of Twenty Thousand pounds be raised between 50 persons...they shall rent a convent Hall or House...a Protestant Monastery for the Aged* (Ibid., 106).

As for the Slave, one might have hoped the then fashion for 'primitivism' (*the admiration of men not yet afflicted with the ills of civilised life* [Ibid., 77]) would have helped more benevolent attitudes. Initially, however, this does not appear to have been the case, and Jesuits and Quakers protested against the matter-of-fact brutality meted out to 'savages'. The Quaker, George Keith, wrote in his 'An

Exhortation and Caution to FRIENDS Concerning the Buying or Keeping of Negroes': *Negroes, Blacks and Taunies are a real part of Mankind, for whom Christ has shed his precious Blood, and are capable of Salvation, as well as White Men* (Ibid., 101).

The best known progenitor of primitivism, J-J Rousseau, was much influenced in his youth by the religiously-inspired didactic writing of the Abbé Prévost: *My (North American Indian) Iglou offered me all his clothing to protect me from the extreme cold of the night but I stoutly refused because of my feelings of humanity. I did not see that my position as his master should cause him to lose his station as a man, or that my superior station should take away from him the natural right to protection from the cold, when he needed that protection as much as I did* (Ibid., 107-108).

Shaftesbury and the aestheticizing of morality

All these proto-sentimental ideas were amplified, extended and widely disseminated in the hugely popular works of the philosopher Shaftesbury. His *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinion, Times* was re-printed four times between 1727 and 1737 and ran to eleven editions before the end of the century. It was, we are told: *one of the most popular philosophical works of the 18th century* (Scruton 1984, 109) and established Shaftesbury as *the unofficial philosopher of the movement of sensibility down to the end of the century* (Bredvold 1962, 17).

As such his direct influence was great, but for us it is even more important that he is so representative. In his philosophy we can study those ideas and enthusiasms which powered the inner drive of the great European evolution of thought and feelings (Ibid., 17-18).

Anthony Ashley Cooper, 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury, is an unlikely hero - and a largely forgotten one. A retiring and invalid aristocrat, whose ill-health forced him to live much of his life abroad, he had been tutored by the philosopher John Locke (who, as physician, had attended at his birth). The ill-health that forced him to abandon an active political career provided him even more time for reading; taught Greek and Latin from infancy, his breadth of reference was impressive.

Shaftesbury was influential as much because of the way he expressed his ideas as for the ideas themselves, and this was very largely a function of his background. He represented the well-born generalist rather than the career specialist, and his work is a testament to gentlemanly eclecticism. He had *small regard for*

university drudges. (Ibid., 11) 'Experts' were perceived by him as narrow and doctrinaire, and their influence pernicious. For instance, of philosophy and philosophers he wrote: *We have immur'd her (poor Lady!) in Colleges and Cells; and have set her servilely to such Works as those in the Mind. Empiricks and pedantick Sophists are her chief Pupils* (quoted in Dobrée 1959, 261). Shaftesbury's tone was perhaps more *contemplative rather than strictly philosophical* (Ibid., 259) and the *Characteristicks* less a systematic treatise than a collection of diffuse and informal essays (Bredvold, 11). For Shaftesbury, *To philosophise, in a just signification, is but to carry good-breeding a step further. For the accomplishment of breeding is to learn whatever is decent in company or beautiful in art, and the sum of philosophy is to learn what is just in society and beautiful in Nature and the order of the world* (Ibid., 12). In distancing himself from the professionals, Shaftesbury could appeal to the broad spectrum of general readers who would have warmed to his stressing of common sense at the expense of abstruse scholarship: *In the main, t'is best to stick to Common Sense, and go no further. Men's first Thoughts in the matter are generally better than their Second: their natural Notions better than those refin'd by Study or, Consultation with Casuists* (Shaftesbury quoted in Harris, 92). His assertion that *The truth is, - as Notions stand now in the world, with respect to Morals, Honesty is like to gain little by Philosophy, or deep speculation of any kind* (Ibid., 92) is more *Readers' Digest* than *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*.

If his appeal was linked to his informality and rejection of method and theory (*the most ingenious way to become foolish is by a System* [Dobrée., 259]) it should be mentioned that this could lead to a certain vagueness. His lack of rigour is well attested: we are told of his *reluctance to carry his arguments through or fully define his terms* (Crane, 111) and that what he has to say *is muffled; he never seems to push his cogitations to that point of clarity where a statement is unmistakably plain* (Dobrée, 328). However, it is arguable that this, too, helped his popularity: lack of clarity favoured a certain leeway in interpretation. This is hinted at in Thomas Gray's rather cruel appraisal of Shaftesbury: *You say you cannot conceive how Shaftesbury became to be a philosopher in vogue; I will tell you: first, he was a lord; second, he was as vain as any of his readers; thirdly, men are very prone to believe what they do not understand. Would you have any more reason?* (quoted in Harris, 371).

This goes too far. Shaftesbury, though lacking formal method, makes his key points quite clear by the method of stating them in different ways in different places. His 'shortcomings' helped elevate him to 'philosopher to the middle classes'. Ironically, what made him popular in the eighteenth century has denied him serious consideration in the twentieth century.

Shaftesbury's philosophy started with a less theological re-statement of Latitudinarian principles: we all naturally tend to goodness, and happiness is to be achieved by exploiting and nurturing this tendency. This is a variety of philosophical Naturalism: *the doctrine that the ideal of the good life is to be derived not from divine precept but from a description of human nature. Such a doctrine aims to show that evil is against nature, while good fulfils it* (Crane, 108). Accordingly, the moral probity of people is more important than the goodness or badness of the acts they commit. Possessing such probity - being virtuous - is the *sole and sufficient cause of happiness* (Ibid., 110). And Shaftesbury insisted *happiness is the state in which our nature is in harmony with itself* (Ibid., 110) thus exactly mirroring the earlier thoughts of the Cambridge Platonist, Benjamin Whichcote: *The good Man is an Instrument in Tune; Excite a good man, give him an Occasion, you shall have from him savoury Speeches out of his Mouth, and good Actions in his Life* (quoted in Bredvold, 9).

The principle of this harmony, this in-tuneness is *sympathy, which is the ability to feel the sufferings and joys of each man as part of some greater whole* (Crane, 111).

The exercise of sympathy rather than blind adherence to social, legal or religious codes should guide our lives for *The man who is motivated externally, as by fear of the police or the criticism of his neighbours, or by hope of gaining eternal happiness in a future life as a just recompense for self-denial in this, such a man can only be judged prudent or shrewd, not truly virtuous* (Bredvold, 13).

Both Shaftesbury and the Cambridge Platonists, therefore, similarly stress individual, internal moral impulses which nonetheless reflect the social, external fact of our common humanity (this, interestingly, was taught in a Victorian sentimental song, *One Touch of Nature Makes the Whole World Kin* which delineates various situations that might excite our social sympathy, thus reflecting Enlightenment communitarianism with its emphasis on what unites us rather than [our modern stress] on what makes us unique.)

Shaftesbury, however, went much further than the theologians when he strove to link the moral with the beautiful. This, his 'coupe de philosophe', is an attempted aestheticizing of morality. In it *the good and the virtuous become part of the virtuous* (Todd, 25). Shaftesbury had written that *The virtuous soul has an inward harmony and health. There is a beauty in goodness and a goodness in beauty* (quoted in Bredvold, 15). Might one not assume then that *that which is beautiful is harmonious and proportionable; what is harmonious and proportionable is true; and what is at once both beautiful and true is, of consequence, agreeable and good?*

(Ibid., 15) *...after all, the most natural beauty in the world is honesty and moral truth. For all beauty is truth. True features make the beauty of a face, and true proportions of the beauty of architecture as true measures that of harmony and musick...* (Denvir 1983, 123).

As 'virtu' (the Beautiful) and 'virtue' (the Good) become analogous in Shaftesbury's writing it is hardly surprising that a similar process - the exercise of feelings - evoke both. Thus we have a situation where *only feelings can be truly relied on to indicate what is good* (Campbell, 151). Equally *Man has a sense of beauty, just as he has a moral sense...he has to judge by his own experience, his own feelings* (Dobrée, 329).

The term used to describe these feelings was 'sensibility': *Typically it covered feeling sorry for oneself, feeling sorry for others and being moved by beauty, and yet all responses had equal significance as indication of goodness. Responsiveness to beauty thus became a crucial moral quality, such that any deficiency in this response became a moral lapse, while correspondingly virtue became an aesthetic quality, such that, in turn, any moral lapse was 'bad taste'...*(Campbell, 152) or as another commentator noted *we may be excused for suspecting that for Shaftesbury the antithesis of virtue is not sin, but vulgarity or ill-breeding...*(Bredvold, 15).

Thus formal rules appear irrelevant, both in the identification of beauty and the formulation of the good, as these could now be ascertained merely by 'trusting one's feelings'...(Campbell, 151).

To modify the relativism implied in this position (all responses appear equally valid) Shaftesbury invoked the notion of the virtuoso (in the sense of one who has complete mastery of his craft). Obtaining aesthetic and moral virtuosity is a learning process: *I like! I fancy! I admire! How? By accident: or as I please? No. But I learn to fancy, to admire, to please...Otherwise I like at this hour but dislike at the next* (Crane, 94). To this end one continuously honed one's intuition, refined one's perceptivity: *I am persuaded that to be a virtuoso...is a higher step to becoming a man of virtue and good sense than being what in this age we call a scholar* (Denvir, 124). It was to further these ideals that sentimental art of all sorts came to be produced.

Shaftesbury and the Cambridge Platonists, therefore, offered a theoretical framework for 'a new way of doing things' - a cultural shift of perspective that had psychological, moral and aesthetic components. As such it possessed the already noted optimism and eclecticism of the age.

It also provided the eighteenth century - and by implication subsequent eras - with a precisely articulated philosophy of feeling that was a counterpoint to the conventional view of that time as The Age of Reason. It is perhaps misleading to present reason and feeling as opposites, though this is the implication of accepting Matthew Arnold's famous dictum that the eighteenth century was the *age of prose and reason*: feeling is therefore necessarily contra to the zeitgeist. In reality it seems more likely that feeling was harnessed with reason: the work of Shaftesbury and the Cambridge Platonists offering lucid exemplars of this tendency. The early eighteenth century view of reason was more that of an active driving force that powered the search for truth rather than the passive mechanism that had delivered Descartes and Spinoza their stunning axioms. *Thus it is not so much that reason gives way to feelings as that the reasoning process, now seen as fundamentally active, takes on or assumes or is understood to include certain characteristics which were formerly ascribed only to passion, desire or feeling. The eighteenth century deserves to be called the Age of Reasoning, rather than the Age of Reason* (Brissenden, 51).

Indeed the very success of the universal eternal truths of Cartesian philosophy hinted at a lack. These provided, as Descartes intended, unequivocal first principles - yet in reaching them through the application of a purely intellectual concept, 'doubt', had not something been omitted?: *I believe that one can demonstrate that one exists as well by saying 'Je sens, donc je suis' as by saying 'Je pense, donc je suis'* (The Marquis d'Argens quoted in Ibid.).

As a philosophy possessing both subjective and objective components - a '*je sens*' as well as a '*je pense*' - sentimentalism presaged the more celebrated work of David Hume and Kant. (Hume argued that thinking or reasoning was impossible without feeling; Kant, that the capacity to receive sense impressions is a necessary pre-condition for the operation of thought.)

One can begin to appreciate why the idea of sentimentalism was so eagerly received - Shaftesbury's *Characteristicks* being endlessly reprinted and *the same lesson being taught from hundreds of pulpits in London and the provinces* (Crane, 195): it offered a unified theory of things that, whilst invoking feeling, nevertheless appealed to reasoned philosophical truth as a basis for the expression of those feelings.

Offering a unified theory was all very well but all this might have come to little had not sentimental philosophy so effectively tapped contemporary concerns: for once the cliché 'an idea whose time has come' might be invoked without apology.

The multi-faceted framework offered by sentimental theorists was of a special relevance to a burgeoning bourgeoisie, who found little to relate to in the prevailing cultural nexus. Indeed in the rise of sentimentalism we see many of the defining points of middle class culture become established.

This all occurs against the background of more settled times following the Glorious Revolution of 1688, times which also saw the emergence of at least a notional egalitarianism in the wake of a more modern monarchy. The Hanoverian succession of 1714 which *provided political stability and appeared to denote a shift in class power* (Todd, 11) for *...although peers and their near relations almost monopolised high political office...(and) from these great families came church dignitaries and the higher ranks in the army and navy...* (Marshall 1962, 30) nonetheless *...the power of the middle and trading classes was felt to be increasing* (Todd, 11).

There was, however, great irony in the fact that trade, which was giving the middle classes a new economic power base with the possibility of social mobility, also fostered an aggressive self-interest and duplicitous role-playing, where, as Rousseau said: *It became in the interests of men to appear what they really were not* (J-J Rousseau quoted in Dwyer, 1031). Not for the first or last time had material advances outstripped moral change: *If the economy had been literally transformed... ethics had lagged far behind, leaving men and women increasingly confused in a world wherein the moral personality and social progress appeared to be moving in opposite directions...the language of commerce and interest...was neither personally satisfying nor an acceptable foundation for a new ethics* (Ibid.).

The resulting anomie was felt beyond the confines of the purely mercantile by an increasing number of people who the historian Dorothy Marshall has called *the Middling Sort* (Marshall 1962). These included the small freeholder and tenant farmer in the country, shop-keepers and clerks in the town - as well as those in the lower echelons of the professions. *The problem was that of constructing a viable ethic which could at once compensate for the loss of personal independence and integrity while it combated the indifference, selfishness and deceit endemic to a specialised commercial society. It was precisely for this end that the sentimental movement was born* (Dwyer, 1030).

The implied 'Q.E.D.' at the end of this quote is a little misleading: sentimental philosophy developed as part of a pattern of social change (of which the rise of trade was a part) rather than as a result of it. Nevertheless, the implication of sentimentalism providing a crucial new value system is correct. Remarkably, it performed the dual function of refuting existing uncongenial philosophic systems as

well as providing the basis for new ones. It *appealed to men...who felt naked, helpless and insignificant in the new world offered them by the dominant philosophers* (Dobrée, 258).

This disquieting world was represented by the reductive materialism of Locke and De La Mettrie, but most characteristically by the harsh social philosophy of Thomas Hobbes. The genesis of this brand of philosophical pessimism goes back at least to the playwright Plautus (c. 200 B.C.) who saw man as 'homo homini lupus' (man is a wolf to man): *The English philosophers Bacon and Hobbes had both accepted this definition of man as ravening wolf to his fellows and Christian doctrine for many centuries had insisted that man, having fallen in Adam, is essentially evil* (Atkinson, 100). Hobbes had written of the need of *the terrour of some...common Power to keep them all in awe, they are in the condition which is called Warre; and such a warre, as is of every man, against every man* (Ibid., 204).

The Hobbesian world view with its appeal to the state ('the Leviathan') to check man's murderous selfishness must have found grim resonance in a trading culture that exalted self-interest above all else. Hobbesian philosophy had furthermore received a recent witty boost in Bernard de Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees* (1714) in which he argued that *Man is ineradically selfish...that his advocacy of moral value is necessarily hypocritical, and that paradoxically, private vices are public benefits* (Brissenden, 28).

How refreshing, therefore, for the middle classes - traders or not - to come upon the optimistic theorising of Shaftesbury and the Cambridge Platonists. Representing such views John Tillotson, a celebrated member of the Cambridge group, had written: *so far it is from being true, which Mr Hobbes asserts as the fundamental principle of his Politicks, That Men are naturally in a State of War and Enmity with one another that the contrary Principle...is most certainly true, That Men are naturally akin and friends to each other* (quoted in Crane, 207).

In denying man's implicit depravity, sentimental theory substituted Hobbesian societal constraints with an appeal to the private regulation of behaviour. The theory and practice of such an approach has been given exegesis here in the survey of the work of Shaftesbury and the Cambridge Platonists. It will be necessary to trace the extension and modification of the seminal doctrines of sentimentality, and an example of their manifestation in popular song is of course the focus of this work. Suffice it to say for now that sentimentalism found increasingly wide and varied expression as the eighteenth century progressed. It mediated and softened the harshness of political and economic life by reflecting *a world view in which private friendships, the domestic hearth and specifically feminine feeling not only had a*

respected place but became essential characteristics of the moral community (Dwyer, 1030). And thereby ...achieved something that classical ethics was failing to do and which Romanticism had no intention of doing: the emotional and intellectual foundation for recognisably modern social relationships (Ibid.).

In stressing *more flexible, humane and polite kinds of human interaction (Ibid.)* it provided a sociological staging post between traditional patriarchal hegemony and our modern stress on the supremacy of individual ego. Further *At a time when the loose financial ties of early capitalism were emerging in the marketplace sentimentalism expressed a longing, not only for a domestic close-knit family, but for a community firmly linked by sentimental, familial structures (Todd, 16).*

Another area of concern for the middle classes, and one which sentimentalism also successfully addressed, centred on notions of taste: of what might be considered beautiful and artistic. In the absence of any concepts of their own the middle classes had no choice but to turn to the prevailing aesthetic of classicism. Classicism, however, was intrinsically exclusive. It presupposed a wide frame of reference, not just that implied by a 'classical education', but the wealth, leisure and inclination to apply such knowledge. Further, its tenets were austere and aristocratic, stressing an *idealised representation of content and form in which values of harmony, balance and order predominated* and exemplified in largely Graeco-Roman inspired subject matter *consisting of epic themes featuring the exploits of noble heroes (Campbell, 148).* This was a static and conservative aesthetic, it could include only a fixed body of work and references existing through time because they satisfied certain rules. For all these reasons it *had little direct appeal to the newly affluent and increasingly influential tradesman, merchants, yeoman farmers and skilled artisans of eighteenth century England, as the principal subjects were too far removed from their interest, whilst the treatment was too unemotional to cater adequately for their tastes (Ibid., 149).*

Further, much post-Restoration art presupposed not only classical learning but social knowledge. This was also an exclusive commodity, this time largely limited to a London in-group. The cosmopolitan 'knowingness', for instance, of much Restoration and Augustan writing must have necessarily limited its audience and made it appear impenetrable and often distasteful to a rising middle class. Faced with such uncongeniality the strength of impetus to find an alternative aesthetic can be understood. It was the Earl of Shaftesbury's theories which gave an indication of how this might be done. It will be remembered, Shaftesbury stressed a self-determining notion of the beautiful, personal response rather than adherence to rules being the

thing. Although this could form the foundation of new notions of taste, neither Shaftesbury nor his middle class readers were happy to jettison classicism entirely. For his part Shaftesbury, in his endearingly vague way, never seemed quite sure if in the course of the very personal quest of 'tuning' one's sensibility to virtuoso level one might not apprehend impersonal truths about beauty. Such truths sounded suspiciously like the universal and eternal rules of classicism. The middle classes had a different problem. Although largely excluded from and alienated by classicism they nonetheless felt a certain awe for such an old and venerated tradition. It had ... well ... class. A compromise - punningly titled 'Middle-Classicism' (Fairchild 1939, 155 ff.) - was afforded by grafting some of the trappings of classicism to the new Shaftesburian aesthetic system. These trappings, however, must not obscure the fact that a huge shift was occurring: taste could now be linked to personal feelings rather than external maxims - to paraphrase Rousseau: 'My judgement, right or wrong'.

The sentimental ethic

One can now posit the emergence of a specific *sentimental ethic* remarkable as much for its originality (*...which a hundred years before 1750 would have been frowned on ...by representatives of every school of ethical or religious thought* [Crane, 189]) as for its multi-facetedness (including the good, the beautiful and the pleasurable).

As the eighteenth century progressed it is reasonable to assume this ethic became part of what Arthur Lovejoy has called *the unconscious mental habits* of the time (see also Brissenden, 21), a fact borne out by its very diverse expression: *It is, indeed, remarkable how the philosophers of the century collaborated to formulate the sentimental psychology of the good man, the man of feeling, the man of beautiful sentiments. But they were only keeping pace with the novelists, dramatists and poets* (Bredvold, 230).

He might also have mentioned the landscape gardeners, the hymn writers, the experimental physiologists as well as the journalists, critics and preachers. The ethic they reflected might be characterised thus:

(i) A benevolent view of mankind as a community where all have value. The necessity of individual members to manifest this precept in their dealing with others. For instance, practising civility and kindness on a 'micro level' within the family, or on a 'macro level' between races and nations.

- (ii) The foregrounding of the exercise of feeling as the touchstone to moral action and aesthetic choice.
- (iii) The legitimisation of the enjoyment of such exercise of feeling specifically in the operation of:
 - (a) pity (as an inducement to charity)
 - (b) self pity (as a token of spiritual probity)
- (iv) The implication of the above as a quantitative notion of feeling, with greatest value accorded to quick and extreme emotional response, which results in a general favouring of heightened emotionality.

Realization

'Liquid Virtue' and the Culture of Pathos

The sentimental ethic was essentially a pro-active philosophy: it was predicated on the need for a *response*, a change of psychological state. A particularly extreme and public demonstration of this response was the shedding of tears; this became the preferred sign of a correctly engaged sensibility. Tears offered unequivocal confirmation of one's sentimental *bona fides*: *Tears were at once a compliment to the person whose misfortune had called them forth and evidence of the true worth of the one who weeps* (Brissenden, 4).

Tears, or 'liquid virtue' as John Dwyer called them in a memorable phrase (Dwyer, 1038), were elevated to an almost sacred position in the eighteenth century: *They... persuaded themselves that the gift of tears (was) a proof of the excellence and loftiness of their nature, and exclaimed when the tears were over: 'I am positive I have a soul'* (Campbell, 141). As an expression of the pathetic, tears might also be savoured 'in their own right' as an enjoyable indulgence. Crucially they were a pleasurable badge of rectitude (indicative of both 'virtu' and 'virtue'). This is clearly recognised in abundant allusions to *the luxury of tears*, or *a pleasing kind of distress* or *the voluptuousness of sorrow* and the like. This oxymoronic psychology of feeling happy by feeling sad is complex and central to the sentimental experience which Sir

Leslie Stephen, writing in *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century* called *the name of the mood in which we make a luxury of grief* (quoted in Brissenden, 115).

It produced an early theorist in Miss Atkin, who, in 1773 wrote the revealingly titled: *An Inquiry into those kinds of distress which excite agreeable sensations* (quoted in Vickers in Mackenzie 1970, ii) and the eighteenth century saw sensibility and melancholy as *close sisters* (Eleanor Sickels quoted in Campbell, 140). There already existed a tradition that saw melancholy as: *a state of mind favourable to moral elevation*, (Bredvold, 55) (as for instance in Milton's *Il Penserosa*). There was, moreover, the conviction that we, the British, had a particular affinity with melancholy *the belief in a particular British melancholic temperament had well-established roots... De Mandeville made it the subject of a medical treatise on nervous disorders in 1711 (and) Dr George Cheyne studied it in his 'The English Malady' of 1733* (Dwyer, 1036).

It was the fact, however, that the sentimental ethic allowed for the enjoyment of sadness that was novel. Melancholy offered a psychology of pleasure that provided more *secret transports* and *loftier raptures* than *the solemn dullness of the tedious world* (Bredvold, 58). It has already been noted how these pleasures were first experienced within the context of the Puritan equation of melancholia with godliness. With the decline of the power of the fundamentalist theology that sustained such a position, new religious imprimaturs for the enjoyment of melancholy became specifically sentimental. Now, rather than considering one's own dire predicament, ethical sensibility was to be engaged by contemplating the awfulness of other people's lot. This philanthropic evocation of pathos is quintessentially sentimental; and it allowed the familiar enjoyment of melancholy. Indeed it has been suggested that by the time morbid Calvinist doctrines had lost their appeal people had nonetheless become effectively addicted to the enjoyment of unhappiness. There was, therefore, a reluctance to abandon *the subjective states with which they had been associated* (Campbell, 133).

Sentimentality provided a perfect new philosophic licence for the continued enjoyment of sadness. This new, specifically religious strain of sentimentality, was exemplified by Laurence Sterne, who preached of the necessity to enter what he called the *House of Mourning*. Here removed from the *hurry and bustle of the world* one would be chastened and humanised by contemplating the common disasters of everyday life: *aged parents lamenting the death of a foolish child: a virtuous family pinched with starvation; a widow mourning her only son* (Dwyer, 1037).

Similarly, the Scots writer and theologian Hugh Blair (whose *Sermons* achieved Shaftesburian popularity in the eighteenth century with sales second only to

The Spectator), amplified Sterne's original insight: by encouraging his audience to accustom themselves to consider *the distresses of everyday life: of the solitary cottage, the dying parent, the weeping orphan* (Blair quoted in *Ibid.*).

Crucially, these sentimental motifs - dying children, weeping parents: *the distresses of everyday life* - that were evoked from the pulpit, were part of a common pool of pathetic emblems used in plays, novels, essays and songs. Such diverse genres were united in a didactic desire to evoke the sentimental ethic. Their first concern was to teach the correct way to construe the world according to the tenets of sentimentality, to establish a *pedagogy of seeing* (Brissenden, 30). Everything else was subsumed by this aim: understanding this is crucial to understanding sentimental art. Our current shibboleths of artistic originality and psychological insight are simply not relevant in sentimental writing. As instructional material, it typically made its point by a deliberate and sustained evocation of pathos to which the reader was invited to respond. The preferred response was tears - 'liquid virtue' - an unambiguous indication of a writer's didactic success. This eliciting of a sympathetic response is central, of course, because through it one demonstrates one's ethical sensibility. This was *largely judged by (the) treatment of others, especially such stock symbols of pathos as small children, the poor and animals* (Campbell, 152). These symbols were therefore endlessly presented in sentimental writing, the belief - initially at least - was that pity evoked privately would lead one to public philanthropy. There was an *assumption that life and literature are linked... (and that) literary experience can intimately affect the living one... (and) literary emotions herald active ones.* (Todd, 4) and that a *contrived tear foreshadows the spontaneous one of human sympathy* (*Ibid.*).

Subsequently, such work increasingly ceased to be a prompt for action, and assumed the more familiar sentimental function of evoking strong emotion for its own sake. (These emotions, however, were still of course exemplary: they instructed on the quantity and quality of feeling, appropriate for given situations.)

If all this seems crude and mechanistic to us it is as well to remember the influence of Shaftesbury through the eighteenth century: crucially his 'aestheticizing of morality' meant that a lack of goodness implied a lack of taste. The correctly engaged sensibility, therefore had a dual nature, and it is interesting to note that about this time 'insensibility', hitherto an ostensibly aesthetic concept, was acquiring its modern connotation as a synonym for cruelty, a moral concept.

Sentimental work sought to engage the emotions not the intellect, and its stress on melancholy is reflective of both a national predilection and a legacy of Puritanism. These inclinations to indulging the sorrowful were expeditious because it

was also felt that *Sad situations arouse...more strongly than happy ones...*(Brissenden, 6) and *the contemplation of beauty, of mental or moral excellence (is) ...called forth and rendered more interesting by circumstances of pain and danger* (quoted in Mackenzie, x). Adam Smith in his *Theory of Moral Sentiments* expands the point: *Pain besides, whether of mind or body, is a more pungent sensation than pleasure, and our sympathy with pain, though it falls greatly short of what is naturally felt by the sufferer is generally of a more lively and distinct perception than our sympathy with pleasure...* (Smith 1976, 44). (Or elsewhere: *...our sympathy with sorrow is generally a more lively sensation than our sympathy with joy* [Ibid., 43]).

Plot lines are shamelessly manipulated to favour *pathetic and sensationally moving elements* (Todd, 3) and are inhabited by a 'cast-list' of the distressed *natural victims, whose misery is demanded by their predicament as defenceless women, aged men, helpless infants or melancholic youths* (Ibid.). This is an important point: it is the inherent pathos of these types - as well as other favourites like animals and slaves that ensured their continued and continual use. If sentimental writing were reduced to a scientific formula it would concern the action of gross contingency on these helpless archetypes. Indeed, because these *natural victims* are so intrinsically ill-equipped to deal with fate it does not take a particularly gross form of contingency to prompt pathos. That said, sentimental writing - so wonderfully devoid of any restraint - still tends to throw every single sling and arrow of outrageous fortune at its pitiful protagonists. The defining sentimental moment - the Platonic form of sentimentality to which all such work aspires - favours situations which are *completely irredeemable, those which all the generous impulses in the world can do nothing to alter, and to which we can offer only the tribute of our pity* (Brissenden, 6) or, one might add, the exercise of our self-pity.

The practice of placing certain stereotypes in ghastly situations guaranteed the feverish emotionality that sentimentality demanded; more balanced writing with fresh situations and characters of complexity would simply not do the job so well. Nothing was allowed to deflect from a monomaniac pursuit of pathos. Bawdiness or humour, for instance, might subvert sentimental effect, and they are therefore largely eschewed in sentimental writing. They would distract, prompting the wrong sort of emotion - or, worse, no emotion at all: Henri Bergson famously wrote of the *absence of feeling which usually accompanies laughter* and that the *comic demands something like a momentary anaesthesia of the heart* (Sherbo 1957, 73). Similarly, any degree of irony - or indeed much subtlety of any sort - might prompt a

knowingness that would lead to a questioning of the immoderate and unlikely tenor of the sentimental stance.

No, cardboard worked best, and archetypal characters - Campbell's *stock symbols of pathos* (152) - and predictable plots: (for instance: *It is the extremely rare sentimental play whose denouement cannot be predicted in advance of occurrence* [Sherbo, 100]) were summoned by a vocabulary that was *conventional, repetitive, mannered and overcharged* (Todd, 3) drawn from *a pool of trite words...summoning vague memories of similar speeches in similar situations* (Sherbo, 130).

The whole project was therefore above all familiar. And remained so. The aim, of course, was not originality or 'realism', but the expression of the sentimental ethic and the eliciting of the sentimental response: in Sterne's 'Sentimental Journey' *People are described hardly at all* (A. Alvarez in Sterne 1967, 9).

A book, a play and some paintings: Mackenzie, Lillo and Greuze

The link between sentimental philosophy and its artistic expression is apparent: Henry Brooke (1730-1783) produced one the most popular sentimental novels, *The Fool of Quality*, and his *...ideas are derived from their clearest, most systematic, and most effective spokesman, the Earl of Shaftesbury...* (Fairchild 1939, 480). It is not pertinent here to consider the gamut of sentimental drama, fiction and painting, but a few examples will suffice to give their flavour, and afford a comparison with the sentimentality in contemporaneous popular song.

For a sentimental play I refer to George Lillo's *The London Merchant* (1731), an early example of the new middle-class drama much informed by sentimentalism; it is also chosen because it is the near contemporary of another theatrical success, *The Beggar's Opera*, which has particular relevance to the development of sentimental popular song as we shall see in the next chapter. Then, for contrast, I go to the other end of the century for a novel, *The Man of Feeling* (1771) by Henry Mackenzie. Embodying a particularly 'full-tilt' sentimentality, excessive even by the standards of the day, it has not come down to us like the sentimental work of Sterne or Goldsmith, yet was a sensation and - as we shall see later - hugely influential.

In *The Man of Feeling* one catches a precursor of the melodramatic tone of much nineteenth century popular culture. The link between sentimentality and melodrama is close: much sentimental writing is couched in melodramatic terms and sentimentality is a stock component of melodrama. In their pursuit of sensation, both present partial, manipulated versions of the world in an exaggerated manner that

afford the satisfactions of moral and narrative tidiness, of cathartic 'closure'. Here we find Mackenzie's characters in melodramatic mode:

"Perfidious villain!" said I: "Who darest' insult the weakness thou hast undone; were (that) my father here thy coward-soul would shrink from the vengeance of his honour." (Mackenzie 1970, 62)

"Villain," he cried "thou see'st a father who had once a daughter's honour to preserve; blasted as it now is, behold him ready to avenge its loss." (Ibid., 66)

The scene, however, resolves in a uniquely eighteenth century, sentimental, way:

...his lip quivered, his cheek grew pale! his eyes lost the lightening of their fury! there was reproach in them, but with a mingling of pity! He turned them up to heaven - then on his daughter. - He laid his left hand on his heart - the sword dropped from his right - he burst into tears. (Ibid.)

Similarly, although the plot of Lillo's *The London Merchant* is proto-melodramatic, it halts in Act III, and an entirely static Act IV is given over to soul-searching, breast-beating and increasingly pathetic encounters that are purely sentimental. Here the hero, in his condemned cell, is visited by his best friend:

BARNWELL (aside)

Trueman! My friend, who I so wisht to see! Yet now he's here I dare not look upon him. (weeps)

TRUEMAN

Oh, Barnwell! Barnwell!

BARNWELL

Mercy! Mercy! gracious Heaven! For death, but not for this, was I prepared.

TRUEMAN

What have I suffer'd since I saw you last! - what pain has absence given me! - But oh! to see thus!

BARNWELL

I know it is dreadful! I feel the anguish of thy generous Soul, - but I was born to murder all who love me. (Both weep) (Lillo 1965, 71)

In both these cited works unrequited love heightens the pathos of the hero's death. In the final scene of *The London Merchant* the hero, Barnwell, on the scaffold, turns to the good Marion, who has loved him all along, and who, having first lost him to the evil Millwood, must now lose him altogether:

BARNWELL

Would you, bright excellence, permit me the honour of a chaste embrace, the last happiness this world could give were mine. (She inclines to him: they embrace.) Exalted goodness! Oh, turn your eyes from earth and me to Heaven, whose virtue like yours is ever heard. (Ibid., 77)

Similarly it is only when he is dying that Harley, the hypersensitive hero of *The Man of Feeling*, manages to tell Miss Walton of his feelings:

"There are," said he, in a very low voice, "There are attachments, Miss Walton... It is perhaps the last time we shall ever meet... To love, Miss Walton, could not be a crime; - if, to declare it is one - the expiation will be made!" Her tears were now flowing without controul (sic). "I will not pretend to misunderstand you," said she "I know your worth - I have known it long - I have esteemed it. What would you have me say? - I have loved it as it deserved. He seized her hand - a languid colour reddened his cheek - a smile brightened faintly in his eyes. As he gazed on her, it grew dim, it fixed, it closed - He sighed, and fell back on his seat - . (Mackenzie, 130)

At the end of the book it is revealed by the narrator that Harley had already made sentimental capital in anticipation of this sad demise:

He had hinted that he should like to be buried in a certain spot near the grave of his mother... It was shaded by an old tree, the only one in the churchyard, in which was a cavity worn by time. The last time we passed there, methought he looked wistfully on that tree: there was a branch, that bent towards us, waving in the wind; he waved his hand, as he mimicked its motion. There was something predictive in his look! (Ibid., 132)

It should be mentioned finally that Harley is actually not the most pathetic character in the book; that honour goes to old Edwards, the archetypal Good Old Man, whose lip rarely stops trembling throughout. The lengths the author Mackenzie went in the pursuit of pathos can be seen in this paraphrase of old Edwards' story by Brian Vickers:

Here we find the familiar pattern of bad luck (people going bankrupt with someone else's money; the move to a smaller property) and oppression. His son, having trespassed while hunting, is harshly punished by the squire: his dog is shot, he is imprisoned and fined, and lastly a press-gang is sent out for him: they arrive on Christmas Eve - it is the child's birthday - the family around the fireside is blessing Providence - their misfortunes are forgotten - they are playing blind-man's buff - the son is blind-folded - when he is seized, as if in play - but by the press-gang!) (Vickers in Mackenzie 1970, xvii-xviii).

In their effort to represent such strong emotions and extreme situations sentimental writers used a battery of what Janet Todd has called *heightening devices* (Todd, 5). These include 'operatic' punctuation (lots of !!!! and ----), typographical variety and textual lacunae (Sterne's celebrated blank pages in *Tristram Shandy*). These all served to suggest the expression of the inexpressible. In the presence of the truly ineffable - (the quintessential sentimental moment) - words literally fail. Only tears or silence will do *Words are for lighter Griefs*. (Lillo quoted in Booth 1965, 225)

There is a strong pictorial element in all this: the sentimental moment is often an artfully composed 'tableau', a freeze-frame - a film still - that at once delineates the key moral points of the narrative, but also can be savoured as a pleasing (if instructive) visual composition in its own right. Again, the beautiful and the good are linked. Sentimental writing has always favoured the featuring of the telling scene, and book illustrations, magic lantern slides and sheet music covers have sought to represent them visually. Further, song as a form is more naturally represented in tableau than sequentially (even when it tells a 'story'). (We see later how engravings both reflected and maintained the celebrity of early sentimental songs like *Auld Robin Gray*, and how the stereotyped art-work on sheet-music covers is a visual analogue of the [stereotypical] lyrics within.)

In purely visual appreciation, the dominant notion of this time was that of the picturesque. This might be applied as much to garden design as to painting. It occupied a parallel place in art history to that occupied by sentimentality in respect of the written word *The picturesque interregnum between classic and romantic art was necessary in order to enable the imagination to form the habit of feeling through the eyes* (Price 1965, 261). Spontaneous feeling was stressed at the expense of classical formality, and in the paintings of Claude Lorraine and the garden design of Thomas Whateley there is first and foremost an expressive evocation of mood. They are a precise visual analogue of the *mise en scène* 'painted' in words by the sentimental writers. Like them, they taught emotional reaction by a slightly theatrical arrangement of largely natural components. In a similar way that these landscapes later were the *inspiration for the literary sentimental scenes of Anne Radcliffe* (Todd, 15) their visual motifs crop up in sentimental popular music. Indeed, in both painting and writing, there was a growth of the *...cult of the discrete object as the repository of emotion (and) ...as a further mark of refined sensibility... and ...a sense of particular objects as a source of emotion* (Mackenzie 1970, xiv; see also Dwyer, 1035).

Thus the rustic bridges and venerable oak trees that populate the landscape of so much sentimental popular song derive directly from this tradition. (Songs like Henry Russell's celebrated *Woodman, Spare That Tree* [1837] - or, from a hundred years later, Billy Hill's *The Old Covered Bridge*.)

In contrast to these landscapes, figurative painting favoured a less abstract sentimentality with the deft and pleasing presentation of heart-warming situations peopled by characters drawn from the sentimental 'repertory company'. Painting of this sort can be seen in the work of Jean-Baptiste Greuze (1725-1805) who *enjoyed a meteoric rise to fame in 1755, following his first exhibition...* (Dore 1994, 37) and produced *tableaux vivants* with titles like *The Paralytic Tended by His Children*, *A Grandfather Reading the Bible to His Family* and *A Girl Weeping Over Her Dead Bird*. As with critical response to literary sentimentality, art historians note the essentially middle-class appeal of such work, and similarly reject it for its *...stereotyping...* and *...idealisation* (Hauser Vol 3 1962, 33). Less frequently acknowledged is how artfully Greuze blends 'virtu' in the composition and realisation of the image on the canvas with 'virtue' in the moral tone of what that image depicts.

Sentimental creative work, therefore, explicitly sought to school its readers in feelings and ethics, and a bourgeoisie, insecure in all aspects of what might be considered seemly, avidly consumed it. There was a high seriousness in all this, and the use of imaginative modes to shape sensibility was of particular relevance to increasing numbers of women, who, whilst possessing some leisure and literacy, nonetheless had little freedom to explore the world for themselves. Sentimental art (especially the novel), therefore, offered them imaginative versions of the world instead, ones that actually - as has been said - specifically favoured 'feminised' emotional response. It is hard now to perceive the novel as a primarily didactic form, yet the eighteenth century demanded instruction from its art: *his figure, his address, and convention, were not unlike those warm ideas of an accomplished man which my favourite novels had taught me to form* (Mackenzie, 56-7). Accompanying this was a perennial worry one might not have correctly learnt the lessons contained in the art: when Lady Louisa Stuart first read *The Man of Feeling* she was *secretly afraid lest she should not cry enough to gain credit of proper sensibility* (Todd, 146; Campbell 141).

Classical art, by contrast, with its formality and rules, was more 'analytic', more masculinised. There was, therefore, a sense in which sentimental art compromised the whole aggressive, opportunistic notion of male sexuality, yet the 'testosterone imperative' still might always override the 'sensibility imperative'. De

Sade (unsurprisingly) saw this clearly and commented: *Toujours est il qu'un libertin est rarement un homme sensible est cela, par la seule raison que la sensibilité pleuve la foiblesse, est le libertinage la force* (De Sade, *La Nouvelle Justine, ou Les Malheurs de la Vertu* [1797] quoted in Brissenden, 133).

There were probably few men in the eighteenth century who aspired to the anodyne condition of sentimental heroes like Harley and Barnwell. There was, however, an important sense in which sentimental writing favouring sensibility rather than sensuality went *some way towards bringing the male to the social condition of the female* (Todd, 101) and as such played its part in the construction of a more modern consciousness.

The sentimental world-view of *...private friendships, the domestic hearth and specifically feminine feeling...became essential characteristics of the moral community. Never again would it be possible to define a man solely by his political or professional position; never again would it be possible to ignore the place of women in the ethical equation* (Dwyer, 1030).

Having said something of sentimentality's multi-faceted origins, and given examples of how it was incorporated into the relatively familiar forms of the novel, play and painting, we may now turn to the less explored area of its adoption and expression in the lyrics of contemporary popular vocal music.

Chapter 4

The Tradition Originates: sentimentality in eighteenth century popular songs

Background

My use of the plural above - 'songs', not 'song' - is deliberate: this chapter looks at the incorporation of sentimentality in a variety of popular vocal forms. If this seems strange to us now it is because we have become accustomed to thinking of popular song as one thing, a certain sort of standardized product (thirty two bars/ two and a half minutes long), to which the appellation 'popular' is applied hierarchically according to sheet-music or record sales. This is a 'presentist' view, reflecting only the situation of the last hundred years when concentration of production and aggressive marketing at the end of the last century inclined things towards an increasingly standardized industrial product. That product, the Tin Pan Alley song - actualized in sheet music published by a small group of specialist companies - has come to symbolize for most people what popular song (pre-Rock 'n' Roll at any rate) is.

In sharp contrast to this modern ideal-type, familiar vocal material in the eighteenth century came in many shapes. Like the literary and scientific endeavour of the age, eighteenth century songwriting displays a cheerful and untidy eclecticism that subverts neat categorization, and in telling its story retrospectively it is tempting to impose (or at any rate imply) an order or purpose that never existed. I include in my discussion both secular and sacred examples (a possibly contentious decision I defend later) from a variety of sources. The secular would include: the ballad opera song as inaugurated in John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*; the pleasure garden song as typified in the work of James Hook, the Scottish songs of Allan Ramsay, Anne Lindsay and Robert Burns, and the songs of Charles Dibdin. The sacred is centred on the development of the non-denominational congregational hymn by Isaac Watts, Charles and John Wesley and the Olney writers. I therefore use 'eighteenth century popular songs' as a plural descriptive category to include quite different sorts of well-known and well-liked vocal material (rather than the more familiar singular generic sense with its implication of a single dominant mode).

In the light of the diversity of this material it is perhaps wise to clarify what I count as a 'popular song'. Shiach (1989) has shown the notion of popular cultural forms are problematic, not least because the semantic meaning of 'popular' in this type of context has shifted significantly. I use it in the modern sense of that which reflects the popular taste and needs, and has general currency. 'Song', though surely less contentious as a definition, presents a different problem to us today in that perception of vocal music in the eighteenth century was significantly different. This is because our current notions of musical value derive from nineteenth century German Romanticism which, *vide* Hanslik, regarded instrumental 'art' music as the most profound form of musical expression (indeed Pater later suggested that *all art constantly aspires to the condition of music.*) This is surely linked to instrumental music's abstract, 'mysterious' nature suggestive of elusive, 'deep' meaning (both its charm and its limitation, as was discussed in chapter 1). Song - (words and music) - has a specificity of meaning which *de facto* denies it the ambiguity needed for 'deep' meaning. However for most of the eighteenth century things were viewed very differently, and the situation was reversed: instrumental music was distrusted because it *was hard to ascribe a moral significance to (it) because it lacked specificity or intelligible and concrete meaning* (Goehr 1994, 144). Song by contrast was the high-status musical mode precisely because its lyric makes clear what it is 'about' (it had *concrete and specific semantic content and produced similar concrete effects* [Ibid.]). Purely instrumental music, by contrast, was understood and appreciated largely in terms of its function: as accompaniment to a dance or masque; as adjunct to religious ritual - that is its *meaning (came) from without itself* (Ibid. see also Frith 1996, 253 ff.). It is significant that it was vocal music, songs and hymns, that was dominant in the initial stages of the accommodation of a new middle class 'taste public'. The nature of this new audience influenced both the content and production of its music: because traditionally musical production was tied to its function composers tended to be either court musicians, church musicians or town musicians, and concerned only with a discharge of specialist musical duties connected with their office. Now however there was a new public that was neither specialist nor expert so its *attention had to be roused and captivated...(and) satisfied and won over again and again* (Hauser 1951, 74). This favoured the production of work *written for as many repeats as possible* (Ibid., 76) as opposed to commissions for a single occasion (often the case previously). The viability of such songs - their 'popular' status - melded aesthetic and commercial considerations. Aesthetically they had to be memorable, catchy; commercially they had to be capable of 'consumption'. These two facets are linked by a shared notion of repetition - which necessitates

simplicity (too complex and you won't remember it, or be able to perform it), brevity (a separate identity has to be established quickly) and immediacy (these points must be made succinctly). These new criteria are common to both secular and sacred material, and sentimentality was adopted as a dominant tone in these songs for the same reasons it was in literature and painting: it was enjoyable, it didn't assume familiarity with existing (classicist) forms and it assuaged middle-class aesthetic and ethical insecurities. The new specification of song was partly the child of new eighteenth century public arenas for the performance and reception of music, and it cannot be considered independent of innovations in cultural life that favoured its production and uptake. Popular songs' journey to being a leisure option 'consumed' by the many was partly predicated on a new social impulse in the enjoyment of music. In religious song this centred on the communal enjoyment of a new fervent hymnody developed to be accessible to all worshippers (previous sung devotional music was far from inclusive). In secular popular song the impulse to the social was fed by *a feeling for the power of association, the conscious and unconscious idea of the age* (B. Kirkman Gray quoted in Mackerness 1966, 111). In the absence of a music industry *a great deal of eighteenth century music making had its origin in the awakening spirit of voluntary association* (Ibid.). Clubs sprang up for the performance and witnessing of music, but there were two specific phenomena connected with the social enjoyment of music that played a particularly vigorous part in the forging of brief, catchy composed ditties - that is to say 'popular' songs. These were the metropolitan pleasure garden and the ballad opera.

Both provided a platform (literally) for sentimental songs, yet despite being precursors of modern forms - the former was the forerunner of much *al fresco* music making, from brass bands in the park to pop festivals, and in the latter one has the origins of Anglo-American Musical Theatre - they are easily sidelined as extinct historical curiosities.

Although the pleasure gardens and ballad opera were quite distinct sociological phenomena, they spawned similar songs (signifying a similar shift in musical taste). This is hardly surprising as the work was created and performed by the same people, indeed *performers moved freely from one genre to another and the same composer wrote for both* (Hamm 1979, 20). Arne and Hook, the most famous pleasure garden composers, both also wrote ballad operas and *The music of both was brought out in sheet music by the same musical publishers* (Ibid.). Thus *the airs written for these operas are strikingly similar to the pleasure garden songs* (Ibid., 19) and indeed, in some cases they were the same songs with the growth of the fashion of interpolating 'hits' from one sort of entertainment to the other. The two

contexts in which they were presented however differed significantly, and now need a more detailed appraisal. First the pleasure gardens.

Arne and Hook: the pleasure garden song

The tear, as a pearl he will wear, and I in remembrance be bless'd.

('The Tear': James Hook)

We are told *The London pleasure gardens are of considerable importance in the social history of English music* (Mackerness 1966, 105) and these al fresco venues for socialising, eating and entertainment were established in London *in spite of the English weather* (Gammond 1991, 587) at Vauxhall (1732), Marylebone (1737) and Ranelagh (1742). Here one might *walk, eat, drink, listen to light music, watch fireworks, or make amorous assignations in the bowers* (Lee 1970, 65). However the gardens gradually inclined to respectability, providing a *pleasant but edifying environment* (Brewer 1997, 65) - *the only refreshment allowed was coffee and tea* (Dibdin 1842, 19) - and those who ran them, like Jonathan Tyers (prop. Vauxhall), were among the first to commodify culture in a modern way.

They were hugely popular from the early eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century and were distinguished by two factors central to their status as crucibles for popular song: their informality and their social mix. *An interesting feature of the gardens...was that within them social distinctions tended to be disregarded...the audiences were not as solemn and attentive as they are expected to be in a modern concert hall (and) full provision was made to meet a variety of tastes* (Mackerness, 104-5). And Sir Samuel Egerton Brydges noted at the time of Ranelagh Gardens: *It was very entertaining; as all ranks were there mingled* (quoted in Ibid.).

The entertainment offered therefore had to appeal to a diverse audience. This was a severe challenge made harder still by the fact that the only thing uniting such an audience was its distinctly informal and peripatetic nature. How this challenge was met is a defining moment in popular music history: first Thomas Arne at Ranelagh, and later James Hook at Vauxhall, produced work that might still be considered an exemplar of popular song writing. Arne (1740-1786) *understood that such music must have immediate accessibility, that it would be judged on first hearing* (Hamm, 11). To this end he adapted extant lyrics to produce strophic songs

(songs with stanzas of equal length sung to the same tune) with simple internal structures that repeated key or 'hook' musical phrases each verse and that concluded with a catchy refrain line. Thus *By the time an audience had heard one of his songs for the first time they might not be able to sing it from memory, but at the very least they would have some memory of it, could recognise it if they heard it again, and by the end of the song very likely could sing the refrain line at the end of each stanza with the performer* (Ibid.). Arne's success continued and during the next twenty years he published annual song collections; indeed the songs performed at the pleasure gardens became widely available in printed form, and *musically literate Britons purchased them, to play and sing in their homes* (Ibid.). The publishing of the songs gave them wider temporal and geographical currency than was possible through performance alone and *The abundant musical life of the pleasure gardens provided a considerable amount of business for music publishers in the eighteenth century* (Mackerness, 106). The sale of sheet music aided and defined the popularity of 'popular song' from these early days through to Tin Pan Alley, and is a central component in the establishment of a sentimental song tradition.

James Hook (1746-1827), the other great pleasure garden composer, produced a remarkable two thousand songs. He was engaged at the Marylebone Gardens from 1768-69 and at Vauxhall from 1774. Writing a little after Arne, his work for the gardens represents a further move towards a simple, demotic style of popular song; although *the subject matter of his songs is the same as Arne...but there is sometimes a subtle and profound difference. Each of Hook's songs is concerned with recognisable human beings... Many of his songs are expressions of dramatic and emotional situations not unlike those his listeners might have encountered in their own lives* (Hamm 1979,16). Thus, his most famous song, the quintessentially sentimental *The Tear*, (has) *an immediacy not found in earlier pieces...(and)...deals with sentiments not as an abstraction, one-dimensional and isolated from real experience, but with a situation and a resulting emotion that is human; and can be responded to at the first-person level* (Ibid.):

*My heart from my bosom wou'd fly, and wander oh wander afar,
Reflection bedews my sad eye, for Henry is gone to the war.
O, ye winds! to my Henry bear, one drop let it fall on his breast,
The tear, as a pearl he will wear, and I in remembrance be bless'd.*

('The Tear')

This sentimental emphasis on individual psychological response again uses humble protagonists, and Hook uses the sentimental axiom of tears as a correct and natural

response in both this and another of his most successful songs, *Lucy, or Selim's Complaint*. (Hook's music similarly sought an unaffected style: it was *clear, pleasant, and 'natural' as opposed to the elaborate counterpoint of previous generations...*[Sadie 1980, 279]). Naturalness also characterized the song's performance, and the success of Arne's and Hook's pieces was further aided by their straight-forward renditions by performers, who, though gifted, were conspicuous in their lack of showy technique: the tenor Vernon *had no voice* but pleased audiences with his *strong conception, quick sensibility, and a correct taste* (Dibdin quoted in Hamm, 11). And Arne's wife, Cecilia Young, the first featured singer at Vauxhall, *knew nothing in singing but sweetness and simplicity* (Ibid.).

John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*: a new form defined

Then think of poor Polly's tears...

('O, Ponder Well!': John Gay)

This concern for a natural sincerity of heart over elaborate and mannered expression that so characterized the pleasure garden songs was similarly found in ballad opera. The rise of the ballad opera, the second 'popular' music phenomenon of the eighteenth century, is also represented as *a significant cultural moment* (Scott 1989, xii). It is best understood as a reaction against the prevailing *opera seria*, predominantly an Italian creation that was as artificial in its presentation as it was distant in its themes. In its pure form it was seen as *a model of the prevailing rationalist philosophy, the action moving through conflicts and misunderstandings to an inevitable 'lieto fino'*. The music was equally orderly, largely an alternation of *recitatives (in which the action takes place) and arias (in which the characters give vent to their emotional states)* (Sadie 1980, 538). Its themes were largely classical: the Gods and ancient heroes; it was sung in an excessively mannered way and in a foreign language. All of which provided little if any cultural sustenance for the bourgeoisie. In direct and deliberate contrast ballad opera provided vernacular entertainment, *vernacular in setting, plot and musical style (that) was a statement against the domination of the British stage by foreign performers singing in a foreign tongue* (Hamm, 17) and it is exemplified by its most celebrated example, John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* (1728). In the introduction to the opera Gay (through

the character of the beggar) explains: *I hope I may be forgiven, that I have not made my Opera thoroughly unnatural, like those in vogue* (quoted in Ibid., 17). In this new form *The singers were all English, and the men practised the 'manly art of singing' rather than 'modulating through all the meanderings of falsetto' in the style of the castrati of Italian opera* (Ibid.).

A combination of recognisable characters - like the whores and highwaymen in *The Beggar's Opera* - spoken colloquial dialogue and simple strophic songs provided *a piece of musical theatre readily acceptable to a much wider audience than that which patronised Italian opera... (and was) comprehensible and enjoyable to listeners of modest musical training and listening experience* (Ibid., 19). And because *The Beggar's Opera* was the work which pointed most clearly to the cultural appetite of the growing urban middle class... (Scott, 4) Gay was careful to instil into the work a moral purpose... *designed to appeal to the taste of a middle class audience* (Ibid.). Thus Gay's heroine, Polly Peachum, is granted a musical naturalness that affords both an implicit critique of mannered *opera seria*, as well as making her the perfect embodiment of a (sentimental) moral naturalness:

*Compared with her, how flat appears
Cuzzoni or Faustino?
And when she sings, I shut my ears
To warbling Senesino.*

('Of All the Belles that Tread the Stage [There's None Like Pretty Polly]'), quoted in Hazel 1991, 425)

The piece was immensely successful - Handel commented that *...the ballad opera has pelted Italian opera off the stage with Lumps of Pudding* (Lee, 61), a reference to the last tune in Gay's work - and much celebrated (Hogarth's painting of the original production can be seen in the Tate). It paved the way for the production of a hundred other ballad operas in the following five years (as well as its own less-than-successful sequel *Polly* [1729]).

The success and subsequent influence of *The Beggar's Opera* in pioneering new modes that helped establish a popular music in the eighteenth century is therefore indubitable. By examining in detail material from this piece it becomes apparent that a significant part of its appeal to its first audiences was in its sentimentality. This at first glance seems unlikely: the perception of *The Beggar's Opera* is usually of a robust satire that is decidedly unsentimental, a piece that still reads and plays well in our own more knowing times. The truer picture, however - and one that explains it as the theatrical phenomenon of the eighteenth century - was

that Gay manages to marry satire and sentimentality: *The nature of the whole play was at once sentimental and satirical; it is this distinctive mixture that brought the work its popular success* (Booth 1981, 116) ...his (Gay's) cultivation of the sentimental lyric has long been recognized... (Fairchild 1939, 228), and indeed without its sentimentality the play might have flopped: Boswell tells that *during the first night of its appearance it was long in a very dubious state; that there was a disposition to damn it, and that it was saved by the song, 'Oh ponder well! Be not severe!' the audience being much affected by the innocent look of Polly, when she came to those two lines...*

*For on the rope that hangs my Dear,
Depends poor Polly's life. (Ibid.)*

This particular song seems to have been the hit of the show, and it not only tipped the balance in its favour on the first night, but brought Lavinia Fenton, the actress playing Polly to the attention of her future husband, the third Earl of Bolton. (It is said her affecting performance caused him to immediately fall in love with her: she bore him three sons before they eventually married.)

Gay managed the considerable technical feat of blending toughness and tenderness in *The Beggar's Opera* by allowing different characters to represent quite separate values and then having them further precisely articulate these values in the songs. Thus Lockitt and Peacham represent the Walpoleian greed and expediency Gay sought to satirise whilst Polly, although occasionally comic and shrewish, is essentially a regulation sentimental heroine: *Peacham sings cynicism, Polly sings self-pity, Macheath sings bravado...*(Ibid., 118).

It is through the songs especially - and there are sixty nine in the piece - that Gay was able to inject sentimentality into a piece that in other ways appears anti-sentimental. For despite its harshness and mordancy *The play is also deeply sentimental, able as Boswell said, to cause its audience to be temporarily much affected. Gay's principal device for making this happen - the rush of sentiment despite the satire - is in his use of songs* (Ibid., 118). Polly, cast by the narrative as sentimental heroine, is understandably the most appropriate character to articulate pity and self-pity in song - and Gay gives her three big pathetic numbers. Act I closes with her (sung) rejoinder to Macheath's attempt to soften her anguish at their parting:

*The boy, thus, when his sparrow's flown,
The bird in silence eyes;
But soon as out of sight 'tis gone,
Whines, whimpers, sobs and cries.*

Later, when Macheath is about to face trial, Polly is again inconsolable:

*When my hero in court appears,
And stands arraigned for his life;
Then think of poor Polly's tears;
For ah! poor Polly's his wife.
... And alas, poor Polly!
Alack, and welladay!
Before I was in love,
Oh! every month was May.*

But it was the brief *Oh Ponder Well* near the beginning of the play that seems to have most affected audiences:

*Oh, ponder well! Be no severe;
So save a wretched wife!
For on the rope that hangs my dear
Depends poor Polly's life.*

Here *Her mood is not despair or even agitation, but rather the tranquility of self pity ...the song opens to its audience an exquisite moment of disinterested self pity, an ecstasy above the self to savour its lovely sadness from not too close* (Ibid., 124, my emphasis). This is a quintessential part of the appeal of sentimental songs, the ability to savour deep emotion without being destroyed by it: 'affect' without 'effect' if you will (or in contemporary-speak, 'lite' sadness).

Mark Booth has provided a bravura exegesis of the song's pathos: *the characteristic posture of the lyric...is a droop. It is given in the feeble expostulation of the sense, in the feeble discharge of the 'p' consonant...(the sound returns three times in the climactic last line)...and in the descent of the tune to the tonic in regular little steps... the tune droops to the floor of its tonic note four times and almost five* (Ibid., 122). (And we may assume Lavinia Fenton performed the song with drooped head.)

Thus *When Polly sings 'Oh Ponder Well!' she allows her audience to savour a special sentimentality native to the play and to the age that produced it* (Ibid., 119).

No other ballad opera had the success of *The Beggar's Opera* but the characteristic mood of these subsequent works remained sentimental, and the first three writers of individual sentimental songs we consider, Ramsay, Lady Nairne and Dibdin, all also had links with ballad opera. In his influential *Music in England* Eric Blom

commented of the second generation of theatre composers writing from 1760 onwards that they were *providing music for the sentimental absurdities expected by their public* (Blom 1942, 113), and Mackerness in *A Social History of English Music* makes reference to work following *The Beggar's Opera* as *relying on sentimental characterization* (Mackerness, 100).

The ballad opera and pleasure garden remained the significant arenas for the performance of popular song in the eighteenth century: indeed much of the secular song considered in this section was featured at some time in the pleasure gardens, and many of the 'hits' of writers like Dibdin originated in ballad operas they had written.

Allan Ramsay and Lady Lindsay: the new Scottish sentimental song.

'Farewell to Lochaber' and 'Auld Robin Gray'

Although *The Beggar's Opera* is the definitive work of the form, it was not the earliest example: a Scottish writer had produced a piece entitled *The Gentle Shepherd* three years earlier which *is often considered a forerunner of 'The Beggar's Opera'*. (Scott 1989, 5) That writer was Allan Ramsay, the first of the important writers of individual sentimental songs. Ramsay (1686-1758) was many things - wig-maker, poet, publisher, patriot, gossip - an energetic and convivial 'chancer', the quality of whose achievements might most kindly be described as 'uneven'. This irregular and opportunistic approach is evident in his attitude to Scottish Song; yet Ramsay is important to this study for his innovations in this field. (That these were arrived at haphazardly is of secondary importance). Ramsay was at once a creative lyricist and antiquarian, and these two impulses - to create new songs and curate old ones - got hopelessly mixed up. This is evident in his famous 1723 publication, *The Tea-Table Miscellany*, a collection of songs by himself and others, as well as ostensibly 'traditional' material. The *Miscellany* certainly deserved its name and is an indigestible mixture that veered from Ramsay's attempts at high poetic style (borrowed ironically from English models) to his versions of folk material in the public domain. This latter was manifestly not a curatorial venture in any modern sense: in line with the age, Ramsay had no interest in provenance and authenticity. He merely took traditional themes and existing fragments and adapted and 'improved'

them as he saw fit . (His own taste was poor: *His taste was always uncertain and his notions of refinement had the wavering exaggeration of a man of innate vulgarity...*[Daiches 1994, 812]). Where no suitable originals existed he made them up: he was, after all, a poet.

This all might seem slack to modern eyes, but Ramsay's concoction and publication of material that was 'folk-like' rather than 'folk' was a precursor of later more influential work by Burns and Moore, and his methodology informed theirs.

That methodology centred around certain areas. First was the perception of rural life as picturesque and natural. This was a new, very middle class view: until recently the country had been seen as backward and undesirable (*vide* Harriet's reaction to Hampshire in *The Man of Mode* and the characterization of Margery, the 'country wife', in Wycherley's play), yet increasingly it became *something an urban society found quaint and appealing* (Scott, 23). Ramsay's depiction of simple rustic folk in beautiful surroundings highlighted a naturalness and simplicity in accord with eighteenth century thought, not eighteenth century historical realities. To achieve this vision he therefore had to omit much in the way of political or social truth, though part of the appeal of the work was exotic: (rural) Scotland as different, 'other'. Ramsay's English publisher, William Thompson, was aware how *Scots people and culture were sufficiently 'foreign' to excite curiosity, as well as fitting in neatly with the myth of rural arcadia ... Being close to 'Nature' Thompson's sanitised 'Lass' who scorned 'Brocade', and his idealised (and fashionably kilted) 'Scottish Lads' could be enjoyed by the city 'BEAUS' and 'BELLES' without problems like the odour of sheep-dung or the danger of physical work* (Harker 1985, 13).

Ramsay was again typical of his time in being both proud and ashamed of his country. His nationalism, like so many of the subsequent Celtic song-writers, is resolutely sentimental (see Fairchild 1939, 434). The failure of nationalist dreams are always more potent sentimentally than their success because they allow for an orgy of pity and self-pity; absolute failure - exile - is particularly piquant, and this of course was to be the Jacobite situation. His nationalism was typically more cultural than political, and he can be credited with being the first to seek *a wider market for Scots cultural nationalism* (Harker, 9). The key word here is 'market', and this consisted of packaging the Hibernian Rural Idyll in a very careful way. Because he was promoting an idealized 'refined' reality, all bawdiness - traditionally a 'country matter' - had to be excised: *The 'Miscellany' ostentatiously claimed to keep out 'all smut and ribaldry' so that the 'modest voice and ear of the fair singer might meet no affront'...* (Ibid., 10) and his *presentation process involved the words in a great deal of literary improvement and moral purification, an exercise which was to become*

standard practice (Scott, 23). In this Ramsay may be therefore seen as one of the first to provide what was to become axiomatic in sentimental song-writing: a genteel form of musical expression for the amateur (the gentility being partly a function of his 'improving' and 'purifying'). His 'manor' was certainly solidly middle-class: his shop at Luckenbooths *became the centre for the polite literary and musical culture, not only of Edinburgh residents, but also of 'county' gentry and professional people* (Harker, 9) and his mannerly versions of Scotland found favour *...as the Scottish middle classes became increasingly Anglicised...* (Shiach, 105).

The refined arcadia in Ramsay's songs was the ideal vehicle for the representation of sentimental values. The 'rural' was equated with the 'natural', and the simple, uncorrupted, good-hearted people in the songs offered an object lesson in the unforced naturalness so admired by sentimentalists. Thus in one song Ramsay writes:

*'Tis not money, but a woman
Of a temper kind and easy
That gives happiness uncommon.*

('Bonny Betsy')

This at once stresses the sentimental movement's emphasis of the individual 'feeling heart' over rude social facts like status or money, and shows how poverty becomes *sine qua non* for naturalness and moral decency. There is indeed a *sentimental tinge to his realism...* (Fairchild 1939, 434) seen, for instance, in the quaint unsophistication of his protagonists as in *The Yellow-Hair'd Laddie*, in which a lovesick girl pines for the boy of the title whilst milking her ewes.

*She stole my heart away
When tending of the hay,
Bare-headed on the green...*

('The Lass of Patie's Mill')

She is..free from affected pride..and loves..without the help of art.

Ramsay's single most important contribution to the tradition is perhaps his song *Farewell To Lochaber*, after his own poem *Lochaber No More*. The popular song historian Willson Disher comments: *Homesickness and regrets for days that are no more now seem typical of Victorian England. In origin they are Irish or Scottish, or both...*(1939, 35.). What he doesn't say is that they date back to the first part of the eighteenth century; they were a motif in the work of the Shaftesburian *littérateur*

Henry Brooke, a ...*lover of olden times, and of distant places...* (Fairchild 1939, 475) and Ramsay's piece is an early example of that tendency in popular song. Willson Disher continues: *The very name is full of yearning. No other can be substituted for it, so that an exile says 'Lochaber no more', no matter where his lost home may be* (My emphasis) (Ibid., 35) allowing Ramsay to meld pity and self-pity:

*Farewell to Lochaber and farewell to Jean,
Where heartsome with thee I have many day been,
For Lochaber no more, Lochaber no more,
We'll may be return to Lochaber no more.
These tears that I shed they are for my dear
And no for the dangers attending on weir...*
(*'Farewell to Lochaber'*)

Like previous work the success of Ramsay's songs was much aided by their dissemination in print: *The Tea-Table Miscellany* was pirated only two years after its publication, and his work was a feature of contemporary anthologies - the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1750 for instance included *The Highland Laddie Written long since by Allan Ramsay, and now sung at Ranelagh and all the other Gardens; often fondly encore'd, and sometimes ridiculously hiss'd* (quoted in Mackerness, 108). This shows not only the fickleness of audiences, but the symbiotic relationship between a song's public performance and its publication in print.

Lady Anne Lindsay, eldest daughter of the first Earl of Balcarras, was a well-to-do lowland Scot, and the first in a line of titled women to write Scottish songs. As her social situation differed substantially from Ramsay's - aristocrat to his *arriviste* - so did her contribution to the sentimental song tradition. She was the first of our songwriters who had direct links with Henry McKenzie, whose floridly sentimental *The Man of Feeling* influenced a generation: *She came to know the Edinburgh intelligensia of the period such as David Hume (and) Henry McKenzie...* (Lonsdale 1988, 276). The song she is most remembered for, *Auld Robin Gray*, was published in 1771, the same year as *The Man of Feeling*. (Both make a feature of pathetic old men, an eighteenth century favourite.) The song is important for the way it followed the sentimental novel and drama in utilizing an extravagantly pathetic narrative, which Lindsay gave both Scottish characters and setting. Although not set to its present tune until 1812 it was nevertheless a huge immediate hit and *became such a favourite that in 1780 it formed the basis of an entire ballad opera, 'William and Lucy'* (Scott, 96). This was followed in 1782 by the publishing (by William Stothard

and Edmund Scott) of a popular stipple engraving based on the song. At a time before book and sheet music illustrations were standard the sales of this print attest the song's celebrity. (The print was based on a painting by Stothard, and was one of many inspired by the song [Alexander 1993, 18]). These visual and theatrical 'spin-offs' from *Auld Robin Gray* mark it as a phenomenon in its own right, one of the first popular song sensations. It is still widely anthologised.

The narrative of its four verses may be summarised as follows:

The song's protagonist, Jenny, is loved by young Jamie. Jamie is, however, poor and goes to sea to find his fortune:

*He had sae gone a-week but only twa'
When my mither she fell sick, and the cow was stown awa'
My father brak his arm...*

when auld Robin Gray comes to court Jenny. Even though Jenny works day and night to support her unfortunate parents it isn't enough and Robin Gray, who

*Maintained them baith, and wi' tears in his e'e
Said, 'Jenny, for their sakes, Oh will you marry me?'*

Jenny's heart *says nae* for she longs for Jamie's return. She then hears his ship is wrecked and eventually, succumbing to parental pressure agrees to marry Robin, perceiving that

Auld Robin Gray is a guid man to me.

Having been only married *a week or four* she sees what she takes to be Jamie's ghost, but it is Jamie himself returned:

Jenny, I am come to marry thee.

Despite their continuing mutual ardour Jenny is now trapped in a loveless marriage to auld Robin: she cannot work, wishes she was dead - but, being a thoroughly moral heroine, she

*... Darena think on Jamie, for that wad be a sin,
But I'll do my best a guid wife to be,
For Auld Robin Gray is a kind man to me.
('Auld Robin Gray')*

As with Ramsay, the perceived good-heartedness and quaintness of the rural protagonists serves the song's sentimental agenda, but its narrative has a Mackenziesque extravagance, and exemplifies the already noted sentimental *modus operandum* in manipulating plot-line for maximum pathetic effect. The poignancy of Jenny's situation is given a further dimension by the fact it is her goodness in agreeing to marry Robin for her parents' sake, repaying his kindness to them, that loses her her true love. The path to Jenny's loveless marriage to an old man is prompted in high sentimental style, by auld Robin's tears - (*Wi' tears in his e'e*) - and by her mother's mute imploring:

*... though my mither didna speak,
She looked in my face till my heart was like to break ...*

It is therefore Jenny's 'feeling heart' that brings about her demise: an eighteenth century audience would have understood and approved. The song's savouring of grief plainly pointed the way to song practice in the next century: Willson Disher comments: *Far from attempting a survey of all the world's sorrow as it has expressed itself in rhyme, I wish solely to indicate one of the earliest songs that served the Victorians for a model. This is 'Auld Robin Gray'* (Willson Disher 1955, 33).

Dibdin: business, propaganda and 'Jack Tar'

*Why, what's that to you, if my eyes I'm a-wiping
A tear is a pleasure, d'ye see, in its way...*

('True Courage': Charles Dibdin)

Charles Dibdin (1745-1814) produced songs that did much to proselytize *sad sympathy's delights*, to quote from one of them. Like Ramsay he was an energetic and erratic man of parts and although his milieu was the theatre where he worked variously as composer, singer, librettist, actor - he was by all accounts especially good at funny accents - he also produced journalism, text-books, novels and a biography. Working later in the century than Ramsay he differs from him in that, whilst similarly following 'the main chance', he brought talent and flair to his divers

ventures, and his career is remarkable for the number of 'firsts' it achieved. Dibdin indeed might be considered the first polymath of popular music.

He was a trained professional, who *wrote to order* (Lee, 70) like others we have noted, but unlike Gay or Ramsay, who set their words to existing tunes, or Hook who largely composed music to others' verses, Dibdin provided both words and music to the fifteen hundred songs he wrote. This made for artistic cohesion in the writing, and established him as the first in a long line of celebrated composer/lyricists: one thinks of Stephen Foster in the nineteenth century and Irving Berlin in our own. His work was multi-faceted: he was involved with the pleasure gardens, composing two operas for Ranelagh, where he was also concert organiser for a time (Brewer 1997, 395). Further he was responsible for innovation in the business and performance practice of popular music, taking complete control of the presentation and promotion of his work, incensed by the profit made by others: *the sale of a song, 'Poor Jack' (which) made £500 for the publisher...decided Dibdin to publish for himself* (Blom, 124).

It was, however, in performance that Dibdin is most celebrated as innovator. He started to tour in 1787 with a miscellaneous 'one-man show', and as a result of its favourable reception looked for permanent premises to present what became his celebrated self-styled *Table Entertainments: He started his new venture at Hutchins's Auction Rooms in King Street, Covent Garden, where he sang the songs composed by himself to his own words* (Ibid.). The success of this project was partly due to the fact they brought to *a wider public...the sociable spirit of the (catch and glee) clubs then popular, where people gathered perhaps for the sake of conviviality rather than for a keen love of music* (Ibid., 123).

Dibdin's Entertainments can be seen as the direct inspiration for the Song and Supper clubs of the early 19th century - which later metamorphosed into Music Hall. Such was their success Dibdin opened a small specially built theatre, the *Sans Sourci*, in 1796 and *It was in his Table Entertainments that he made the greatest impact on the direction of bourgeois 'popular song'* (Scott, 32). The atmosphere was agreeably informal - *like a person entertaining a party of friends in a private drawing -room* (Hogarth in Dibdin 1842, xxv) - and like the pleasure garden singers his performance style was modest: *He sang with simplicity, without any attempt at ambitious ornament, but with a great deal of taste and expression...*(Ibid.). At these Entertainments he accompanied himself on a piano *adapted to incorporate chamber organ, bells, side drum, gong and tambourine. The percussion was operated by mechanical contrivances* (Scott, 33). (Dibdin had pioneered the use of the piano as an accompanying instrument as early as 1767 when *...there was some excitement at*

Covent Garden on May 16th at a revival of the Beggar's Opera, for the playbill announced that after the first act 'Miss Brickler will sing a favourite song from Judith, accompanied by Mr Dibdin on a new instrument call'd Piano Forte' [Blom, 115]).

These innovations ensured his work was promoted in a lively, imaginative and remunerative way; but despite the breadth of that work Dibdin is remembered for the production of one particular sort of song that celebrated and sentimentalized sea-faring life, especially that of the fighting sailor. He extended and popularized the benign stereotype of the Jolly Jack Tar that had first appeared in John Gay's 1720 ballad opera *Sweet William's Farewell to Black-Ey'd Susan* and more recently in Arne's *Thomas and Sally* (1760). In Dibdin's songs the able seaman is characterized by his ...*generosity, simplicity of heart, unworldliness, warmth of affection...*(Willson Disher 1955, 51) and is in some ways a 'below-decks' variant of Mackenzie's sentimental exemplar, Harley, displaying that character's lachrymosity and altruism:

*...he'll melt into tears at a tale of distress ...
and ... save a drowning foe.*
(*'The True English Sailor'*)

*Why, dam'me, whats my own distress?
For others let me feel.
...A handkercheif is the best wet sail
To bring you safe to port.*
(*'Foretop Morality'*)

Dibdin's spelling out of the sentimental party line is as unequivocal as it is precise - an early entertainment he had written for the Royal Circus was called *The Benevolent Tar* - and the numerous nautical heroes of his songs are of a single mind in recognising both the moral excellence of a sentimental stance:

*The truest glory to the bosom dear
Is when the soul starts soft compassions tear.*
(*'True Glory'*)

For in pitying others you honour yourself.
(*'Philanthropy'*)

- as well as its psychological rewards:

*Why, what's that to you, if my eyes I'm a-wiping
A tear is a pleasure, d'ye see, in its way...*

('True Courage')

Jack Tar was also courageous and patriotic (if sometimes feckless). His tendency to tears - rather than compromising his valour - attests it:

*In either eye a lingering tear,
His love and duty prove...*

('The Manes of the Brave')

and demonstrates (in a very eighteenth century way) his sterling good nature:

But they that hasn't pity, why I pity they...

('True Courage')

When one speaks of Dibdin as a sentimental propagandist it is metaphorically, yet his work was literally propaganda too. He had been '*instructed by Pitt to write, sing, publish and give away what were termed War Songs*'. : *In the revolutionary period ... there were ballad writers who were employed by the Government to compose songs which would arouse the people to the danger of invasion and awake a sense of national pride. The outstanding example of this is Charles Dibdin...*(Mackerness, 135). Dibdin sought to achieve this aim by representing the navy as the most typical and resonant symbol of Britain's power, and the individual sailor as the most persuasive embodiment of British spirit. Time and again (he was a prolific songwriter) he presented his Jack Tar as a patriotic exemplar that came to stand for all British fighting men - and the example was strongly sentimental. The 'feeling heart' was an essential part of this project as the very titles show: *Poor Jack, Poor Tom, Poor Peggy*, and *The Blind Sailor*. Other titles had no less pathetic content, and the sentimental strand was useful in the 'selling' of Jack Tar for it tempered an otherwise unattractively aggressive patriotism.

Dibdin was popular in America, and his most famous song, *Tom Bowling* - originally *Poor Tom or The Sailor's Epitaph* - was well-known there (though not to the extent of other ballads like *Poor Jack* and *True-Love's Knell*). It is still anthologised today and concerns a quintessential Dibdinian Tar, morally and physically fine: *His form was of the manliest beauty...His virtues were so rare...true-hearted, hard-working: ...faithful below he did his duty and popular: The darling of our crew...His friends were many and true-hearted...* The entire tone of the song is one of pathos, generated by the apparently untimely demise of such a good fellow

(Dibdin's elder brother, Tom, the captain of an Indiaman, which was struck by lightning and lost at sea, is generally held to be the model for this song). Dibdin invites our pity on *Poor Tom's* behalf, and as he himself put it: *The song, written to please may be so managed to instruct* (Scott, 35) and he is important for imbuing obviously pathetic material like this with a strong moral tone. Dibdin's work earned him the title of *Tyrtaeus of the British Navy*. The power of his propaganda can be assessed by remembering that at the very time this paragon was gaining currency there was *discontent in the navy concerning bad provisions, low pay, harsh discipline* (and) *the resentment of pressed men* (Ibid., 33). Against the harsh reality of late eighteenth century naval life such a characterisation could only be maintained by an appeal for stoicism:

The rough and the pleasant he takes as it comes...
(*'The True English Sailor'*)

that at times is downright sinister:

I've lost an eye and got a timber toe;
But old ships must expect in time to be out of commission...
(*'Tom Tough'*)

One catches a similar hidden bleakness in the way Dibdin's songs so often appeal to providence - not the Admiralty or superior officers - to provide for their sailor heroes:

...providence takes us in tow:
There's a sweet little Cherub who sits perched aloft
To keep watch for the likes of poor Jack.
(*'Poor Jack'*)

...that power that never errs,
That guards all things below -
...will surely take in tow
Little Ben that keeps his watch in the main-top.
(*'Little Ben'*)

Echoes of this grim world are later found in sea shanties - effectively naval work songs - whose often brutal vision contrasts with Dibdin's noble (invented) naval world. Dibdin was not unaware of conditions in the navy. He had witnessed a flogging where a seaman had died after receiving 650 lashes out of a total of 1000,

and he realized...*that the typical punishment meted out to seamen was more severe than could be given to black slaves in America - since slaves were worth money, whereas seamen could be replaced by the press gang...*(Sanjek 1977 vol I, 320). Protests however would look ill from someone charged with sentimentalizing the ordinary seaman's life, so his public comments only extended to censuring the general hypocrisy whereby *foremastmen are generally punished with rigour, and the crimes of officers were often palliated and softened into errors* (Dibdin quoted in *Ibid*, 320).

Dibdin's benign vision was therefore achieved only by substantial editing of the facts, and his pictures of nautical life are as much a fiction as Ramsay and Lindsay's Highland representations, and they shared a tendency to serve up songs about the simple-hearted in colourful setting. Dibdin did this too in his non-naval pieces, and it is interesting to note his *The Negra and his Banjer* (sic) was an early attempt to sentimentalize the slave in song. He had achieved success twenty years earlier with a prototypical 'black-face' role in the ballad opera *The Padlock* and used the same character, Mungo, to proselytise an early version of the benign stereotype of the slave experience, specifically in the way it *preach(ed) contentment with one's lot* (Scott, 81):

*One massa, one slave, high and low, all degrees,
Can be happy, dance, sing, make all pleasure him please...*

('The Negra and his Banjer')

Other of his non-naval songs also invoked sentimentality with melancholy titles like *Since Then I'm Doom'd*, *Alone by the Light of the Moon* and *The Way Worn Traveller*. This understanding of the contemporary taste is seen too in the way that Dibdin, like the Scottish writers, was keen not to offend middle-class sensibilities - he altered Gay's reference to *a mistress in ev'ry port* to *a wife in ev'ry port* - and an early editor champions his lyrics as *bold and masculine, without the slightest rudeness or vulgarity* (Hogarth in Dibdin, xxxii). Like the other writers he provided the middle classes with *natural sentiments in plain language* (quoted in Scott, 35), and this formula was plainly successful: *his principal songs became universally popular; they were sold in every music-shop, seen on every lady's pianoforte, and sung in every company* (Hogarth in Dibdin, xxiii).

Dibdin's work had a wide cultural currency; for instance like *Auld Robin Gray* one of Dibdin's songs, *My Poll and My Partner Joe*, formed the basis of a melodrama. Melodrama has been usefully divided into three self-explanatory

categories, the Gothic, the Domestic and the Military or Nautical (see Booth 1968), and Dibdin's work has provided the essential flavour for that last category. The heroes were recognisably Dibdinian in their names: Jack Steadfast, Jack Gallant, Bill Bluff, Harry Bowline and Union Jack and the way they spoke in endless (and excruciating) nautical metaphor. This practice had been seen first in characters like Thomas, the hero of Arne's *Thomas and Sally*, who arrives on stage, fresh *From ploughing the ocean and threshing Monsieur* and interprets the wicked squire's attempted rape of his beloved Sally as *A pirate just about to board my prize* (quoted in Scott, 6). The nautical metaphors used so liberally in Dibdin's songs had even more profligate use in the drama, which with its increased potentiality for action and narrative allowed greater scope for their exercise: moving home was *shifting anchorage*; sitting side by side was *mooring together*; greetings were invariably *Belay there!*, *Yoho!* or *Ahoy there!*; and bad luck was *shipping a little of the bilge water of misfortune*. (See, for instance J. T. Haines' *My Poll and My Partner Joe*, 1835, republished 1970.)

However, if Dibdin is remembered for his exemplification of the feeling heart in practice through his work about tars and the negroes, he should also be remembered for his articulation in other songs of the theory behind the invocation of that didactic tool:

*While the heart some beneficent action,
Contemplates, with joy the eyes speak
On the lip quivers mute satisfaction
And a glow of delight paints the cheek.*
(*'The Smile Of Benevolence'*)

And:

*When to man the distinguishing form
And the nature of angels were given
His mind was imued with a charm
That mark'd him the fav'rite of heav'n.*

*Tw'as smiling benignity's grace
To the warm throbbing bosom so dear
That celestially beam'd in his face
As he shed sensibility's tear.*

*Ye who nature have learnt to subdue
Who your hearts 'gainst comparison can steal
Who know not the joys of the tear
Who are happy because they can feel.*

*In luxury and ease as you roll
Learn the bliss to the bosom so dear,
'Tis the luxury, supreme, of the soul
To indulge sensibility's tear.*

('The Tear of Sensibility')

Such work was nothing less than a re-statement of key (Shaftesburian) sentimental precepts, a concise affirmation in popular song of an Enlightenment ideal: Man, God's chosen creature, having subdued Nature, reveals his innately beneficent disposition - God's gift to him - through the operation of exquisite sensibility.

End of century and Burns: the Scottish sentimental song consolidated

*O Love and Sensibility, ye have conspired against my Peace!
I love to madness, and I feel to torture!*

(Robert Burns, letter to Agnes McLehose 1787 quoted in McIntyre 1995, 194)

*Chords that vibrate sweetest pleasure,
Thrill the deepest notes as woe.*

('Sensibility, how charming': Robert Burns, song from Vol. IV of 'The Scots Musical Museum')

The songs of Robert Burns (1759-1796) published from 1787 to 1803 have an especial importance for this study for three reasons. First and most obviously Burns is well-known: he remains a respected poet the world over, and his work has a visibility and influence denied much of the work so far considered. Secondly Burns has direct links with a particularly extravagant species of sentimentality. And thirdly his lyrics get published in part in response to a perception of the new demand for specifically sentimental songs.

Amplifying these points, first Burns's undeniable celebrity. This is all the more apparent when contrasted with, say, Ramsay (who is remembered today principally as the father of the portraitist). Yet Burns's 'cultural visibility' also creates

problems, for more than many eighteenth century writers he has come to represent many things for many people. At one end of the spectrum he is worshipped worldwide in the ritual flimflam of Burns Night; at the other he is castigated as a drunken lecher who squandered a (slight) talent. Yet for all the diverse appropriations few dwell much on the aspect of his work that concerns us here, his sentimentality. Burns grew up in the high period of the sentimental movement, and both his temperament and education were shaped by sentimental examples. He was essentially an autodidact and despite a necessary eclecticism in his reading - Jethro Tull's *The Horse-hoeing Husbandry* as well as Shakespeare - his own preference was clear: *my favourite authors are of the sentim'l kind* he wrote (McIntyre 1995, 26). He is famously reported to have worn out two copies of Mackenzie's *The Man of Feeling* (Bell 1983, 3), a book he loved 'next to the Bible' (quoted in Drabble 1995, 152) and his 'bosom favourite' (quoted in Ibid., 612). Mackenzie later became an influential friend and patron. Burns paid public tribute to him in a prologue he wrote for a benefit performance of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and privately admitted to him in a letter that *...whatever is good in my heart is much indebted to Mr Harley* (Mackenzie's 'Man of Feeling') (MacIntyre, 137). Harley's example affected his writing style too: *O Love and Sensibility, ye have conspired against my Peace! I love to madness, and I feel to torture!* (Ibid., 194). As Burns' most recent biographer comments: *The Man of Feeling could not have put it better* (Ibid.), but it was in its values rather than its style that Mackenzie's book had most significant influence. Burns's more sentimental work has a humility and tender-heartedness that is typically Harleyan: *My muse, tho' hamely in attire, May touch the heart* (Ibid., 58) and he recommends an early version of *Green Grow the Rashes, O ...as it is in the genuine language of my heart...* (Ibid.). Significantly Burns was familiar with earlier examples of the heart song tradition: *...I have studied Allan Ramsay* (Ibid., 86), and *The Beggars Opera* was a favourite. Like Ramsay, Burns sentimentalises the rural experience: his was a version of Scotland - a sentimental backcloth against which sentimental dramas could be played - combining at once the perceived picturesqueness of rural settings with the sterling qualities of the 'folk' inhabiting these landscapes.

Such an unaffected and morally pure world, untouched by the distortions of economic and social change, gained resonance as those distortions - urbanisation, industrialisation and emigration - progressed. It was an appealing vision, offering the frisson of 'archaism' - of an old stable culture with enduring values. And while at their worst these Highland arcadias bore as much relation to the realities of eighteenth century Scottish rural life as Marie Antoinette's shepherdessing did to the

realities of French agricultural practice, their attraction to a new and insecure middle class was considerable. Now, rather than having to relate to the forbidding and austere tenets of classicism they could relate to the simple 'folk' values of the people - essentially those of the 'feeling heart'. Because the very relationship to this rural culture was *au fond* sentimental, it is hardly surprising that the songs were too; like Ramsay Burns preached a pastoral chauvinism - Home as Rural Idyll, an enduring sentimental theme:

*How softly sweet Afton thy neighbouring hills,
Far mark'd with the courses of clear, winding rills;
There daily I wander as noon rises high,
My flocks and my Mary's sweet cot in my eye.*

*How pleasant thy banks and green valleys below,
Where, wild in the woodlands, the primroses blow,
There oft as mild Ev'ning weeps over the lea,
The sweet-scented birk shades my Mary and me.*

('Flow Gently Sweet Afton')

Yet despite *Ev'ning weeping over the lea* Burns is a far better poet than Ramsay and he brings a depth to these hackneyed scenarios. He cannily realised that the idealised Highland Home was both Eden, a place you were expelled from yet ever sought to return to, and Arcadia, a pastoral paradise, but one where Death still lurked: *Et in Arcadia ego*. Exile and death meant things could never be the same, and both have a prominent place in Burns songs; his use of death as the most absolute - and hence poignant - expression of loss is typically sentimental:

*Farewell, farewell Eliza dear,
The maid that I adore!
A brooding voice is in my ear,
We part to meet no more!
But the latest throb that leaves my heart,
While Death stands victor by,
That throb, Eliza, is thy part,
And thine the last sigh!*

('Farewell, Thou Stream')

*O pale, pale now those rosy lips
I oft ha'e kiss'd sae fondly!
And clos'd for aye the sparkling glance
That dwelt on me sae kindly.
And moulders now in silent dust,*

*That heart that lo'ed me dearly,
But still within my bosoms core
Shall live my Highland Mary.*

('Highland Mary')

*Farewell, thou fair day, thou green earth, and ye skies,
Now gay with broad setting sun;
Farewell, loves and friendship, ye dear tender ties
Our race of existence is run.*

('Farewell, Thou Fair Day')

Burns's songs are also suffused with a more general sense of perdition, the way that time robs and love dies, and so things can never be as they were:

*Thou break my heart, thou warbling birds,
That wantons through the flowr'ing thorn;
Thou minds me o' departed joys,
Departed never to return;*

('The Gallant Weaver')

and

*Where are the joys I met in the morning
That danced to the larks early song?
Where is the peace that awaited my wand'ring
At evening the wildwoods among?*

('Fair Jenny')

and

*Ye'll break my heart, ye warbling bird
That warbles on the flow'ry thorn,
Ye mind me o' departed joys,
Departed never to return.*

('Ye Banks and Braes o' Bonny Doon')

or

*But now our joys are fled
On winter's blast awa'...
...Oh, Age has weary days
And night's o' sleepless pain
Thou golden time o' Youth's prime
Thy comes thou not again!*

('The Winter of Life')

These were lodes that would be mined more famously in the next century by Tom Moore and Stephen Foster, but Burns provided an early and sustained example of this sort of song-writing. Loss can be evoked by comparing a bleak present with a rosy past, the better time *Before Things Changed*, and Burns' best known song is about just that: literally the 'old long since' or *Auld Lang Syne*. Burns' contribution to the song is now only thought to extend to the third and fourth verses, Allan Ramsay having apparently come upon it some time earlier. It was however Thomson, Burns' second publisher, who set it to the tune we now know and thus propelled it on its timeless trajectory, the song universally associated with New Year's Eve just as *Silent Night* (whose composition lay less than twenty five years in the future) is with Christmas. *Auld Lang Syne has become not merely a national, but international song of parting...mourning for something that is gone...*(Douglas 1976, 189). It is particularly sentimental in its evocation of *warmly remembered friendships, the kind that defeat time and distance* (Ibid., 190) as in:

*But seas between us braid hae roar'd
Sin' auld lang syne.*

*But we've wander'd mony a weary fit
Sin' auld lang syne.*

Central to all this was that the feeling of loss that is so continuously and immoderately invoked in Burns's sentimental lyrics is to be savoured; so when Burns writes:

*Farewell, thou stream that winding flows
Around Eliza's dwelling
O Mem'ry - spare the cruel throes
Within my bosom swelling
(Farewell, Thou Stream')*

he is being disingenuous: it is, of course, exactly those very *cruel throes* that the song itself seeks to evoke! Similarly, the exile that so often occasions the feeling of loss in Burns' lyrics - sometimes self-imposed for love, sometimes a fact of the failure of Jacobitism - is presented as an awful fact, but, in the manner of the time, as an enjoyably awful fact:

*Oh, sad and heavy should I part
But for her sake sae far a-wa';
Unknowing what my way may thwarl,*

My native land sae far a-wa'.

('Sae Far Awa')

The above is a precursor of later Parlour expatriot songs such as *My Ain Folk*, which we are enjoined to perform *simply and pathetically*; indeed in delineating different varieties of loss, and presenting them for melancholy enjoyment, Burns anticipates nineteenth century sentimental song practice. Temperamentally a sentimentalist, he shows a keen awareness of the workings of this 'psychology of pleasure' and his songs inform later writing in their explicit and extravagant self-pity:

*The dark, dreary winter, and wild-driving snow,
Alone can delight me - now Nannies awa'*

('My Nannies Awa')

*If thou refuse to pity me,
If thou shalt love anither,
When yon green leaves fade frae the tree
Around my grave they'll wither.*

('Craigieburn Wood')

*...Wha I wish were maggots meat,
Dish'd up in her winding sheet,...*

('Whistle o'er the Lave O't')

At its most unremitting this was strong even by eighteenth century standards:

*Wae is my heart with tears in my e'e -
Lang, lang, joy's been a stranger to me;
Forsaken and friendless my burden I bear,
And sweet voice of pity n'er sounds in my ear.
Love, thou hast pleasures, and deep ha'e I loved:
Love, thou hast sorrows, and sair ha'e I proved;
But this bruised heart that now bleeds in my breast,
I can feel by its throbbings will soon be at rest.*

('Wae is my heart')

Yet Burns knew exactly what he was doing: in his introduction to Vol.V of *The Scots Musical Museum* he makes explicit reference to the *pathos of sentiment*, and he often incorporates a 'super-heated' emotionality in his songs that is typical of late eighteenth century sentimentality, with tears to the fore. It is perhaps writing like this that has led to his being described - rather extravagantly - as *the greatest and best sentimental poet in the world* (quoted, Low, intro. to Burns 1991, 17):

*Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,
Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee.*

('Ae Fond Kiss')

and

The bursting tears my heart declare...

('The Gloomy Night')

and

*...Wha spied I but my ain dear maid
Beside her mothers dwelling!
And turn'd me round to hide the flood
That in my een was swelling...*

('The Soldiers Return')

His metaphors could be 'over-heated' too:

The Golden Hours on angel wings

and

The moon-beam dwelling at dewy e'en

('Bonnie Jean')

Extravagance of tone could always be heightened by the profligacy with exclamation marks so favoured by the sentimentalists:

*Ae fond kiss, and then we never!
Ae fond kiss, alas, for ever!*

('Ae Fond Kiss')

and

*But O, fell Death's untimely frost,
That nipt my flower sae early!*

('Highland Mary')

Burns anticipated the prosopopoeia so beloved by the nineteenth century in this example that links the floral and the lachrymose:

*O, sweet is she that lo'es me
As dews o' simmer weeping,
In tears the rosebud steeping.*
(*'O, Wha' Is She That Lo'es Me?'*)

And it will not please Burnsites to find he provided a model for later Patience Strong sentimentality:

*Her smile is, like the evening, mild,
When feathered tribes were courting,
And little lambkins wanton wild,
In playful bands disporting.*
(*'Young Peggie Blooms Our Bonniest Lass'*)

Burns's sentimental writing is thrown into sharp relief in the contrast it affords with other antithetical work especially his erotic verse (published posthumously as *The Merry Muses of Caledonia*). In this work he demonstrates the masculine literalness De Sade thought inimical - and superior - to the feminised vagueness of sentimentality. Its typical stress on virile action which was *coarse, seldom particularly witty, and certainly not of a very high literary quality* (Douglas, 107) was the exact opposite of the impotent yearning of his sentimental work. His bawdy lyrics, many first produced for the Edinburgh Drinking Club, *The Crochallan Fencibles* - whose members included Mackenzie - had the bizarre distinction of shocking Byron: *They are full of oaths and obscene songs* (Ibid.). Yet Byron was shrewd in his appraisal of Burns: *What an antithetical mind! - tenderness, roughness - delicacy, coarseness - sentiment, sensuality - soaring and grovelling, dirt and deity - all mixed up in that one compound of inspired clay!* (quoted in Marchant 1976, 157).

Burns himself had no problem reconciling such disparate modes. His celebrated ballad *John Anderson, My Jo* started life as an engagingly frank declaration of lust only to be '*purified*' into the famous sentimental ballad of the same name (Douglas, 149). Similarly *Coming through the Rye* was originally *Wha'll Mow Me Now?* and *Green Grow the Rashes, O!* was a refinement of *...an old favourite ditty regarded by decent folk as having 'indelicate' words* (Loesberg 1994, 69). Many of his songs existed in both coarse and sentimental versions: the rude lyrics were for his male cronies, the sentimental ones for the market. Burns is perhaps wiser than De Sade in that, whilst demonstrating the diametric opposition of sensuality and sentimentality, he nonetheless realises they so often exist contiguously in the same individual (as they certainly did in him). His most recent biographer

notes: *Burns, who could be so monstrously coarse, was also possessed of a keen almost feminine sensibility* (McIntyre, 208) and, whilst known for his licentiousness, one of his most famous relationships - that with Mrs McLehose - *was in the technical eighteenth sense a sentimental friendship* (Low, 17).

Finally, Burns' sentimental work and the market. To his credit Burns retained a certain poetic and patriotic integrity that was decidedly uncommercial, though whether this was due to an *almost saintly lack of commercial acumen* or *just plain silliness* is still debated (McIntyre, 309). He asked for no payment for the songs until in penury at the very end of his life, though no such scruples troubled his publishers - his songs were issued by James Johnson in *The Scots Musical Museum* from 1787 and by George Thomson in *Select Collection of Original Scottish Airs* from 1793. It is significant for the development of the tradition that Burns' songs were published in part at least as a response to a perceived market demand for sentimental songs: we are told Thomson's first idea for the *Musical Museum ...had been for a collection of "sentimental" songs, including Irish and English as well as Scots material* (Harker, 26). This shows unequivocally not only an eighteenth century awareness of sentimental song as a category, but - equally importantly - its commercial potential.

There is no doubting that the enthusiasm for his songs and the appeal of his work was huge and, like Dickens's novels, united different levels of society: *he sold to the gentlemen's clubs of Edinburgh, and to the farmers, 'plough-boys and maidservants' of his own age, who saved up three shillings for a copy...*(Ibid., 19). Yet the very *production of Burns's 'Museum' would not have been possible without the bourgeois book-buying public with its ... growing power in commercially-orientated cultural production and consumption* (Ibid., 27).

For all this, however, Burns was carrying on the pattern established by earlier writers, and his *modus operandum* was that of Ramsay's: the adaptation of extant material - (*Burns did not hesitate to 'improve', add to, and rewrite any songs he found* [Scott, 24]) - and the creation of new pieces in a quasi-pastoral mode. The adaptation followed similar precepts, but because the market for such work was becoming increasingly defined - and powerful - it was becoming increasingly important not to offend that market's taste. To ensure commercial success Burns and his publishers were aware of the need to excise earthy material redolent of Restoration license from which the new middle classes, under the tutelage of men like Addison, had so firmly distanced themselves. Conversely, songs that reflected a preferred middle-class susceptibility like sentimentality might be expected to do rather well; as with so many subsequent songsmiths the sentimental content in Burns' work is both a reflection of the zeitgeist and a shrewd attempt to capitalize on

its commercial potential. More importantly it establishes a key link between a general eighteenth century commitment to sentimentality and its specific incorporation into popular song.

Not all of Burns's songs were sentimental, but those that were presaged the way that sentimental song was to develop in the next century (especially in the way they highlighted a sense of loss for the old days and the yearning for home).

It is perhaps unsurprising that the sentimental strain in Burns's songs is played down: it is obviously unmodish, and sits uneasily with dominant strains of Burnsian mythology (roistering plough-boy poet /national icon). Less 'presentist' views point to the value of his contribution in using sentimentality as part of new and accessible lyric writing; as one of his nineteenth century editors noted: *Robert Burns was one of the earliest poets - at the close of the last century - who threw off the slavery of the so-called classicality of the period and abandoning the parrot-like mimicry of the artificial school, drew his inspiration from living nature, and not from dead antiquity and books. (His songs are)...imbued with...a correct taste, a susceptible heart...*(Mackay 1877, viii). *Correct taste* of course was revealed by the sentimental workings of *a susceptible heart*: that Burns should have considered *The Man of Feeling* the apex of literary achievement explains much. But then one of his own songs had been tellingly entitled: *Sensibility, how charming*.

The rise of the eighteenth century English congregational hymn: a less obvious 'popular sentimental song'.

We will our grief. Incessant longing is a means of grace, to be nurtured within...Strong feeling is desirable as a means of grace...Longing and languishing after God were rewarded with the raptures of mystical consummation in which the singers were to be relieved of all this straining.

(Todd and Forrell, 74-5)

The decision to include hymnody within the developing popular sentimental song tradition might at first seem a little generous if not eccentric. My defence for so doing rests on two planks - first that these hymns are significant species of 'popular song', and second that their character is in part clearly sentimental. First, popularity.

Hymns are after all only a particular species of song, and the better-known examples have a general familiarity no different from any secular vocal music. If we tacitly assume 'popular' song only to be 'worldly' song we are surely being prejudicial, for some hymns are incontestably 'popular' both in the sense of being the 'people's choice' and of possessing wide cultural currency. This starts at a local level where religious songs common to a particular church or ministry are subject to an inevitable sifting: hymns that catch the public imagination, that engage, will - over time - be used more. There is therefore a democracy in the determination of what 'succeeds' that to some extent mirrors the market forces that determine the success of secular popular song. Over time some of these favoured hymns gain yet more popularity when they transcend their (local) denominational origins and assume an ecumenical place within Christian song. Thus *Roman Catholics happily sing the lyrics of Charles Wesley, while Baptists and Presbyterians sing the words of John Henry Newman* (Bradley 1989, 2). Ultimately certain hymns transcend the religious domain completely, becoming part of the 'community chest' of familiar songs within a culture. In the places where people sing communally - on the football terraces, in the back of the 'bus - there is no querying of provenance ('is this a folk-song or a show-tune, a children's playground chant or a hymn?'): popularity is manifestly unrelated to origin, and hymns are merely another source of potentially enduring and familiar vocal material. Thus *Abide With Me* stands with *Danny Boy*, as other sacred songs like *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot* or *When the Saints Go Marching In* stand with parodies like *Nice One, Cyril*.

Now to the hymn's putative sentimentality. The construction of sentimentality as we have seen has a strong theological component, and the English congregational hymn flowered with, and was informed by, the sentimental ethic. The link has been long recognised in the literature: H.F. Fairchild's *Religious sentimentalism in the Age of Johnson* (1939) and *Protestantism and the cult of sensibility* (1942) and Todd and Forrell's *English Congregational Hymns* (1982) are exhaustive and persuasive studies to that effect. The new eighteenth century hymnody is informed by an optimistic emotional didacticism common to other sentimental work and was largely the work of three 'projects', that of Isaac Watts, that of the Wesley brothers and that of John Newton and William Cowper. These projects not only span the high period of the sentimental movement but have an historical congruence with some of the defining aspects of that movement: Watts's collection of *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* appeared in 1707 four years before Shaftesbury anthologised his earlier writings in *The Characteristics*, and Cowper and Newton's *The Olney Hymns* were published in 1779, eight years after the first

printing of Mackenzie's influential *The Man Of Feeling*. There is a definite feeling of them all inhabiting the same cultural landscape.

However, if the new hymnody reflects the general influence of sentimentality, it can also be seen as a specific response to lack of satisfactory religious provision, for at the turn of the century the established church did not present an inspiring face: provision was patchy in the country and the church's function in the towns was social rather than religious. Church music was similarly uninspired: apart from sung responses all musical aspects of a service were undertaken by the choir or priest and ordinary worshippers were ...*spectators and listeners rather than participants* (Reynolds 1963, 17). The non-conformist church had long recognised the need to involve the congregation in church music, and realized that to do so music would have to become more accessible: ...*Calvin recognised early the value of Christian song to promote piety and worship...(and had)...firm conviction that congregational singing should employ only the writing in the vernacular of the people* (Ibid., 30).

Despite this awareness of the need for change the weight of tradition and the forbidding character of church song ensured that nothing shifted significantly until the late seventeenth century. At that time the example of Pietism and the general reforming benevolentist theology of the Cambridge Platonists inclined worship in a more subjective direction: goodness could be found within the individual human heart. The possibility now existed for radically recasting church song in concomitantly subjective mode, that it might reflect the emotional reality of individual witness. However it was unlikely that this radical step would be initiated by the Cambridge divines, or countenanced by similarly influential thinkers like Shaftesbury, because of the extent to which they represented the established order (the Universities and the Aristocracy respectively). An optimistic, cheerful theology was one thing, but as Augustan *bien-pensants*, Shaftesbury and the clerics would have instinctively distrusted 'enthusiasm' - immoderate emotional display - which was exactly the sort of thing a more fervent congregational music might be expected to display. It needed 'outsiders' with less investment in the status quo to give concrete expression to new religious song. And this is exactly what Watts, the Wesleys and Newton and Cowper did.

Their 'outsider-ship' was two-fold. First, and most obviously, they embraced a non-conformist theology (Watts was an Independent and the others Methodists). This in itself constituted a tacit critique of accepted modes, yet at the same time allowed appropriation of those aspects of the zeitgeist thought to be pertinent - in this case the cheerful benevolence of the Cambridge Platonists and Shaftesbury. The

implications of non-conformity for church song is examined later. The second aspect of 'outsider-ship' concerns specifically the social situations of the new hymnodists. In different ways all were removed from the power structures and value-systems of eighteenth-century England: Watts was a recluse, Newton and Cowper part of an obscure provincial philanthropic scheme and John Wesley's peripatetic ministry was famous for taking the word to less 'visible' people and places. Their self-conscious removal from the cities surely has great symbolic resonance - a geographical demonstration of their commitment to the democracy implicit in sentimental ideals: the 'feeling heart' makes all men equal, and their new hymns like their ministries were to be for everybody, not just those of a certain educational or occupational stripe. (The towns, then as now, were the seats of power and privilege). All three projects attempted to reach hitherto 'unfranchised' groups. (Watts wrote the first hymns specifically for children; the Olney hymns were written for the poor lace-workers of that parish and Wesley's *al fresco* preaching was uncompromisingly democratic).

It was indeed a profound belief in the universal availability and value of subjective, emotional truth, and a belief that a new hymnody might provide correct didactic focus for obtaining that truth that united the three groups. (Virtu and virtue are again linked - for the hymns lead us to the beauty of our own souls, as well as the correct moral stance to our fellows and our God). How they differently achieved these aims can now be considered.

Isaac Watts: the beginnings of the new hymnody

Watts is called the father of English hymnody...because he produced a 'new song' based on the experiences, feelings, and aspirations common to all Christians...
(Reynolds, 49)

Isaac Watts (1674-1748) was a minister before ill-health forced him into a busy, hymn-writing retirement. This made him aware of the 'point-of-service' limitations of existing church song, and a practical skill as a poet enabled him to produce a modern alternative (his verse collection *Horae Lycidiae* had appeared in 1706). Specifically, Watts appreciated the limitations of the metrical psalms that formed the basis of existing sung worship, indeed *The rise of the hymn in England has been frequently credited to the inadequacy of the psalter as an expression of modern Christian faith.*

Both the antique language...and the Old Testament, and therefore pre-Christian content of the psalms forced Watts...to forge a practical, Christian alternative (Todd and Forrell 1982, 14).

This alternative was effective because it successfully married a traditional puritan devotion with the new more emotional sensibility. Thus a rather austere and frightening non-conformist dogma was mediated by a new stress on personal feeling: *Watts's departure from tradition...was his strong emphasis on the inwardness of religious experience, its seat in the passions...his confidence in the ability of the passions to serve pious education suggested the new 'enlightened' trust in the native resources of humanity in its educability. The sentimental moralists maintained that, if our better feelings are touched, we will advance in virtue (Ibid., 58).*

Watts was well placed to produce this new hybrid, being at once an unquestionably pious man, and a literary man: a gifted poet to be sure, but unusually perhaps for such an austere Christian, one who also had a keen interest in the drama: *Watts frequently expressed an admiration for dramatic literature (Todd and Forrell, 34) and his Two hundred hymns are characterized by a highly dramatic presentation of religion... (Ibid., 9): Almost every Watts hymn contains a little dramatic scene or sketch for a religious painting (Ibid., 42).* This is of significance because we have seen how the 'telling scene' becomes a leitmotif in so much sentimental work. As a religious 'dramatist' Watts was also aware of his 'audience': *Like drama, hymns are a public genre, dependent for their survival on broad appeal. They must reach out and capture the attention and interest of the audience-congregation. Like drama, they depend on extra-literary factors, including music. The suitability of religious verse and the stage-worthiness of a play are both determined by the author's mastery of his audience and his resources (Ibid., 34).*

Watts's 'audience' was not initially wide: *He wrote for a relatively sophisticated, homogeneous group that could be trusted to understand and respond appropriately to his verses (Ibid., 153)* yet subsequently his work has transcended national and racial barriers: *Dr. Watts hymns, as they were known, were the basis of Black church music in America - which in turn later informed secular forms like Soul (see Broughton 1985, pps 17-18).*

In his work there is often an invitation to extravagant pity:

*When I survey the wondrous Cross
On which the Prince of glory died
My richest gain I count but loss ...*

The cross, as a focus for pity, is of course a motif in Christianity of all sorts. What this hymn hints at however is the scale of emotional indulgence that was to be developed in later religious sentimental material like *The Holy City* or *The Old Rugged Cross*. The intense tone is signalled by his use of capital letters for the words Cross and Prince, a tone which is maintained right through until the last verse, with its breathless final lines:

*Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were an offering far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.*
(‘When I Survey the Wonderous Cross’)

Again, as with secular sentimental material, tears are the correct signifiers of such heightened emotional states:

*This night I hide my blushing Face
While his dear Cross appears,
Dissolve my heart in Thankfulness,
And melt my Eyes in Tears.*
(IX, 5 quoted in Todd and Forrell, 54)

This extravagance of tone is found in other hymns, for instance, as in imagery like:

*Ten thousand are there tongues
But all their hearts are one.*
(‘Hark How the Adoring Hosts Above’)

There is a nice philosophical point here: sentimentality is often defined - and by implication criticised - as being an overly emotional response to a situation. It could be argued, however, that the intemperate tone of the new non-conformist hymnody is not excessive in so far as it is entirely justifiable as a response to, and an attempt to represent, the awesome Christian message. It might be argued that no amount of emotion can be ‘excessive’ when seeking to express the ineffable; in other words the emotional tone of their hymns is entirely appropriate - and indeed is demanded - by their subject matter.

Foremost amongst these ineffable notions that hymn writers strove to represent is that of eternity. Watts skilfully evokes images of time - which so often has sentimental resonance of some sort - to suggest an everlasting time-less-ness:

*A Thousand ages in thy sight
Are like an evening gone*

*Time, like an ever-rolling stream
Bears all its sons away;
They fly forgotten, as a dream
Dies at the opening day.
(‘O God, Our Help in Ages Past’)*

and

*Firm as a rock thy truth shall stand
When rolling years shall cease to move.
(‘Before the Almighty Father’s Throne’ - [a collaboration with John Wesley])*

Another notion of the ineffable, Heaven, is central to the Watts and Wesleys canon - a recent comentator has written of how *Dr Watts excels himself...and longs to soar into the empyrean...* and *Frank Baker says of Wesley’s hymns that no matter with what or where they begin they end in Heaven* (Booth, 134). Heaven is the focus for Christian ecstasy, the happy home to where we’re bound and where we’ll live in joy for ever. Watts is especially clear on this point - *Heaven is my home...* he wrote in his devotional poem *True Wisdom*, and for him this was no theological abstraction, but a real place:

*There is a land of pure delight
Where saints immortal reign;
Infinite day excludes the night,
And the pleasures banish pain.*

*There everlasting spring abides
And never-withering flowers;
(‘There is a Land of Pure Delight’)*

and

*Christ hath a garden walled around
A paradise of fruitful ground.
... Eden’s gracious streams ...
Awake, O wind of heaven,
And bear their sweetest perfume through the air ...*

*That he may come, and linger yet
Among the trees that he hath set ...*

To walk among the springing green.
(*'Christ Hath A Garden Walled Around'*)

Here

Hunger and thirst are felt no more
Nor the sun's scorching rays ...

and

In pastures green he'll lead his flock
Where living streams appear;
And God the Lord from every eye
Shall wipe off every tear.

(*'How Bright These Glorious Spirits Shine'*)

It is the explicitness of these visions that make them so appealing: the details of Heaven's meteorology, geography and flora give it the sharp-edged reality of a holiday brochure. And it is tantalisingly close:

Death, like a narrow sea divides
This heavenly land from ours.

(*'There is a Land of Pure Delight'*)

It is however Watts' transparent ecstasy about heaven as the place where all will be eternally well that remains in the mind. This fervour is understandable, for heaven at once gives purpose to the apparent contingency of our condition (we are on a journey that has as its conclusion a delightful homecoming) as well as lessening the vexations of this life (by contrasting them with the sublime joy to come):

When I can read my title clear
To mansions in the skies,
I'll bid farewell to ev'ry fear,
And wipe my weeping eyes...
Let cares, like a wild deluge come,
And storms of sorrow fall!
May I but safely reach my home,
My God, my heav'n, my all...
There shall I breathe my weary soul
In seas of heav'nly rest,
And not a wave of trouble roll
Across my peaceful breast...

(*'When I Can Read My Title Clear'*)

As heaven is a real and approachable place, so Jesus is a real approachable friend,
the kindly guide who shows

the same path to heaven.

('Give Me the Wings of Faith To Rise')

This relationship with Jesus is a personal one:

*I'm not ashamed to own my Lord
Or to defend his cause ...*

- the companion who has shared our sorrows:

*He in the days of feeble flesh
Poured out his cries and tears.
(With Joy We Mediate the Grace')*

- but also the friend who is the intermediary between us and God:

*Before his Father's face
And in the new Jerusalem
Appoint my soul a place.
(I'm Not Ashamed To Own My Lord')*

Finally Watts again demonstrates his benevolentist *bona fides* by portraying the animal kingdom as also having a special relationship with the Divine, and responding accordingly:

*Ye monsters of the bubbling deep
Your Maker's praises shout;
Up from the sea, ye coddlings, leap
And wag your tails about.*

*Each from afar has heard thy fame
And worms have learnt to lisp thy name...*

demonstrating his ability...to tap a vein of religious sentimentality that prefers the numinous to the concrete... (Parsons 1988, 119).

The Wesleys and the 'feeling heart' in the new hymnody

...the hymns of Methodism ... are a kind of sentimental, dramatic poetry reaching out to the singers and taking them into the religious theatre. Like sentimental fiction and drama, they teach and provoke emotion.

(Todd 1986, 23)

Reason, declared John Wesley, cannot produce the love of God. Wesley (1703-1791) preached a democratic message of God manifest in Christ: a simple religion of repentance, direct from the heart...(Harris 1968, 192). In stressing emotion in religious experience ... Wesley was part of a much wider tendency during the period to emphasise the importance of feeling and to underline the importance of the individual, however poor, in a society which was in danger of creating self-interest into a philosophy of selfish materialism (Ibid., 193.) Greatly impressed by the Cambridge Platonists and their emphasis on benevolence and humility over dogma, Wesley and his brother Charles wanted Christ formed in our hearts and a life lived in Christian community (Ibid.) and Wesleyan Methodism with its emphasis on the loving tenderness of Jesus and the charity of the individual heart... fed the sentimental concern for the victim and the dispossessed (Todd 1986, 23).

Wesley also very much echoed Shaftesbury in his distrust of university cant and casuistry and his stress on good sense. His platform, however, was more democratic than Shaftesbury's and he wanted *the element of enthusiastic faith and emotional drama that would appeal to the mass of people (Ibid.)*. To reach this mass he abandoned abstruse theology, favouring fervent al fresco preaching at meetings that were *the opposite of formal church-going, emotional spectacles demanding in the open air the kind of response sentimental literature wanted in the closet (Ibid.)*.

Singing was absolutely central to his ministry and *the hymns of Methodism...are a kind of sentimental, dramatic poetry reaching out to the singers and taking them into the religious theatre. Like sentimental fiction and drama, they teach and provoke emotion (Ibid.)*.

Here one becomes aware of the difference between Watts and the Wesleys: both produced hymns that were emotional and theatrical, but in different ways. Watts' work is about the joy of the ineffable, a reaction to the Christian message; but behind its excitement and generosity of spirit there is the shadow of Calvinistic exclusivity. Wesleyan Methodism specifically believed in salvation for all and its emotionality was less a reaction to that fact than a quite specific tool for teaching that salvation. Thus, whilst their verses may seem to have a surface similarity,

Wesley's purpose was not the expressive venting of feeling but rather the evangelical directing of feeling. Emotion, roused and controlled, would carry the singer to God. Passion was a means to a didactic end, and its expression was usually exemplary (Todd and Forrell, 79).

Practically this was achieved by stressing the pain of our pitiful situation; the fact of our pathos, *the vast gap between the omnipotent God and vile humanity (Ibid., 165)*, is common to all Christianity - indeed Watts alluded to this by stressing the majesty of Divine power (and our corresponding feebleness). Wesleyan Methodism however was unique in the way it sought out and orchestrated our anguish as a means of achieving salvation: it is through the emotional experience of our lack, our despair, our striving that we achieve grace. *Charismatic religious experience sprang from just such cultivated despair and yielded just such ecstatic moments. The responses written into the hymns indicate that Wesley's manipulation of his singer's feelings was deliberate, controlled, and directed by this kind of evangelical purpose....our pain is a precious possession...We will our grief. Incessant longing is a means of grace, to be nurtured within (Ibid.,74) because Longing and languishing after God were rewarded with the raptures of mystical consummation, in which the singers were to be relieved of all this straining... (Ibid., 75).*

This remarkable *veritable sanctification of emotion (Ibid., 86)* by Wesley meant *No longer simply an antidote to indifference (as with Watts), feeling had become indistinguishable from salvation (Ibid., 79)*. This ecstatic transformation of pathetic, negative 'lack' into joyous and affirmative deliverance was the cornerstone of Wesleyan religious practice, and represented a manipulation of emotion for didactic purposes that is quintessentially sentimental.

In pursuit of such aims Charles Wesley (1707-1788) wrote over two thousand hymns that *are best approached as didactic-sentimental poetry (Ibid., 11)* and in the fifty years following the publication of his first hymnal in 1737 he *created the immensely popular core of a permanent hymnody for the new Methodism, and for English speaking Protestants generally (Booth, 128)*.

Like Watts, Wesley presented Jesus as approachable - a wise, loving friend - but in addition one who may be personally petitioned. (Derek Scott has suggested that this *strong emphasis on the personal that was a constant feature of his hymns (would) accord well with a burgeoning middle class individualist ideology [Scott, 104].*):

*Leave, ah, leave me not alone,
Still support and comfort me.
All my trust in thee is stayed
All my help from thee I bring...*
(*'Jesu, Lover Of My Soul'*)

*...Glad are my eyes, and warm my heart...
Jesu, be thou our constant guide...*
(*'Let Saints On Earth In Concert Sing'*)

These appeals to Jesus are not all vague pleas for emotional succour, but also practical requests for help in living up to the ideal he affords us. This ideal seems specifically Shaftesburian, with Jesus as a feeling benevolentist, both moral and beautiful (*...the kindness and concern of Jesus (is) particularly prominent...*(Todd and Forrell, 63):

*Make us of one heart and mind,
Courteous, pitiful and kind
Lowly, meek, in thought and word
Altogether like our Lord.*
(*'Jesus, Lord we Look To Thee'*)

*Help us, to help each other, Lord
Each other's cross to bear.
Let each his friendly aid afford
And feel his brother's care.*
(*'Help Us To Help Each Other, Lord'*)

And with *his kingdom of love in the heart* (as Wesley describes it in the hymn 'Away With Our Fears') Jesus sets a recognisably sentimental example.

The tone of Wesley's hymns are even more ecstatic than those of Watts: exclamation marks (again) signal an almost febrile emotionality:

*Tis love, tis love, thou diedst for me!
I hear thy whisper in my heart!*
(*'Come, O Thou Traveller Unknown'*)

Lo, God is here! Let us adore him ...
(*'Lo, God Is Here! Let Us Adore'*)

... *Leap, ye lame for joy!*
(*O For A Thousand Tongues To Sing*)

- and his work is full of exclamatory injunctions like *Rejoice!* and *Alleluia!*.

However, as with Watts, the emotional temperature of Wesley's hymns seems to reach its peak in his 'Dreams of Heaven': *The pining, longing, and languishing take as their object...heaven* (Todd and Forrell 77) as the following example shows:

*Ever upward let us move,
Wafted on the wings of love,
Looking when our Lord should come,
Longing, gasping after home.*
(CX, 9 quoted in Todd and Forrell, 76)

There is no doubt of our heavenly destiny (and the happy resolution it affords): in *Forth in Thy Name, O Lord, I Go* there is reference to how we will ...*closely walk with thee to heaven* and in *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling* we are assured that *in heaven we (will) take our place*. Indeed *Frank Baker says of Wesley's hymns that no matter with what or where they begin, they end in Heaven* (Booth, 134).

Olney, a mission with music: from abandonment to Amazing Grace

The Olney Hymns, published in 1774 was *by far and away the most important and influential Evangelical Hymnal* (Reynolds, 62). The unlikely backgrounds of the two men who produced it, John Newton and William Cowper, and the way they eventually collaborated on material for a poor Buckinghamshire parish, is one of the most remarkable stories in the generally colourful history of eighteenth-century non-conformity. John Newton (1725-1807) was an ex slave-ship captain who had gone to sea at eleven, been press-ganged into the navy and subsequently flogged for desertion. His life was...*by his own admission dissolute and godless...* (Bradley, 34) until his dramatic conversion after a near fatal voyage in 1748. Newton's associate on *The Olney Hymns* could scarcely have been more different: William Cowper (1731-1800) scarcely engaged with the world as a result of serious and life-long mental illness. His conversion came during a spell in a private lunatic asylum run by a committed Evangelical, and he came to Olney at Newton's invitation. The evangelical zeal

brought by both men to their work at Olney is perhaps understandable: Newton had been delivered from dissolution and certain death by God - and for Cowper...*the one anchor in (his) stormy and unhappy life was his strong Evangelical faith...* (Ibid., 141).

Their fervency perhaps fed the philanthropic aspect of their work and by eighteenth-century standards their emphasis on ministering to the underprivileged was notable, even within the more socially-aware climate of non-conformity: *The people of Olney were lacemakers, working by hand in their damp, ill-lit hovels; they were ignorant, and suffered a great deal of hardship. Newton looked after them, even at the expense of the few wealthy members of his congregation who were by no means pleased to see their church filled up with noisy, uncouth villagers... It was in this atmosphere of an attempt at religious education that the hymns of Olney were published and used* (Reynolds, 63).

The personal nature of our relationship with God and Jesus, the expression of which was a hall-mark of the new hymnody, is pointed up in their work. In one of Cowper's best known hymns, *O For A Closer Walk With God*, (which echoes Wesley's line *...And closely walk with thee...* and presages the celebrated nineteenth-century gospel song, *Just A Closer Walk With Thee*) this intimacy is demonstrated by the way one of God's characteristics, calmness, mentioned in the first stanza (*O for a closer walk with God/ A calm and heavenly frame...*) has been acquired by man by the final verse: *So shall my walk be close with God/ Calm and serene my frame...*

The third verse - often omitted today - is a remarkable religious assertion of the quintessential sentimental regret for past times that was to receive such emphatic endorsement in the (secular) songs of Burns and Moore:

*What peaceful hours I once enjoy'd!
How sweet their mem'ry still!
But they have left an aching void
The world can never fill.*

(*O For A Closer Work With God*)

In his *God Moves In A Mysterious Way* Cowper again seeks to personalize, to humanize the divine -: *Behind a frowning providence/ He hides a smiling face* whilst still asserting His awesome power: *He plants his footsteps in the sea/ And rides upon the storm.*

John Newton's *How Sweet The Name Of Jesus Sounds* is also about the personal nature of our relationship with the divine, and in *Glorious Things Of Thee Are Spoken* whilst offering a 'dream of heaven' in the manner of the earlier writers,

the ineffable is moderated by stressing the personal fellowship we have with the almighty, who provides for us like a benevolent parent:

*Zion, city of our God! See the streams of living waters,
Springing from eternal love,
Well supply thy sons and daughters,
And all fear of want remove...*

('Glorious Things Of Thee Are Spoken')

Newton's most famous work is *Amazing Grace*. Here, as with *Abide With Me* and sundry spirituals, religious song enters the secular domain and has an independent existence there - indeed it will be remembered that *Amazing Grace* topped the charts for nine weeks in July 1971 and *There was a time in the early 1970's when it was almost impossible to listen to the radio for any length of time without hearing...this hymn...* (Broughton 1985,18) The familiar emotionality of *this most universal spiritual song* (Ibid.) has meant it has transcended not only its original religious and cultural situation, but has also subsequently gained a new racial context: *...it is certainly curious to think, as you listen to Sam Cooke or Aretha Franklin singing 'Amazing Grace' that this great hymn of solace for a race in captivity was penned by a former slave-ship captain* (Ibid.). This widely-sung lyric is actually full of pathos for our circumstance as God's 'lost' children, a pathos that is relieved - or at any rate mediated - by the grace that comes with faith. Our dependence on a personal relationship with the Lord is again stressed (*The Lord has promised good to me...*), and the hymn concludes in expectation of ultimate redemption in a pleasant afterlife (*And grace will lead me home...*):

*Yes, when this heart and flesh shall fail,
And mortal life shall cease,
I shall possess within the veil
A life of joy and peace.*

('Amazing Grace')

The Olney Hymns show sentimental influence in the way they seek to teach a 'religion of the heart' to poor people, and in the way they are reflective of their author's own rather emotional educations. Again fervour and benevolence are joined.

These hymns were written specifically for congregational worship, and the shared nature of their expression was a reinforcing, inspirational experience: *religion is something eminently social*. (Todd and Forrell, 10) and *The communal setting*

encouraged a theatrical element in hymnody (Ibid., 19). All these writers saw the tremendous importance of the act of singing itself. Watts enjoins *Come, let us join our cheerful songs ...* [122] - and exhorts us to *With songs surround the throne* (Hark How the Adoring Hosts Above) and in the last line of the original manuscript of *Love divine, all love's excelling* Charles Wesley urges us to *Sing, and cast our Crowns before Thee* (not the later *Till we cast our Crowns before Thee*). John Wesley had famously exhorted *Sing lustily and with good courage. Beware of singing as if you were half dead, or half asleep; but lift your voice with strength* (from the preface to *Sacred Melody* 1761, quoted in Reynolds, 56) and at the Bristol conference of 1768 Wesley attacked *complex songs, which it is impossible to sing with devotion* (Ibid.). There seems little doubt part of the attraction of these ministries were their hymns which were *hugely effective with the people at large, showing that religion need not be formal, dreary and old fashioned...* Specifically *the music of Methodism was a powerful draw. Dr. Vincent, in 1787, concluded that 'for one who has been drawn away from the Established Church by preaching ten have been induced by music'. The novelty of the Wesleyan tunes was their secularity* (Sadie, 357). Like John Gay and the Scottish songwriters *Wesley had no objection to adapting popular or operatic songs to religious words ('plunder the carnal lover' as Charles put it)...*(Ibid.) and his brother believed in *the great power of music over men's hearts* (Sadie 1988, 827).

Ecstatic testament

The particular genius of these hymns is, however, that they simultaneously teach God's grace whilst simulating the grace that that rapture brings: *The role of the author is not only to teach, but to enable, to arrange the event of singing so that the singers can not only learn about, but experience...the immediate access of the human soul to the infinite* (Booth, 135). Thus in *Love divine, All Love's Excelling* Wesley the religious 'dramatist' provides *a script for a progressively rapt acceptance of grace... Absolute ecstatic lostness in the divine presence is represented...(it teaches) salvation is not far to seek, that it lies just the other side of acceptance of love and grace, and that such salvation is continuous with heaven itself* (Ibid.). Yet crucially *the experience of the hymns as sung is to invite the grace it teaches will save; to pray and praise without ceasing, that is, in the instant musical present, over which no future different from itself casts a shadow; and to be lost from the world here for*

the time of the song (My emphasis) (Ibid.). In seeking to teach emotional response these hymns are similar to much other sentimental material, and are similarly manipulative: their task *to calculate and promote the spiritual expression of other people, (is) an undertaking clearly fraught with the possibility of manipulation and exploitation... A doubter may judge the spiritual experience orchestrated by certain hymns to be maudlin* (Ibid.).

This emotional didacticism (that at once delineated belief at the same time as orchestrating the emotion necessary for its reception) was new in Christian practice but is only a specific variant of the wider eighteenth century impulse to extract wisdom and truth from feeling, and the new hymnody reflected (in an albeit enthusiastic way) the notions of the Cambridge Platonists and Shaftesbury. Their optimistic benevolentism (that 'underwrote' all sentimentality) derived from new theological perspectives, and it is therefore unsurprising that the new hymnody as a specifically religious project gives such perspectives particularly clear expression. In the hymns the intrinsic goodness of the human heart and the perfectibility of human nature can be seen in the way they present the divine in a familiar, human context - Jesus as a superior friend and heaven as a enhanced place - as well as in their implied democracy: salvation for all. They draw on a recognisable eighteenth century sentimental 'world' with heaven as an improved indigenous vista - as in the paintings of Lorraine or the landscaping of Whately - and Jesus as a kindly Shaftesburian. (Jesus is a very special friend, as Heaven is a very special location, but - critically - the scale is still a human one.)

Because of their religious character it is tempting to take a narrow perspective on the hymns as worthy and pious, yet it is important to remember that the new hymnody was as much to do with the enjoyment - connoisseurship - of emotion as other aspects of eighteenth century sentimentality: a *...kind of participatory pleasure proceeded from the convincing representation of intense emotion, the sentimental joy of enthusiasm* (Todd and Forrell 150). Also religious context should not hide the fact that familiar sentimental *leitmotifs* of pathos and tears are central to this work: pity is invoked (for Jesus's passion; for our less fortunate brothers) as is self pity (for our punyness in the divine scheme; our reliance on God's benevolence) and tears of gratitude are a constant motif (Watts' *Dissolve my heart in Thankfulness/ And melt my Eyes to Tears* is typical [IX, 5 quoted in Ibid., 54]).

The new hymnody arguably was the most influential 'school of sentimentality': because it aimed to reach all classes and conditions of people (particularly *...the unlettered masses...* [Ibid., 155]) its sphere of influence was far

greater than, say, that of the sentimental novel (the appreciation of which implied not only literacy, but leisure). Its influence can be underestimated if only construed in terms of its purely religious function: evidence produced by both Fairchild, and Todd and Forrell suggest the hymns influence subsequent 'literary' sentimentality (dramatists and songwriters, as well as novelists): *...the poetic values of the key (hymn) writers...has implications for the contemporary development of popular literature* (Ibid.).

Aside from such specific effects, the general influence of the hymns was wide: it is important to reiterate just how new their tone was - nothing like it had existed before, and it informed not just later non-conformist hymnody but much subsequent religious song of all kinds. (Watts's influence on black Christian songwriting is felt for instance in gospel and spirituals as well as in more staid work; see Broughton 1987, 17 and Cantwell 1992, 133). Indeed one might go further and say that without the example of the hymns non-religious sentimental song would have been different - tamer certainly: the fevered yearning for eternal loved ones (God and Jesus) and eternal home (heaven) finds a secular analogue in the fevered yearning for temporal loved ones (Mother) and temporal home (Dixie). Watts, the Wesleys, Cowper and Newton stoked the fires of ecstatic testament in song in extreme and novel ways, and their example allowed all subsequent sentimental songs to run at a higher emotional temperature.

Intrinsically sentimental?: the sentimental basis of Christian belief

There is one final point. From the specific casting of congregational worship in a more sentimental mode to the general provision of models for the representation and enjoyment of extreme emotion, eighteenth century hymnody had far-reaching effects. Yet should we be so surprised? I think not when one considers the basic tenets that inform it, because viewed analytically the espousal of Christian belief is itself an intrinsically sentimental project. I wish to suggest that this is so by virtue of three key facets: high emotional tone, imprecision and pathos. These become more apparent when 'pointed up' within a general culture of sentimentality (as in the eighteenth century), but my point is they necessarily follow given the nature of Christian belief (and are therefore independent of any particular historical context). Taking these facets one by one. First, tone: what is being attested in Christian

worship (including song) is not an important thing; it is the most important thing - a metaphysical affirmation that lends meaning, value and purpose to the world; that makes sense of Life and Death, and is therefore the most impassioned thing imaginable. As was noted, sentimentality is often criticised for being an over-emotional reaction to stimuli; but given the rapturous 'good news' of the Christian message of salvation and life eternal such a reaction here is understandable - indeed failure to highly-emote would be suspect!

Second, imprecision: such a system is crucially predicated on the emotional (rather than intellectual) premise of faith, and this is necessarily vague in that it resists all rational exegesis. (Indeed as Hume noted it *subverts all the principles of... understanding...indeed...is most contrary to custom and experience* [*Essay on Miracles*, Part 2, {1748} quoted in Humphrey 1995, 57].)

Finally, there is pathos. We have already seen the central place in Christianity of both pity for Christ's passion and self-pity for our own fallen state, but there is a yet more profound pathos in our relation to God. He (She) 'exists', *causa sui*. He is immortal, omnipotent, omnipresent; we are manifestly not, so there is a *vast gap between...omnipotent God and vile humanity* (Todd and Forrell 165). Our relationship with Him therefore is necessarily one of the most extreme disparity. This most inconceivably unequal partnership is *ipso facto* pathetic: God gives us being and orders everything, and we have to rely entirely on His benevolence, and are totally at the mercy of His inscrutable ways. This pitiable state is used to feed the emotional dimension of Christianity in sacred songs by contrasting how the (initial) wretchedness of man's lot is transformed by belief in God's redemptive love: the mood is always extreme and can switch within a verse from the excesses of self-pity to the excesses of rapturous joy. (The 'before' state of pitiful lack is played up the better to highlight the 'after' state of redemptive grace: indeed much of eighteenth century hymnody specifically invokes these emotional extremes to 'teach' the Christian message.) From our perspective within a culture that has been informed in so many ways for so long by Christianity it is easy to forget its tone for *Most of our basic attitudes and feelings are sentimental...(and) enormous numbers of our feelings and attitudes towards the most basic issues are based on some more-or-less Christian outlook* (Tanner 1976, 145). Given both the intrinsic nature of Christian belief in our culture and the particular representations of those beliefs in the new eighteenth century hymnody this should not come as a surprise.

Summation: common strands

It might seem unrealistic to find much to link diverse eighteenth century expressions of sentimentality in song (particularly between sacred and secular examples). Yet despite their apparent dissimilarities I hope to elucidate a number of facets common to all the material considered in this chapter. One might be that there are similarities of approach to the business of creating 'popular' vocal material.

Much is made of the 'professionalisation' of the writer and artist in the eighteenth century - of how for the first time novelists, painters and songwriters might make a living producing work for the 'public', independent of patronage or commission. However to do this successfully necessitated a willingness to provide whatever was in demand, and such adaptability entailed the production of a variety of differing work (rather than the refining of one particular area). Most of the writers we have considered demonstrated a degree of eclecticism in their output and career: Hook and Arne, for instance, both produced a plethora of work, much of it very different from their pleasure garden 'popular' songs.

Making a living entailed being a generalist, knowing the market, playing an audience; in this respect Watts wrote as much for his 'audience' - his congregation at Mark Lane - as Hook did for the *boulevardiers* at Vauxhall. This adaptability to demand has been taken by some critics as an absence of seriousness that is seen at best as a dilution of integrity and purpose and at worst artistic prostitution - a cynical impulse to exploit the market in any way possible. In a classic Marxist reading this involves a new class of opportunistic hacks servicing a debased popular taste (in this case the penchant for sentimentality); Hauser (1951) makes this point about painting and Lee (1971) about songwriting. A closer examination of the situation of these 'hacks' shows that this will not do. Firstly these professional writers share something with their audiences which is entirely new, for like them they are provincials, and like them they have provincial taste. This provincialism is firstly literal, a geographical fact: Dibdin was from Hampshire, Hook from Norwich and Gay from Devon; Ramsay was from Lanarkshire, Burns from Ayrshire. All the hymn writers had similar origins (and specifically sought ministries away from the towns). This meant these men were not heir to the established intellectual community of the Universities any more than they were heir to the smart social networks of the Town. Not being of the cosmopolitan *haute monde* meant the writers were provincial in a second, metaphorical, sense: they lacked the assurance and polish of an established urban élite. Their security therefore had to be gained, and varying degrees of

autodidacticism inclined them to adapt contemporary cultural currents in their work such as sentimentality, rather than relying on old established ones like classicism. (The implied democracy in sentimentality - the 'feeling heart' uniting all - is important here).

Most importantly their provincialism meant they tended to be part of the same middle class as their public, and the part sentimentality played in defining bourgeois taste has been remarked on, and is axiomatic. The incorporation by the songwriters of a heightened sensibility into their work is therefore of a piece with the enjoyment of such sensibility by their public: a similar cultural current is being tapped into. (And it is important again to stress the ethical and aesthetic attractions of sentimentality that elevated it far beyond the purely modish for its middle-class auditors). Despite the disparate situations of our writers there are similarities in the tone of their work that attests the influence of such a common cultural current.

First, along with significant sections of the art and literature of the age, their songs are cast on a very human scale: we see this in the way the songs are concerned both with the psychology of their protagonists, and - more importantly - our psychological response to them. Both hymns and non-religious material are similarly concerned with 'bearing witness' through being moved, and are therefore personal, internal affairs. They assert sentimentality's essential emotional didacticism: *if our better feelings are touched, we will advance in morality* (Todd and Forrell, 58), an experience that is necessarily inward-looking and private.

Secondly we detect a human scale in the way the songs draw on a recognisable cast of 'ordinary' characters as opposed to epic or supernatural protagonists; it is significant that even Jesus is presented in intimate human terms as our 'brother'. Although it might seem fanciful to us now, sentimental song was for the eighteenth century an approachable modern alternative to the irrelevancy and obscurity of existing forms. Thus we see the new hymnody countering the tedium of Latin liturgy and the ballad opera challenging the pretentiousness of Italian opera. (This new-found relevance lends eighteenth century sentimental song a broad appeal which is entirely commensurate with the implied democracy of sentimental teaching: an essential goodness links us all, and it is the business of sentimental art to excite that common humanity.) A naturalness, simplicity and humility characterises the protagonists of the songs: we feel pity for Dibdin's Jack, Gay's Polly and Lindsay's Auld Robin because they show such traits so openly. And the story of so many songs is one of betrayal, of the way the naïve goodness of the 'feeling heart' is abused. Similarly the abuse of true goodness is a dominant motif in Jesus's life, and his humility can be seen as pathetic as well as exemplary.

The landscapes these sentimental protagonists inhabit is tellingly similar. It is often an idealised place as in the case of the Scottish writer's Highlands or Watts' Heaven, or an edited and fictionalised location as in Dibdin's naval songs. The result is benign, 'rose-tinted' and often paradisaical; the softness (not to say 'wetness') of these visions is understandable when it is remembered that sentimentality's appeal in the eighteenth century was partly because of its rôle as a humanising force capable of tempering the ethical bankruptcy and general coarseness of 'progress'. Progress of course is bought at a price, and from the start sentimental songs encouraged the nostalgic rejection of an often ugly present in favour of 'alternative worlds'. This can be seen in its most obvious form in the representation of rural arcadias; if, however, one allows nostalgia to be forward as well as backward looking then one might equally allow that the hymn-writers' 'Dreams of Heaven' represent a similar impulse.

More generally it will have become apparent that all the songs are partisan in the way they stress only one particular response to the world. Sentimentality is about a partial view of things; the 'feeling heart', one might say, is best engaged by a severe editing of the world, and much is omitted. For instance they avoid any humour or earthiness that would distract from the workings of sympathy. They also shun complexity, ambiguity and enquiry - and what emerges is necessarily two-dimensional; indeed the depth we today expect in art is often missing. The pursuit of tears however would be compromised if too much rein was given to the unique personal vision of the writer. Thus the originality we take as the *sine qua non* of literature is absent: situations ('plot-lines') are frequently of a piece, because the summoning of a correct response is secondary to everything else. In the songs, as in the novel and drama, one is left with the reiteration of extreme, unsophisticated though increasingly familiar 'plot-lines' and 'characters'. (An ungenerous atheist might claim that there is something of this in the Christian story too).

Finally, one notes a similarity of tone in these lyrics. There is something over-wrought - hysterical almost - perhaps 'dramatic' is the kindest word, and this has been linked to a general trend to a new subjectivism in eighteenth century music-making with the *concept of simplicity, directness and intimacy as the criterion* (Hauser 1951, 74). There is no doubt that Lindsay, Gay and Watts were, in their differing ways, all dramatists, and that the prevalent culture of sentimentality provided a sanction and focus for dramatic sensationalism. Yet *Their feelings were neither deeper nor more intensive than their predecessors, they merely took them more seriously and wanted to make them seem more important, and for that reason they dramatized them* (Ibid.). The taking of feelings seriously was exactly what the philosophy of sentimentality encouraged, and its cultural currency ensured its

incorporation into the various new vocal material that emerged during the century. There is much to suggest the eighteenth century is the crucible of modern popular song, where many current forms had their origin, and when a general audience for such work first emerged: it is significant that sentimentality had such a dominant influence at such a critical time in the history of popular song.

Chapter 5

The Tradition Consolidates: nineteenth century adepts

The road from 'modest proposal' to hegemony

The story of sentimental song in the nineteenth century is primarily that of the continuation of a distinctive style of song writing informed in both tone and subject matter by eighteenth century sentimentalism. Essentially it is about the perpetuation of a mode of lyric writing, and one can see this clear continuation particularly in the way the baton is passed first from Burns to Thomas Moore, and then from Moore to Stephen Foster.

It is also however the story of the adaptation, refinement, consolidation and extension of that tradition until, by the time our detailed consideration of key writers finishes in the 1860's, it enjoys something like hegemonic status within the world of British-American popular song. The songs in this chapter represent the road to that hegemony, and their popularity is firstly and most obviously about the expression of a particular aesthetic preference for sentimental motifs and imagery, and the defining and solidification of that preference. Yet this indubitable (aesthetic) partiality for a certain sort of cultural product would not have been sustained and have assumed the dominance it did unless it had also spoken to certain wider aspects of nineteenth century life. The extra-aesthetic appeal of sentimental song was substantial, and can be seen in the various economic, psychological and sociological possibilities it afforded people as the century progressed. These are considered at the beginning of the next chapter, when the dominance of sentimental song has been achieved.

However before returning to an exegesis of the key writers and their songs one theoretical strand needs immediate elucidation, and this concerns how the perception of sentimentality itself was changing. We are faced with the (complicating) fact that despite the specific success of sentimentality's incorporation into various art-forms (including song) during the eighteenth century the assessment of its general significance changed dramatically to the point where it was seen to be a hopelessly flawed endeavour. Until the final decades of the eighteenth century sentimentality had been generally accorded a high seriousness: however immoderate its mein it was 'underwritten' with a worthiness that protected it from any carping. Within a brief space of time however it became an object of censure; yet, even as criticism robbed it of its elevated cachet, sentimentality was gaining an increasing

What happened was as follows. The culture of feeling engendered by a sentimental stance - always potentially the victim of its own immoderation - was by the end of the century getting out of hand, as the following quotes from that time show: *I love to weep, I joy to grieve; it's my happiness, my delight, to have my heart broken in pieces* (Tompkins quoted in Campbell, 142); *Sighs and griefs have infinite sweetness to me that to prolong them I abstain from sleep...* (Bredvold, 82); *Alas! a nuance of sentiment touches me and engages my interest more than all the Pantheons and Trajan's columns...the man with the sheep, for example, the blind man and his daughter, the cripple: these are my follies* (Brissenden, 5). This intemperate stance of being 'a fool for feeling' was characteristic; many, like Lady Louisa Stuart, wondered if they were displaying enough emotion to indicate a correct sensibility, and many others were simply addicts to extreme emotionality. However, as with any addiction, there was a need to ever increase the fix: *new devices must be introduced, stimuli must be intensified, the voltage must be continually increased so as to overcome the resistance of the reader* (Bredvold, 81). Thus the pathetic scenarios necessary for generating a sentimental response became increasingly extreme - absurd even - in an effort to satisfy this fixation with feeling. A novel like *The Man of Feeling* (or a song like *Auld Robin Gray*) had so thoroughly utilized pathetic plot possibilities that its imitators - and there were many - were left with 'nowhere to go': its excesses simply couldn't be trumped. (The search for yet more piquant sensation led some to new areas like the Gothic, where the *frisson* of the sympathetic tear was replaced with the *frisson* of the chill down the spine). Certainly in its attempt to provide yet more potent pathos sentimental writing had forgotten its benevolentist credentials, and all this drew forth critical venom: *an ethic which placed such emphasis upon emotional display would be bound in time to disintegrate into histrionics, and thus call forth ridicule and satire* (Campbell, 173) - Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* was one such satire - and feelings intended for stimulating virtue but 'too much indulged or allowed to become habitual' were dangerous; it made men 'unfit for the enjoyment of every day life' (Dwyer, 1039). At worst sentimentality became selfish and self-regarding, encouraging behaviour the exact opposite of that intended, as when feelings were cultivated at the expense of others rather than - as the sentimental ethic hoped - for their benefit (as in the story of the nobleman who wept at the sentimental play while his coachman froze in the snow outside). However - and this is the crucial point - by the time sentimentality was attracting critical obloquy its defining 'stance', the savouring of emotion especially in pitying or self-pitying contexts, had suffused the culture in a general way. This

paradox of sentimentality's absorption into the cultural mainstream despite having 'bankrupted' itself has been explained by its going down-market:

By the time that the sentimental movement had ceased to be an 'elevated' literary and cultural force, it had made deep inroads into an emerging and insecure bourgeois consciousness. Such motifs as the sentiment of home, the dying child, the cult of the discrete, natural objects...all became stock characteristics of Victorian life, literature and popular consumption (Dwyer, 1041).

The sentimental strain did not die in 1800 but continued into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, especially in the popular genres... (Todd, 147).

Note how both comments refer specifically to 'the popular': as sentimentality loses credibility as a 'serious' cultural idiom it is embraced by 'frivolous' forms (where its excesses don't matter because the cultural projects concerned don't aspire to deep worth). There is something in this, although this study's attempt to demonstrate the relatively early incorporation of sentimentality in popular song - a 'frivolous' form - suggests it may only be partially true. It is reflective of the standard bias in construing sentimentality as a largely literary phenomenon; judged this way it does indeed seem that its nineteenth century manifestations like melodrama and monologue, are *déclassé* - 'popular' - compared with the sentimental novel of the previous century. Sentimentality's relation to distinctions between 'high' and 'low' art is complex, and involves economic as well as aesthetic factors; it is examined briefly in the conclusion. However, its unassailable status as a social fact - something woven deep into the cultural fabric - indicates that over a hundred years a 'paradigm shift' had occurred in the meaning and value of emotions: by the end of the eighteenth century despite the fact that sentimental texts might produce cynical laughter (as well as tender tears) few would have disagreed with Hume's dictum that *A propensity to the tender passions makes man agreeable and useful in all parts of life, and gives a just direction to all his other qualities (A Treatise on Human Nature [1740] quoted in Todd 1986, 94)*. People had long forgotten why being moved was important: eliciting emotion - especially tears - was accepted: it was simply what a certain sort of book or song did.

Lady Nairne and the cult of the discrete object

*O Rowan tree! O Rowan tree! thou'lt aye be dear to me;
Entwin'd thou art wi' mony ties o' hame and infancy...*

('The Rowan Tree': Lady Nairne)

Carolina Oliphant (1766-1845) became Lady Nairne following marriage and the restitution of the Jacobite peerage. Like Lady Lindsay, the author of *Auld Robin Gray* and Lady Scott, who wrote *Annie Laurie*, Carolina Nairne was a well-to-do lowland Scot. Because much of these women's work was not credited to them when originally published for reasons of modesty - commercial song-writing not yet being an accepted pursuit for well-bred women - it is hard to date accurately: Nairne's work was certainly collected and published with great success posthumously, but she was writing and publishing pseudonymously much earlier - (for instance as 'Mrs Bogan of Bogan' in 1821). Only seven years younger than Burns, she perhaps most rightly deserves the title of his heir, and it is a tribute to her that her work is often mistaken for his: *...whenever a Scottish song is sung of which the paternity is doubtful or wholly unknown it is generally credited to Robert Burns, as a safer supposition than any other. In this manner the songs of Carolina Oliphant, Lady Nairne, who began to write soon after the sweet clear note of Burns was stilled in death, such songs as "The Land o' the Leal" "Caller Herrin'," "The Lass O' Gowrie", and others of equal merit and beauty were attributed to the people's favourite* (Mackay 1877, ix).

This comment establishes both the demotic nature of Burns's appeal - *the people's favourite* - and the power of his legacy. Much of her work is indeed a continuation of the *people's favourite*, especially in its emphasis on themes of loss and exile, and Nairne - named 'Carolina' after Prince Charles Stuart - again exploits the felicitous conjunction of sentimentalism and Jacobitism (her best known song, *Will Ye No' Come Back Again*, still jerks tears: there is exquisite pathos in the saga of Bonnie Prince Charlie as long as one is selective with the facts).

Nairne, however, extended Burns's palette of sentimental devices by concentrating on objects as a focus for the sustained manufacture of pathos (thus anticipating the more familiar work of later writers like Henry Russell). The 'cult of the discrete object' had been a facet of sentimentality, and possibly originally derives from Puritan *memento mori*, with which it shared an indulgence of unhappiness. A sentimental consideration of objects was however more benevolent: Mackenzie had *advocated an 'attachment to inanimate objects' ...even a 'withered stump' humanized by generations of 'school companions' could become a symbol of affection and*

sentiment, a contrast to the artificiality and temporizing of the modern age (Dwyer, 1035).

Nairne's pioneering use of such motifs in song can be seen in two examples. First:

*Oh! The auld hoose, the auld hoose,
What though the rooms were wee
Oh, kind hearts were dwelling there
And bairnies fu' o' glee.*
(*'The Auld Hoose'*)

It transpires *The Auld Hoose* - despite its 'wee rooms' - was the home of the auld laird (*'sae canty, kind, and crouse'*) who had sheltered Bonnie Prince Charlie (*'the auld Laird's wife clipped a lock of his hair'*). Then it rang with children's laughter (*'that we'll hear nae mair'*), for the folk from the Auld Hoose are now dispersed (*'some to the Indies gane'*) or dead (gone to *'their lang hame'*). However the Auld Hoose is now deserted and *'not here we'll meet again'* *'There ne'er can be a new hoose, will seem sae fair to me'*. The song's final image is highly symbolic: the sundial, that marked the previous happy hours is overturned, *'noo hid 'mang weeds and grass'*.

Nairne's evocation of the pathos of time's passage - the loss occasioned by the surrender of a bright past to a dull present - is impressive, and she is innovatory in the extent to which she uses various objects - the wee rooms, the lock of hair, the sundial - to summon the mood. These devices quickly became commonplace in sentimental songwriting, but even allowing for the indeterminacy of the original publication dates, Nairne was pioneering in the extent of her usage.

In making her 'hoose' old she also anticipates trends by extending that sentimental catch-all to things: we have already seen its pathetic potential when used in relation to people (*Auld Robin Gray*) and time (*Auld Lang Syne*): *The word 'old' was to prove an infallible ingredient... The century-long it dominated the list of titles: old armchairs, oaks, spinning wheels, clocks, rustic bridges, dogs, soldiers, sextons and rugged crosses. (Henry) Russell squeezed all he could out of the device: one of his songs, 'The Drunkard', begins with 'The old lamp burned on the old oaken stool'. Stephen Foster was to catch the virus badly and gave vent to 'Old Uncle Ned', 'Old Folks at Home', 'My Old Kentucky Home', 'Old Dog Tray', 'Old Memories' and 'Old Black Joe'* (Turner 1975, 130). (The writer Jonathan Raban has recently suggested [1996] the presence of 'old' household artefacts might simply reflect pious thrift.)

The second example of Nairne's work uses another object, this time a rowan tree, to evoke the loss of past times. Sterne had singled out trees - he favoured myrtles and cypresses - as a way of distancing oneself from spleen (and it was an old tree in a graveyard that had waved at Harley in a way he thought 'predictive' in *The Man of Feeling*) but Nairne's tree song is remarkable for the way it utilizes a whole litany of soon-to-be-familiar sentimental motifs: Mother, Home, Aged Parents, Affecting Children. The song is to be performed *with much expression - rather slowly*:

*O Rowan tree! O Rowan tree! thou'lt aye be dear to me;
Entwin'd thou art wi' mony ties o' hame and infancy...*

*...On thy fair stem were mony names, which now nae mair I see
But they're engraven on my heart - forgot they ne'er can be!
O Rowan tree!*

*We sat aneath thy spreading shade, the bairnies round thee ran
Thy pu'd thy bonny berries red, and necklaces they strang.
My mother! Oh! I see her still, she smil'd our sports to see
Wi' little Jeanie on her lap, wi' Jamie on her knee!
O Rowan tree!*

*Oh! there arose my father's prayer, in holy evenings calm
How sweet was then my mother's voice, in the Martyrs psalm;
Now a' gane! we meet nae mair aneath the Rowan tree;
But beloved thoughts around thee twine o' hame and infancy.
O Rowan tree!*

('The Rowan Tree')

Thomas Moore and 'the luxury of woe'

*Weep on; and as thy sorrows flow
I'll taste the luxury of woe!*

('Anacreontic': Thomas Moore)

Moore has a peculiarity of talent, or rather talents, - poetry, music, voice, all his own; and an expression in each which never was, nor will be, possessed by another (quoted in Sadie 1980 vol.12, 550). So wrote Byron in his journal on November 22 1813. The object of his appreciation was Thomas Moore (1779-1852), the popular

poet-performer, *the Prince of all Minstrels* (Denis McCarthy quoted in Austin 1975, 155), whose best-known songs, like *The Last Rose of Summer* and *The Minstrel Boy*, remain widely anthologised and form part of the English-speaking world's pool of familiar songs. Commentators have long agreed on the importance of his influence in the development of nineteenth century popular song, for instance William Austin posits an international tradition of popular song writers that includes Burns and Lady Nairne as well as others we meet later in this chapter like Haynes Bayly and Bishop, but Moore *more than any other, came to dominate this international tradition* (Austin 1975, 131).

Moore's importance to the specifically sentimental strain in popular music is axiomatic. Not all his songs were sentimental: like Burns before him and Henry Russell after him his work presented contrasting moods. Whilst Burns espoused the bawdy when not in sentimental mood, and Russell the determinedly cheery, Moore favoured the convivially boozy. His drinking songs like *Fill The Bumper Fair*, *Come Send Round The Wine* and *One Bumper At Parting* were, however, hackneyed affairs as their titles suggest (and their lyrics bear out): posterity had little to fear from couplets like *Fill the bumper fair, Ev'ry drop we'll sprinkle' O'er the bosom of Care, smooths away a wrinkle*.

A falling-out with the Prince of Wales is supposed to have turned Moore from drinking songs to sentimental songs: the popular song historian Willson Disher suggests this spat effectively changed the direction of popular music. His contention that *Tom Moore put sadness into song...* (Willson Disher 1955, 155) is simply wrong, disregarding as it does Moore's various eighteenth century progenitors - who had also preceded him in their espousal of the sentimental over the boozy: *...the tear that bedews sensibilities shrine/ Is a drop of more worth than all Bacchus's Tun* (William Shield 1785). Moore's work nevertheless has a unique importance in the tradition. Not only did he synthesise what had gone before - his career was a felicitous blend of Dibdinian business acumen and Burnsian poetic popularity - but he brought a recognisably modern tone to his writing. Indeed a 'modernness' characterises his whole approach: whilst incorporating the lessons of earlier writers he refined sentimental song in a way that influenced the rest of the century.

Moore was a sensation in his time, a writer-performer who might be considered the first popular song 'star'. He certainly had many of the accoutrements we have come to associate with that title: his performances were thrilling affairs in which he moved his audience and himself to tears. (*No one believes how much I am sometimes affected in singing, partly from being touched myself, and partly from an anxiety to touch others* [quoted in White 1977, 161]). His somewhat highly-strung

temperament also led him on occasion to walk out during a piece if he thought insufficient attention was being paid to it. He was even mobbed on an 1835 tour: *Only a cup-winning football team, or perhaps, an Olympic medallist would call out such a crowd today* comments his biographer (Ibid., 244). All this high emotionality has since become routinely associated with 'stars', but it was novel then and helped establish his celebrity as well as ideally reflecting the sentimental repertoire he was performing. Perhaps the most strikingly modern aspect of Moore's musical celebrity was his awareness of the effect his material had: although a sweet-natured sentimentalist himself both his writing and performing had a knowing, manipulative aspect: *...tears and laughter and applause (were) always at his command...* (Priestley in Moore 1925, xi), and he imbued even his love affairs with a self-conscious theatricality: *an hour or two of sentiment one night, a brief tearful farewell next morning; and an addition to the store of nostalgic impressions for future retrospection* (White, 95).

Byron thought him the best song writer bar none, and Moore had a most illustrious 'fan-club': Sir Walter Scott, the Shelleys, Sydney Smith, and 'Monk' Lewis all paid extravagant tribute. If this suggests a superior sort of aficionado there is some truth in it : Moore had Lord Moira and the Prince of Wales as patrons, and like Burns he was lionised by aristocracy and the haute bourgeoisie, *playing and singing his way, a modern troubadour, into the hearts of drawing-room audiences* (Turner 1975, 194). But as Burns's popularity extended far beyond the salons of Edinburgh - remember those ploughboys saving to buy his books - enthusiasm for Moore's songs was never limited to fine houses. His life might appear privileged, from his training at the bar to his later friendships with leading literati and politicians of the age, but his work had characteristics that guaranteed it *a healthy universality of appeal* (Scott, 26).

His most famous work was his *Irish Melodies*, and it is with them that his celebrity and influence largely rest. They were issued separately in ten volumes between 1808 and 1834 and *provided Moore with a lucrative source of income, since he negotiated terms which gave him 100 guineas per song...* (Scott, 25) (providing *in toto* nearly £13,000, a prodigious sum by the standards of the day). Subsequently *...selections from (them) were printed in newspapers and magazines everywhere; they filled half the pages of countless anthologies* (Austin, 131). Although Moore did compose music for his own lyrics, the *Melodies* followed Burns's practice of setting fresh words to old airs. Despite their title, and the fact Moore is always depicted as the 'Irish Troubadour', there is a paradox here. Many of his best known lyrics make no reference to Ireland, and many more are only coincidentally 'Irish'. Whilst Moore

on occasion 'adapted' putative Irish tunes for his sentimental words - *There is scarcely a melody which Moore left unaltered and unspoilt...* (quoted in White, 80) - his references to Ireland in those lyrics are always to a mythic Ur-Ireland of dreams and memories, the place where happiness is always in the past tense. Suffice it to say it bore no relation to the real Ireland of the early nineteenth century: an early friendship with the doomed Irish nationalist Robert Emmett showed the complexity - and danger - of the real situation. It made much more sense therefore to depict an Ireland of the (safe) Long Ago; mood always came first with Moore anyhow, and his choice of Ireland as a sometime locus - however hazy - for his songs provided not only a picturesque backcloth for sentimental episodes (*vide* Burns again), but a potent source of melancholy, for Ireland could be seen as a national analogue for loss itself. Moore's references to a fabled glorious Irish past contrasting with a grim present - 'Erin's Long Night of Bondage' - mirrors the Scottish writer's use of the collapse of the Jacobite dream as a source of sadness. Fortuitously both cases involved the pathos of exile and loss, and both situations tacitly invoke English perfidy. But Moore's link to Irish culture was more tenuous: the Scots songwriters all had some personal involvement with the culture they depicted and some commitment to presenting it (in an albeit 'improved' form) for a wider audience. Moore knew nothing of Ireland beyond Dublin - *It is incredible he knew his own country so little* (White, 183) - and anyhow had left Ireland before the new century. Unlike Burns he *...knew nothing of the original words of the tunes he used. In particular he knew no Gaelic. He saw little of peasant life...but it never occurred to him to seek a distinctive Irish style of poetry, or to make a stylistic distinction between the Irish music and the other music he used* (Austin, 132) *...he had no knowledge of Irish and could not read a word of it* (White, 80). It is not surprising that *...pure Gaels...resented the cut of Moore's coat* (Ibid.).

Again despite the fact that some of his most celebrated *Irish Melodies* make no reference to Ireland at all, that country - however tenuously invoked - was a shrewd choice for a sentimental songwriter, for there was a perception of *the melting pathos of Irish music* (Hamm 1979, 50) and Moore himself wrote *The language of sorrow, however, is, in general, best suited to our music, and with themes of this nature the poet may be amply supplied ... in Ireland, her altar, like the shrine of Pity at Athens, is to be known only by the tears that are shed upon it; 'Lachrymis alteria sudant'* (Ibid., 51).

The importance of the *Irish Melodies* however lies less in their Irish context (often negligible, and always vague) than in the mood they evoke. Moore repeatedly and tirelessly sought to evince a sense of loss: *Moore's most frequent subject was a*

'dream' of sweet security, of a 'home' not too precisely defined, now lost forever... (Austin, 132). His Ireland always remains therefore more a state of mind than a geographical location.

From a technical perspective Moore's achievement for the sentimental song tradition is in the way he synthesized the eighteenth century notion of the nobility of tears (*'liquid virtue'*) as a suitable - nay desirable - demonstration of sensibility with nineteenth century feelings of *world-weariness and loneliness...implicit in so much of the Romantic movement* (Aitken 1956, 98). His concentration on evoking all manner of loss directly invited pity and self-pity. Moore was quite clear about tears being the correct signifier of these states: he re-states the eighteenth century line that they are

for when all lighter griefs have failed.
(*'It is Not The Tear'*)

and

the soul of...sweetness is drawn out by tears.
(*'In The Morning Of Life'*)

There is a clear implication too of the social importance of tears as a visible badge of rectitude prompted by sympathy for another:

Art thou too wretched? yes thou art!
I see thy tears flow fast with mine!
(*'Come Take Thy Harp'*)

Come chace that starting tear away,
Ere mine to meet it springs...
(*'Come Chace [sic] that Starting Tear Away'*)

and an enjoyable indulgence:

Weep on; and as thy sorrows flow
I'll taste the luxury of woe!
(*'Anacreontic'*)

...feeling hearts whose joys are few
But, when indeed they come, divine.
(*'Sweet Innisfallen'*)

and mention has been made of how both he and his audiences were affected during the performance of his songs: there are numerous records of people being moved to tears by his songs. One such was the novelist Maria Edgeworth (another eminent fan), and Moore commented he was *glad to think he could move 'higher spirits'* (White, 179). In a personal fragment composed for the wife of the American songwriter Francis Hopkinson, Moore shows he expected such a response: *...Like eyes he had lov'd was her eloquent eyes/ Like them did it soften and weep at his song.*

And here is Moore himself: *...the melancholy both of the song and my own voice affected me so much that before I had sung the first two lines I broke out into one of those hysterical fits of sobbing...* (White, 252).

This lachrymosity is understandable given the pitch of so many of the *Melodies*: Moore calls one of his songs *'Tis Gone and For Ever* (*...vanished for ever thou fair, sunny vision...*) - and this perfectly sums up the psychological tone of his work:

*Oft I roam my gardens bow'rs,
To gaze upon the faded flow'rs,
And think them like past happy hours,
That fled like summer's bloom.*
(*'Shule, Agra'*)

Time, true to the maxim, 'ravages':

*For time will come with all its blights,
The ruined hope, the friend unkind,
And love, that leaves, where'er it lights
A chill'd or burning heart behind.*
(*'Whene'er I see Thy Smiling Eyes'*)

and only memory remains to bring solace:

*Let Fate do her worst, there are relics of joy,
Bright dreams of the past, which she cannot destroy...
...long, long be my heart with such memories fill'd-
You may break, you may shatter the rose, if you will,
But the scent of the roses will hang round it still.*
(*'Farewell! But Wherever You Welcome The Hour'*)

Moore is particularly exercised about summoning the special loss when the luminous vivacity and hope of youth fades; there is a piquant plangency in knowing we will never again own the world in that way:

*When we see the first glory of youth pass us by,
Like a leaf on the stream that will never return;
When our cup, which had sparkled with pleasure so high,
Now tastes of the other, the dark-flowing urn ...*

('In The Morning Of Life')

*And such is the fate of our life's early promise,
So passing the spring tide of joy we have known;
Each wave that we danc'd on at morning, ebbs from us
And leaves us, at eve, on the beach shore alone ...*

('I Saw From The Beach')

*Now hope may bloom, And days may come,
Of milder, calmer beam,
But there's nothing half as sweet in life
As love's young dream!*

*...Twas light that ne'er can shine again
On life's dull stream.*

('Oh The Days Are Gone When Beauty Bright')

For Moore there can be no compensation for this loss, only anguish at the cruel brevity of young hope, young love:

*Ne'er tell me of glories serenely adoring
The close of our day, the calm of our night;
Give me back, give me back the wild fresh morning ...*

('I Saw From The Beach')

*At the mid hour of night, when stars are weeping I fly
To the lone vale we loved, when life shone warm in thine eye;
And I think oft, if spirits can steal from the regions of air,
To revisit past scenes of delight, thou wilt come to me there,
And tell me our love is remember'd, even in the sky,
Then I will sing the wild song 'twas once such a pleasure to hear,
When our voices, commingling, breathed, like one, on the ear;
And, as Echo far off through the vale my sad orison rolls,
I think, oh my love! 'tis thy voice, from the Kingdom of Souls,
Faintly answering still the notes that once were so dear.*

('At the Mid hour of Night')

Moore's importance to the tradition can be further seen in the way he uses other, more optimistic, themes and imagery that have since become familiar in sentimental song: the lamp shining in the valley to guide home the prodigal (in *The Valley Lay Smiling Before Me*) and the Darby and Joan scenario of love lasting a lifetime (in *Believe Me If All Those Endearing Young Charms*). His religious lyrics were popular enough to be set by other writers, and some like *There's Nothing True But Heaven* - with music by the American Oliver Shaw - presage the 'Dreams of Heaven' that become such a dominant motif in sacred sentimental song.

He also shows an early and sophisticated understanding of music and song as triggers for sentimental feeling. They can be direct conduits to Better Times For Ever Lost, with predictably bitter-sweet results:

*Sweet notes! they tell of former peace,
Of all that look'd so rapt'rous then,
Now wither'd, lost- oh! pray thee cease
I cannot bear those sounds again...*

('Come, Take Thy Harp')

*When thro' life unblest we rove
Losing all that made life dear,
Should some notes we used to love,
In days of boyhood meet our ear,
Oh! how welcome breaks the strain!
Waking thoughts that long have slept;
Kindling former smiles again
In faded eyes that long have wept.*

('When Thro' Life We Rove')

*'Twas one of those dreams
That by music are brought
Like bright summer haze
O'er the poets warm thought;
When lost in the future,
His soul wanders on
And all of his life,
But its sweetness is gone.*

('Twas One of Those Dreams')

*Then should music, stealing
All the soul of feeling,
To thy heart appealing,
Draw one tear from thee,
Strains I us'd to sing thee,*

Oh! then remember me.

('Go Where Glory Wants Thee')

*Those evening bells, those evening bells,
How many a tale their music tells,
Of youth and home and that sweet time,
When last I heard their soothing chime.*

*Those joyous hours are past away,
And many a heart that then was gay,
Within the tomb now darkly dwells,
And hears no more those evening bells.*

*And so 'twill be when I am gone,
That tuneful peal will still ring on,
While other bards shall walk these dells,
And sing your praise sweet evening bells.*

('Those Evening Bells')

It is worth quoting the complete text of two of his most famous songs, *The Last Rose of Summer* and *Oft in the Stilly Night* to get a flavour of the exquisitely pathetic emotionality evoked:

*'Tis the last rose of summer,
Left blooming alone;
All her lovely companions
Are faded and gone.
No flow'r of her kindred,
No rose-bud is nigh,
To reflect back her blushes
Or give sigh for sigh.*

*I'll not leave thee, thou lone one,
To pine on the stem;
since the lovely are sleeping,
Go, sleep thou with them;
Thus kindly I scatter,
Thy leaves o'er the bed,
Where thy mates of the garden
Lie scentless and dead.*

*So soon may I follow,
When friendship's decay,
And from Love's shining circle
The gems drop away!*

*When true hearts lie wither'd,
And fond ones are flown,
Oh! who would inhabit
This bleak world alone?*
(*'The Last Rose of Summer'*)

*Oft in the stilly night,
Ere slumber's chain has bound me,
Fond mem'ry brings the light
Of another days around me.
The smiles, the tears, of boyhood's years,
The words of love then spoken,
The eyes that shone, now dimm'd and gone,
The cheerful hearts now broken!
Thus, in the stilly night,
Ere slumber's chain has bound me,
Sad mem'ry brings the light
Of other days around me.*

*When I remember all
The friends, so link'd together,
I've seen around me fall,
Like leaves in wintry weather;
I feel like one who treads alone
Some banquet hall deserted,
When lights are fled, whose garlands dead,
And all but he departed!
Thus, in the stilly night,
Ere slumber's chain has bound me,
Sad mem'ry brings the light
Of other days around me.*
(*'Oft in the Stilly Night'*)

These lyrics also point up a different facet of Moore's work that is important in the forging of a sentimental song tradition: his paeans to loss are always described from an internal, subjective viewpoint. In this respect he represented the increasing tendency to write *in the first person, describing situations and emotions from within from the point of view of the person experiencing these emotions* (Hamm, 51).

This personalisation of tone allied with a deliberately unspecific context encouraged people to enter the spirit of his songs, and enjoy the emotions being expressed in a way that set the standard for the rest of the century. Beyond anyone else Moore set the tone for nineteenth century song (and it was sentimental); with Stephen Foster he was the most influential song writer in the first half of the century,

and Foster's sentimental work owes an obvious and considerable debt to Moore: *He'd studied Tom Moore's books of...songs very carefully, and in his plantation songs (for which he grew famous) Foster demonstrated the debt he owed to Irish songsters...* (Whitcomb 1994, 305).

It is however crucial to point out that for all his influence on later writers - *In style and content they (Moore's songs) anticipated the sweet melancholy of untold reams of Victorian sheet-music...* (Turner 1975, 194) - Moore owed much to the earlier sentimental songsters, particularly Burns and the Scottish writers. (A debt Moore appears to have been aware of: in 1819 he organised a Burns dinner, *the proceeds to go towards the erection of a memorial* [White,145]).

Indeed the *Irish Melodies* probably would not have been produced without the example of the Burns collections: Moore's first publisher William Power was inspired to commission him in 1807 directly as a result of George Thompson's success with Burns. Power realized Thompson's success was much to do with a move away from the potentially offensive to the generally pathetic. Burns, closer to the original culture of sentimentality and an acolyte of Mackenzie, also provided Moore and subsequent writers with a template for sentimental song. Much that Moore developed and popularised existed at least in embryonic form in Burns; even Moore's 'trademark' milking of a sense of loss is present in Burns songs:

*Where are the joys I have met in the morning
That danc'd to the larks early song?
Where is the peace that awaited my wandering
At evening the wild-wood among?
(Fair Jenny)*

- as is specific lament for irretrievable halcyon youth:

*But now our joys are fled
On winter's blast awa'...
...Oh, Age has weary days
And night's o' sleepless pain
Thou golden time o' Youth's prime
Thy comes thou not again!
(The Winter of Life)*

It is possible Moore's writing was also informed by sentimental precedents in the theatre: *one of the sentimental treats of the day* (White, 29) when Moore was in his early twenties were the love duets sung by Michael Kelly and his mistress, and he collaborated with Kelly on a theatre piece, *The Gypsy Prince*.

Moore's sentimental work is suffused with a gentle melancholy: his songs evoke pity and self-pity for their own sake, and show how completely sentimentality had become divorced from its ethical base by the beginning of the nineteenth century: being moved by *The Last Rose of Summer* might indicate the beauty of one's soul and a general moral worthiness, but long-gone was the time when sentimental art might prompt action. His songs are also shorn of any narrative context - as in Gay's *O Pity Me!* - or of any socio-historical context - as in Dibdin's nautical songs or even the curatorial context of Burns's work:- (It is) *typical of his output... (that it seeks) to conjure a sense of loss; there is usually no remedy offered beyond the melancholy pleasure of indulging the feeling for its own sake... (Scott, 28)... he indulged his dream. This indulgence suited growing numbers of insecure city-dwellers (Austin, 133).* Sentimentality's transition from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century has been discussed earlier, but Moore's primary importance is the way he harnessed the unrestrained eighteenth century emotionality central in the development of sentimentality to an introspective nineteenth century pessimism. In this way his repertoire piquantly demonstrated the death of the Enlightenment ideal. Initially sentimentality looked both inward to the individual heart and outwards to the community, and was born of an optimism that things might change - knowledge could be gained, Man could be perfected. One hundred years later it was clear this was not going to be the case - and Moore was typical of his generation in that he *slaved fitfully in the rational hopes of political reform, science, education and naturally expanding sympathies. Only he found these hopes often disappointed. He wearied of the effort to realise them. He dreamed of escape (Austin, 53).*

This went beyond a facile Romantic penchant for world-weariness, and his songs reflect a new bleakness that is recognisably modern. The philosopher Schopenhauer could have been describing the world of Moore's songs when he wrote *Happiness... always lies in the future or else in the past, and the present may be compared to a small dark cloud which the wind drives over the sunny plain; before and behind it all is bright, only it itself always casts a dark shadow (quoted in Greene 1967, 358).*

In assessing Moore's career one becomes aware of a certain opportunism: he was a complex and imaginative man, but also one who wanted to make his way in the world. (His social aspirations were noted by Byron: *Tommy loves a Lord!*) The writing and performing of his songs furnished him the means to do this. He was doubtless sincere enough in carrying out these projects, but also probably sophisticated enough to be aware of the formulaic excesses of some of his material:

later in his life in 1835 he actually mocked - albeit very gently - sentimentality in *The Fudges in England...a light satire on the sentimental absurdities of the day* (Drabble 1995, 666).

His critics believed he made people think Irish song one of those *sentimental absurdities*: certainly the absence of an authentic Ireland anywhere in his work, and his casting of the *Irish Melodies* in terms of a sensibility - sentimentality - rather than any cultural reality has intensely irritated his critics - *Mr Moore converts the wild harp of Erin into a musical snuff-box* (Hazlitt quoted in White, 74). Yet what such critics always forget is that prior to Moore Irish song - such as it was - had been in decline (the collector Bunting had noted as much at the end of the eighteenth century); Moore's genius (or crime) was to re-invent it in a (gloriously bogus) sentimental mould. He was, after all, a popular song writer (not a poet or folklorist or politician).

Indulgent, vague, opportunistic and inauthentic...and vastly popular: the final paradox of Moore's work is the divergence between critical opinion, and public choice. Contemporary critical opinion is represented by Hazlitt: *It has been too much our author's object to pander to the artificial taste of the age; and his productions, however brilliant and agreeable, are in consequence somewhat meretricious and effeminate* (White, 173). Recent critical opinion is even less kind: a typical assessment would be that of David Daiches, who speaks of Moore's *...facile charm...*(whose songs) *at their best show a controlled tenderness and artificially manipulated display of feeling...* (Daiches 1994, 932). What is interesting - and in no little way ironic - is the fact that the very deficits in his work perceived from a critical point of view helped guarantee its popular success: *Moore's shortcomings as well as his gifts contributed to his success as a song-maker* (White, 74). Thus whilst his lyrics may have been obvious, lacking in depth and artful, they were about universal emotions and were expressed in an accessible way. And, if Moore's rhyming could be seen as bland, this at least saved it from the alienating effects of Keatsian egoism or Byronic sensuality. Not having the depth and challenge of these 'great' poets meant *The Melodies* could be 'consumed' by everybody (ensuring a market success across social and economic lines never achieved by the Romantics). Moore's songs were part of the nineteenth century's collective unconscious in a way *Ode to a Nightingale* and *Childe Harold* never were: *Their immense popularity, cutting across social and economic divisions, was due to...the texts, which were more concerned with the direct expression of human sentiments than those of the earlier song repertory...* (Sadie, 590). They were *...among the best-loved songs in the English language of the entire century, in the United States as well as in Great Britain...(and)...penetrated*

deeply into English-speaking culture around the globe (Hamm 1983, 174). Poe simply called Moore the *most popular poet in the world* (White, 131).

It is impossible to overstate the appeal of Moore's songs: *The 'Irish Melodies'* shared the distinction with the songs of Stephen Foster of being the most popular, widely sung, best-loved, and durable songs of English life and culture for the entire century; Dickens and Joyce refer to them constantly, fully expecting readers to be familiar with the set and with individual songs (Austin, 136). (There are in fact thirty allusions to his work in Dickens's novels, and a Moore song title, 'Oh, ye Dead', gave Joyce ...the theme of the story in 'Dubliners'. [White 1977, 76]) The fame of the *Melodies* was not confined to Britain and America. They held an important part in European music too. Beethoven set some of them, and Berlioz produced his 'Irelande' (*neuf mélodies pour une et deux voix sur des transductions de Thomas Moore*) in 1829.

Moore's biographer offers an exegesis of the success of the *Melodies*: his most celebrated songs 'The Last Rose Of Summer', 'Oft In The Stilly Night' and 'Believe Me If All Those Endearing Young Charms' are almost embarrassingly sentimental; but they are irresistible (White, 78). I would clarify the implication of this statement: Moore's songs are irresistible because of their sentimentality. Given the critical obloquy sentimentality attracts they may not *pass in the academies, but who, given the choice, would rather have an existence in the foot-notes of scholars than in the hearts of living men?* (Ibid., 75)

It is appropriate to pause briefly to assess the development of the tradition after a virtuoso like Moore. A comment by Byron shows at once the viability of secular popular song (after only a century), and the primacy of sentimental writers within the field: *Byron declined to write 'bad songs', which 'would only disgrace beautiful music' after Burns and Moore 'whom it were difficult to imitate and impossible to equal'* (Dick 1908, xi).

Indeed by the time the last of Moore's songs was published, and only a third of the way into the century, there is evidence to suggest the widespread influence of the sentimental tradition, as this example shows: sheet music was still comparatively expensive, and many chose to copy their favourite songs into a musical commonplace book. Anne Brontë was one who did so - and in her slender collection Moore is represented four times, Burns and Watts three times (Brontë 1840's, facsimile 1980).

Henry Russell: philanthropy, the genesis of the dog song and more 'discrete objects'

My songs were of the kind that reached the hearts of my audiences... (being) filled with a sterling sentiment which interested and excited the sympathy of the people...
(Russell 1895, 175)

All of my songs were written earnestly, with beneficent object...
(Ibid., 12)

If Moore's work might be considered as representing the 'subjectivisation' of sentimental song into inward-looking theatre of indulgence completely divorced from any ethical considerations, then the work of Henry Russell (1812-1900) represents, by contrast, a remarkably pure Shaftesburian, eighteenth-century emphasis on utilizing emotion, the 'feeling heart', as a prompt to our moral sense. His songs were also popular throughout the nineteenth century, and between them he and Moore represent two dominant strands of sentimental song. Significantly Russell's work is more descriptive and 'external', narratives that aim to awaken sympathetic fellowship for one's fellow man, (as opposed to Moore's 'internal' meditations).

Russell was born at Sheerness, having a stage debut at the age of three, he *...was something of a child prodigy and had the honour, as a boy singer at Drury Lane, of being lifted on to George IV's knee to receive the royal kiss* (Turner 1972, 105). A little later as a member of a children's troupe he had played for Edmund Kean at his house in Richmond; the great actor gave Russell advice he never forgot: *My dear boy, he said in his tragic way, you will never become either a great actor or a great singer unless you learn to speak every word you utter distinctly and clearly* (Russell, 23).

Like Moore he moved in illustrious company: during a career that spanned two thirds of the century he met Disraeli, Macaulay, Madame Vestris and Lytton Bulwer. In America he knew Daniel Webster and Fennimore Cooper, and worked with some of the best talents of the day. In this country his collaborators included Dickens, Thackeray and Longfellow. Like Dibdin he was a musical journeyman. He studied with Bellini - the ailing maestro gave him free lessons in counterpoint, harmony and orchestration - and then toured as pianist and chorus master with Michael Balfe, and sang in Opera, meeting Rossini and Donizetti. He also followed Dibdin and Moore in singing and playing his own songs, being *...one of the few major singers of the time to present such unassisted entertainments* (John Stephens

in Sadie 1980 vol. 16, 335). As Russell himself commented *This class of entertainment was practically a new idea in England, my only other predecessors being Foote, Dibden (sic), and the elder Matthews* (Russell, 188). His performance style was forceful, and Kean's influence might be detected in that he was *A highly theatrical performer (who) delivered his own ballads with a flourish of histrionics* and this dramatic tendency was favoured in that his songs had *...rather static melodies which allowed Russell to perform them in speech-song manner* (Sadie, 335). Short, and having only a limited vocal range, he nonetheless *...overcame an unprepossessing appearance by the brilliance of his performances...* (Turner 1975, 131) and *developed the novel style of dramatic concert singing...that was to make his name. Accompanying himself on a little portable piano, so that he faced his audience, he used his big, operatic, voice to dramatize scenes...and then draw tears...* (Austin, 18).

Perhaps to an even greater extent than Moore, Russell was therefore a 'personality' performer who set his own stamp on everything he performed. Whilst he composed all his own tunes (allowing him to accommodate his small vocal range) he often chose to set the lyrics of other writers, and in this respect he differs from other key figures in the tradition that we examine. However, through an extensive transatlantic concert career, Russell made these 'imported' lyrics his own to the extent they became universally known as 'Henry Russell songs', and it is as such that they are considered here. (See, for instance, Klamkin 1975, illustration facing 60, where Russell's is the only name to appear on the sheet music.)

Russell had less luck than his predecessors with the sale of his songs, which were sold for an average of only ten shillings; as he himself explains: *There was no such thing as a royalty in those days, and when a song was sold, it was sold outright* (Russell 1895, 198).

In common with many nineteenth century song-writers necessity dictated that on occasion he practically give his work away, as an incident early in his career shows: Russell has arrived with his lyricist, Charles Mackay, at Walkers, the music publishers, in Soho Square.

"I went in, assuming the air of humility which best befits a man who has not breakfasted.

'Good morning, sir', said I.

Mr. Walker never condescended to reply, which was discouraging.

'I have a song here', I continued, 'which has just been composed'.

'Well', he growled, 'sit down, and let me hear it'...

...'What do you want for it?' he asked.

My heart beat violently. I thought of my empty interior, and of the hungry versifier outside.

'Oh! anything you like, sir'.

'Well', said Walker, 'I'll give you a guinea for it'.

I took it. He brought out a paper for me to sign. My heart was so gladdened that I never even read it. It might have been a promissory note for all I knew." (Ibid., 214)

Russell indeed estimated his total payment for eight hundred songs was only £400 (compared with Moore's £12,000 plus), and his income had therefore necessarily to be derived primarily from performing work. Like the earlier writers and those who followed him - specifically Stephen Foster - his output was not exclusively sentimental: he is remembered also for his energetically upbeat songs like *Cheer, Boys Cheer* and *A Life On The Ocean Wave*. It has been suggested this happy/sad emotional dichotomy is found with great frequency among nineteenth century bourgeoisie (Scott, 40), so it is unsurprising to find this split reflected in the work of the key writers (who were at once composing songs to satisfy bourgeois taste, as well as themselves being subject to the forces that shaped that taste).

Russell's sentimental work divides into two categories: the relatively straightforward ballad, and the more extended - in every way - 'gran scena' (mini-melodramas utilizing a range of expressive effects).

As has been mentioned, the work is interesting for the way it reinvigorated the philanthropic dimension of sentimentality that had been so important in the previous century. Russell actually *thought of himself as a social reformer as much as a musician* (Turner, 106) asking *Why should it not be possible for me to make music the vehicle of grand thoughts and noble sentiments, to speak to the world through the power of poetry and song?* However *The element of evangelical humanitarianism in (his) character placed him in conflict with the laissez-faire philosophy which maintained that people driven by self-interest to create wealth forwarded the general good* (Scott, 38). For a professional song-writer - itself still a new and precarious calling - to adopt such a radical stance was brave (if not foolhardy) especially when one considers the prejudices and insecurities of his largely middle-class audience. Russell was one of the few writers to do so: *Much less encountered...are compositions critical of contemporary society. When they do appear, they bewail society's indifference to vice, and acceptance of slavery and oppression...Henry Russell...composed and sang many such pieces - in support of the American Indians and of women's rights, and against slavery, gambling and drunkenness* (Tawa 1985, 145). Apart from arrogating socially critical songs he campaigned and played

benefits for Irish famine victims and would-be emigrants (he raised £6976 for the latter on one tour alone), and attacked the work conditions of shop-assistants and potters. It was the songs however that were to the forefront of his most celebrated cause: *Russell claimed that slavery was 'one of the evils I helped abolish through the medium of my songs'* (quoted in Scott, 39). This is perhaps pitching it a bit high: for one thing anti-slavery songs were not new (Burns had written one in 1792), but in pieces like *The Slave Sale* and *The Slave Ship* he anticipates *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and whilst Harriet Beecher-Stowe was condemnatory, Russell was actively abolitionist:

*Let every man arise to save
From scourge and chain, the Negro slave.*
(*'The Slave Ship'*)

Like Dibdin he toured with 'entertainments' about negro life, but whilst Dibdin's entertainments were just that, Russell's *Negro Life in Freedom and Slavery* - from which the above song comes - were fiercely committed. This was artistic radicalism very much in the Wordsworthian mold: (Wordsworth wrote) *with a missionary intention to change the literary attitudes of his own class. The poet's duty is to 'descend lower, among cottages and fields, and among children'...* (his) *greatest work concerns classes of people generally ignored by earlier writers: the very old, the mad and the poor...* (Wynne-Davies 1990, 242). One of Russell's most celebrated 'gran scenas', *The Maniac*, directly deals with the plight of the mad: *Russell insisted that it was composed with specific intention of 'exposing that great social evil - the private lunatic asylum' where people were unlikely to be declared sane whilst they proved profitable inmates...The piece stands as an indictment of the blanket application of 'laissez-faire'* (Scott, 39).

(This might be usefully compared with Wordsworth's treatment of a similar theme in *The Idiot Boy*; in both cases a strong emotional response is sought, producing *...a tearful laughter, a kind of release...* at the same time as demonstrating *...a strenuous moral sympathy, uncompromisingly expressed...* [Wynne-Davies, 243]).

It is of course no coincidence that all these deprived classes of people are potentially pathetic, and therefore suitable for sentimentalization - and a cynic might suggest Russell merely hi-jacked moral concerns because they were excellent sources of emotional excitation. In *The Maniac* it is difficult not to conclude Russell was satisfying contemporary taste for the sensational effects of madness deriving from personal grief (à la Mrs Rochester in *Jane Eyre*):

For lo you, while I speak, mark how yon demon's eye-balls glare!
He sees me now; with dreadful shriek he whirls, he whirls me through the air.
Horror! The reptile strikes his tooth in my heart, so crush'd and sad!
Aye, laugh ye fiends, laugh, laugh ye fiends!
Yes, by Heav'n, yes, by Heaven, they've driven me mad!
I see her dancing in the hall, I - ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!
I see her dancing in the hall,
Oh! release me, Oh! release me -
She heeds me not.
Yes, by Heav'n, yes, by Heav'n, they've driven me mad!
 ('The Maniac')

It is impossible to judge the extent to which the plights of shackled slaves and incarcerated madmen in his songs served to prompt moral awareness (which then might translate itself into social action). Russell undoubtedly hoped they would, and he appears less opportunistic in adopting these scenarios than later nineteenth century writers. It is perhaps useful at this stage to look closer at one of his most obviously moralising pieces, the 'grand scena' *The Gambler's Wife*. It describes the death of a mother and child after waiting in vain for the husband's return, a plot-line that was used by Henry Clay Work for his celebrated sentimental song *Come Home, Father* (1864), as well as by countless dramatists and tract-writers. The lyrics of the piece were by Matthew Gregory 'Monk' Lewis, one of the most celebrated writers of the Gothic movement. 'Movement' is perhaps too strong a word for what started as a literary fashion that many (Bredvold 1962, Campbell 1987) see as an attempt to trump the emotional excesses of the sentimental writers. In an effort to 'up the emotional ante' the Gothic writers grafted a lurid exoticism and supernaturalism onto existing sentimental motifs like the suffering hero or heroine. The Gothic eventually had wide cultural currency involving the visual arts and architecture as well as the written word. It particularly suited contemporary theatre, where licensing laws limited spoken drama to two 'patent' theatres because its florid 'over-the-top-ness' meant presentation in dumb-show was entirely satisfying. Its practice in many ways prefigured that of silent cinema: *The characters mimed throughout to musical accompaniment and held up scrolls to the audience whenever a vital piece of information or important sentiment could not be conveyed by miming. These scrolls were pieces of Irish linen, crudely painted with captions like REMEMBER YOUR VOW, THE PRINCESS IS IMPRISONED, BIRENO HAS DISCOVERED YOUR LURKING PLACE, and I YIELD TO FATE - CHILDREN FAREWELL FOREVER* (Booth 1965, 70). (There were problems with this approach: the property-man whose job it was to prepare the scrolls *not generally being much of a scholar* (Ibid.)

sometimes got things wrong: what should have been BLOW UP THE CORSAIRS HAUNT! became BLOW UP THE COURSERS AUNT!)

As part of such a broad - nay vulgar - tradition it will come as no surprise that 'Monk' Lewis's trademarks were ...*the ghastly and the horrible...effects of the most startling kind...* (Ibid., 74) It is tempting therefore to see *The Gambler's Wife* as just another slice of his characteristically lurid sensationalism. Equally one may choose to see the piece, as Russell surely did, as a graphic (and as yet unhackneyed) narrative that served to make a moral point about gambling:

*Nestle more closely, dear one, to my heart!
Thou art cold! thou art freezing! but we will not part!
Husband! I die! Father! it is not he!
Oh, God! protect my child! hush, - the clock strikes three.*

*They're gone! the glimmering spark hath fled!
The wife and the child are number'd with the dead.
On the cold earth outstretch'd in solemn rest,
The babe lay frozen on its mother's breast.*

*The gambler came home at last - but all was o'er,
Dread silence reign'd around - the clock struck four.*

('The Gambler's Wife')

Had the gambler been a sentimentalist he would of course never have strayed, satisfied instead with the simple pleasures of hearth and home: the 'feeling heart' disables the selfishness of gambling-house and tavern life. The song therefore instructs its audience to feel the soft emotions that, had he allowed himself to have them, would have saved the gambler. A different sentimentality is at work in another of Russell's sensational 'scena', *Carlo, the Newfoundland Dog*. This tells in song form a true story. On the packet-ship *Montezuma* a young child fell overboard; a steerage passenger with a magnificent Newfoundland dog *that had scarcely left his master's side* heard the child's cries. *With the wonderful instinct of the animal it quickly grasped the meaning of the scene, and leaping on to the bulwarks it sprang into sea and swam rapidly towards the fast drowning child, and then, seizing its frock in his teeth, held the little one's head above water* (Russell, 175).

Russell himself recognised this as a *pathetic story*, and it might be considered as the Ur-text for countless subsequent dog songs. (Earlier lyrics on the canine either lack the all-important narrative element like Burns's *Sweet Echo is No More*, or have a briskness that subverts sentimentality like O'Keefe's *Old Towler*.) The pathos of

Carlo lies partly in the child's predicament: like the old and the enslaved, children have an increased 'pathos potential' because of their helplessness. Russell makes his moral point through the dog's prompt and courageous response: animals, not being prone to intellectualize their actions, represent a particularly pure form of the 'feeling heart' in their loyalty or bravery. Animals, however, like the old, slaves and children are also helpless in their dependence on others for their welfare, so Russell scores a sentimental 'double-whammy'; identical mechanisms made *Old Shep* a hit a hundred years later. Animals, like many other motifs in the songs, had been recommended by eighteenth century sentimental theorists as particularly *appropriate objects for identification...* (Dwyer, 1035). Russell's song has one further moral point to make in that *Carlo* belongs to the steerage, whilst the child - falling from a higher (posher) deck - does not: the truly 'feeling heart', therefore, knows no class lines.

The extravagant tone of this material marks the difference between Russell's time and ours. This difference is seen more starkly in his penchant for material about death. Death has been alluded to in many of the songs so far considered: it is, after all, the ultimate 'loss' - of self and others - and therefore a fine source of pathos and ...*(a) popular preoccupation with death ...Anne Douglas has argued was one of the cornerstones of sentimentalism. A controlled luxuriance in grief amounting to what Douglas calls 'therapeutic self-indulgence'* (Lott 1993, 188).

Russell, however, moved death 'centre-stage', and worked the subject in a way we recognise as quintessentially Victorian:

*Nigh to a grave that was newly made,
Lean'd a sexton old, on his earthworn spade;
His work was done, and he paused to wait
The fun'ral train thro' the open gate:
A relic of bygone days was he,
And his locks were white as the foamy sea;
But these words came from his lips so thin,
"I gather them in, I gather them in,
Gather, gather, gather, I gather them in."*

*"I gather them in; for, man and boy,
Year after year of grief and joy,
I've builded the houses that lie around,
In ev'ry nook of this burial ground.
Mother and daughter, father and son,
Come to my solitude, one by one, -
But come they as strangers or come they as kin,
I gather them in, I gather them in,
Gather, gather, gather, I gather them in."*

*"Many are with me, but still I'm alone;
I'm king of the dead - and I make my throne
On a monument slab of marble cold,
And my sceptre of rule is the spade I hold;
Come they from cottage or come they from hall,
Mankind are my subjects- all, all, all!
Let them loiter in pleasure, or toilfully spin -
I gather them in, I gather them in,
Gather, gather, gather, I gather them in."*

*"I gather them in and their final rest is
here down, down here, in the the earth's dark breast!"
And the sextons ceased - for the fun'ral train
Wound mutely o'er that solemn plain;
And I said to my heart - when time is told,
A mightier voice than that sexton's old
Will sound o'er the last trump's dreadful din -
"I gather them in, I gather them in,
Gather, gather, gather, I gather them in."
(*'The Old Sexton'*)*

The levelling finality of death has been evoked in popular songs as disparate as the 1930's Country hit *Six Feet Of Earth Make Us All Of One Size* by the McGarvey Brothers and Jacques Brel's *Le Tango Funèbre*, but *The Old Sexton* invites an enjoyment of this - a revelling in its awfulness - that represents a peculiarly nineteenth century contribution to sentimentality's oxymoronic axiom of 'happiness-in-unhappiness'.

In another Russell piece, *My Mother's Bible*, death 'frames' the song in the way it is referred to (in quite different contexts) at the end of both the first and last verses. In this song a familiar sentimental redemptive religiosity is invoked, but within the context of a domestic rather than church setting. The song's subject-matter is another important example of 'the cult of the discrete object', and again prefigures Country music (which a century later produced similar 'discrete object' songs like *Dust On The Bible*). *My Mother's Bible* is remarkable for the breadth of its sentimental references: tears, Mother and Home are all here - as is the ritual evocation of the past. It is also remarkable for the way it brings together the different 'voices' of sentimental writing: the first verse is pure Henry Mackenzie, the last pure Isaac Watts:

*This book is all that's left me now!
Tears unbidden start!*

*With falt'ring lip and throbbing brow,
I press it to my heart.
For many generations passed
Here is our family tree!
My mother's hand this bible clasped,
She dying gave to me.*

*Ah well so I remember those
Whose names these records bear!
Who round the hearth-stone used to close,
After the evening prayer;
And speak of what this volume said,
In tones my heart would thrill:
Though they are with the silent dead,
Here are they living still.*

*My father read this holy book
To brothers, sisters dear!
How calm was my poor mother's look,
Who leaned God's word to hear!
Her angel face! I see it yet!
What thronging mem'ries come!
Again the little group is met
Within the halls of home!*

*Thou truest friend man ever knew!
Thy constancy I've tried!
When all was false I found thee true,
My counsellor and guide.
The mines of earth no treasures give,
From me this book could buy;
For, teaching me the way to live,
It taught me how to die.
(*'My Mother's Bible'*)*

Russell's most famous sentimental song, *Woodman, Spare That Tree*, was also significant in helping establish the popular 'cult of the discrete object' in sentimental song. Possibly influenced by earlier work like Nairne's *The Rowan Tree*, it is still widely anthologised. The choice of a tree as the sentimental focus in these early examples shows an eighteenth century preference for the natural over the man-made; Russell's song has a 'green' feel too, and the utilization of prosopopeia (treating things as people) pioneered by Moore - (*my heart strings round thee cling, close as thy bark, old friend*) - is increasingly typical.

*Woodman, spare that tree!
Touch not a single bough;
In youth it shelter'd me,
And I'll protect it now;
'Twas my forefather's hand
That placed it near his cot,
There, woodman, let it stand,
Thy axe shall harm it not!
That old familiar tree,
Whose glory and renown
Are spread o'er land and sea,
And would'st thou hew it down?
Woodman, forbear thy stroke!
Cut not its earth-bound ties;
Oh! spare that aged oak
Now tow'ring to the skies!*

*When but an idle boy
I sought its grateful shade;
In all their gushing joy
Here, too, my sisters played.
My mother kiss'd me here;
My father press'd my hand -
Forgive this foolish tear,
But let that old oak stand!
My heart-strings round thee cling,
Close as thy bark, old friend!
Here shall the wild-bird sing
And still thy branches bend,
Old tree, the storm still brave!
And, woodman, leave the spot;
While I've a hand to save,
Thy axe shall harm it not.
(*'Woodman, Spare That Tree'*)*

The effectiveness of this song is best judged by the celebrated story invariably quoted about it: *After I had sung the noble old ballad of 'Woodman, Spare That Tree' at Boulogne, an old gentleman amongst the audience, who was greatly moved by the simple and touching beauty of the words, rose and said 'I beg your pardon, Mr Russell, but was the tree really spared?' 'It was,' said I. 'I am very glad to hear it', said he, as he took his seat amidst the applause of the whole assembly. I never saw such excitement in any concert-room (Russell quoted in Spaeth 1926, 23-4).*

It is significant that one of Russell's collaborations was with Charles Dickens (in *The Chase* and *The Green Ivy*); no-one knew better than Dickens how sentimentality could be used to make moral points. Like Dickens, some of Russell's sentimental work appears to have little link to any philanthropic or humanitarian theme, being purely about the enjoyment of tender emotions for their own sake (In Dickens's case even his crusading journalism is sometimes at the behest of his sentimentality: see Bell 1983, 145). It almost goes without saying that a sentimental perspective on things was far more part of their world than ours, and as we remember Dickens for reflecting this strident nineteenth century sentimentalism in his novels it has been suggested *Russell could be singled out as the composer mainly responsible for popularising the maudlin, over-sentimental song, the promoter of the moist eye* (Scott, 40), indeed after his early successes *He continued to write sentimental ballads on every conceivable subject...* (Ewen 1962, 149).

Further it has been submitted that Russell's work not only reflected, but actually helped form, nineteenth century sensibilities: *A very dear old friend of mine, a well-known man ... has often told me that he dates the birth of his sentimental nature to the fact that an old nurse used to sing 'Woodman, Spare That Tree' at his bedside, and that scores of times as a child he cried himself to sleep over the simple song* (Turner 1972, 150).

Both Russell and Moore were hugely popular both in this country and America, lending unequivocal proof of the transatlantic nature of the sentimental song tradition. This was not new: Burns and Dibdin were similarly appreciated on both sides of the Atlantic, as of course were English non-conformist hymns (which informed so much subsequent popular song, sacred and secular, Black and White). But Moore and Russell both had defining influence in America. (Moore's) *songs reached large numbers of Americans so quickly that within a few years there were editions of the texts alone... The 'Melodies' quickly entered the mainstream of music in America, and stayed there throughout the nineteenth century... 'Tis The Last Rose Of Summer' has been the most persistently popular of the 'Melodies'; the editor of the anthology 'Songs That Never Die' (Boston, 1894) claimed that 1,500,000 copies had been sold in America alone during the nineteenth century. If true, this tune has the distinction of being the first to sell a million or more copies... 'Oft In The Stilly Night' (was) identified in a note to the Ditson edition of 1893 as second in world-wide popularity only to 'Home, Sweet Home'* (Hamm 1979, 46).

Russell is actually sometimes thought of as an American composer: *He did, in fact, write many of his well-known songs there; but the two periods of his life spent*

in the United States totalled less than ten years, only half the time he spent as an active entertainer in Britain (Scott, 38).

Their reactions to the New World, however, were very different - whilst Russell was *a fervent champion of the New World* (Scott, 38), Moore hated it: *Every step I take not only reconciles, but also endears to me, not only the excellences, but even the errors of Old England* (Moore quoted in Hamm, 58).

Moore might therefore be considered *...the most unwilling hero in the saga of the development of an indigenous popular song in America* (Ibid., 59), yet such is his and Russell's importance that a well-regarded history of American popular song is unequivocal in placing these Britons as the dominant influence in that process prior to (the native) Stephen Foster (Hamm 1979, 44, 176).

The remaining British writers in this section Thomas Haynes Bayly (1792-1839), J. H. Payne (1791-1852), and Edward Fitzball (1792-1873) are less of a defining influence on sentimental song than Moore and Russell, though they produced significant work and reflect similar trends. They are identified in two important studies (Austin 1975 and Scott 1989) as being part of the same late eighteenth century/early nineteenth century popular song tradition that spanned the Atlantic: for instance Bayly's *Long, Long Ago* was *as popular in America almost as long as it was in England* (Jackson 1975, 273), and Payne's lyric for *Home! Sweet Home!* had even wider success.

Thomas Haynes Bayly: 'I'm Saddest When I Sing'

He possessed...a sentiment that ranged from the fanciful to the pathetic, without, however, strictly attaining either the highly imaginative or the deeply passionate.

(D.M. Moir in Stephen and Lee 1917, 1372)

...a master of his peculiar line - that of sentimental song. He was a forerunner of that whole series of namby-pamby stuff which has enormous run at the present day. But his compositions were superior to what has followed; and some of his best songs, words and music, will not die, when all the later stuff has perished.

(comment in *British Minstrelsie* c.1890 quoted in Jackson 1975, 273)

Bayly was similar to Moore in that, although he did compose - including the music for his 'hit' *I'd Be a Butterfly* - he was primarily a lyricist. He knew Moore, and was a

saloniste of much the same stamp, a drawing-room performer whose work (like Moore's) had a wider appeal than that might suggest. This was probably on account of the accessibility of his songs: being musically *shorter, simpler and more regular* than even those of Dibdin, and being possessed of a *generally small...musical compass* (Scott, 37) they found favour with musical amateurs on both sides of the Atlantic. Moore seems to have been his inspiration and *...the 'Irish Melodies' ...seem to have served as a model for the sort of music he composed.* (Ibid.) (and his songs have) *...the delicacy and wilting melancholy found in (them)* (Ibid., 35). Bayly also flirted with both comic and Gothic themes; his *The Mistletoe Bough* was *...a gruesome tale of a young bride who accidentally locked herself in a disused oak chest and was not found until years later* (Ibid., 36) and became a play, but his most popular work was the wistful *I'd Be a Butterfly*. Despite its 'Fotherington-Thomas' tone at the beginning (*I'd be a butterfly born in a bower/ Where roses and lilies and violets meet/ Roving for ever from flower to flower/And kissing all buds that are pretty and sweet!*) it ends in Mooresque melancholy:

*Surely 'tis better, when summer is over,
To die when all fair things are fading away:
(I'd Be a Butterfly)*

Its success can be gauged by the number of 'answer' songs - (*Be a Butterfly Then!*) - and parodies it attracted, to which Bayly eventually answered with a parody of his own:

*I'd be a Parody, made by a ninny,
On some little song with a popular tune,
Not worth a halfpenny, sold for a guinea,
And sung in the Strand by the light of the moon...*

Bayly was careful however to keep his sharp, *haute ton*, humour away from his sentimental writing, and in this and other ways he showed a keen grasp of the nature of sentimental song. His *Such Tears Are Bliss* (*...sung with the most rapturous applause by Miss Stephens, at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane*) uses the familiar Mooresque prompts of past times, lost friends and old songs to elicit a sentimental response, whilst recognising the enjoyment of such a response: *If on my cheek you behold a tear/ Sing on, sing on for such tears are bliss.* Another of his songs, *I'm Saddest When I Sing*, is an almost theoretical exegesis of the nature of a sentimental stance in song, and suggests a line by one of Moore's fans, the poet Shelley, who in *To a Skylark* had written: *Our sweetest songs are those that tell the saddest thoughts.*

It starts with reference to songs first taught the singer ...*by friends now far away* and heard first *in that sweet home, I never more shall see...* and continues:

*Alas! 'tis vain in winter time
To mock the songs of spring;
Each note recalls some wither'd leaf,
I'm saddest when I sing.*

*Of all the friends I us'd to love,
My harp remains alone,
Its faithfull voice still seems to be
An echo of my own:
My tears when I bend over it
Will fall upon its string
Yet those who hear me little think
I'm saddest when I sing.
(*'I'm Saddest When I Sing'*)*

This discreetly self-pitying tone has of course been rehearsed by earlier writers, and the pleasures of such a stance are hinted at in other Bayly songs like *Oh! Leave Me To My Sorrow*, and characterizes the attitude of the heroine of one of his best known pieces, *She Wore a Wreath of Roses*. This is a hymn to lost youth *à la* Moore which also manages to work in references to loss of home and loss of spouse:

*She wore a wreath of roses,
The night that first we met;
Her lovely face was smiling
Beneath her curls of jet;
Her footstep had the lightness,
Her voice the joyous tone,
The tokens of a youthful heart,
Where sorrow is unknown.
I saw her but a moment,
Yet methinks I see her now,
With the wreath of summer flowers,
Upon her snowy brow.*

*A wreath of orange blossoms
When next we met she wore;
Th'expression of her features
Was more thoughtful than before;
And standing by her side was one,
Who strove, and not in vain,
To soothe her leaving that dear home,*

*She ne'er might view again.
I saw her but a moment,
Yet methinks I see her now,
With the wreath of orange blossoms
Upon her snowy brow.*

*And once again I see that brow
No bridal wreath was there,
The widow's sombre cap conceals
Her once luxuriant hair;
She weeps in silent solitude,
And there is no one near,
To press her hand within his own,
And wipe away a tear.
I saw her broken-hearted,
Yet methinks I see her now,
In the pride of youth and beauty,
With a garland on her brow.
(*'She Wore a Wreath of Roses'*)*

The theme of loss is cleverly compounded in that the singer - the song's protagonist - although he only sees the girl in a series of fleeting moments, is obviously smitten. The pathos of his unrequited love is made more poignant by what happens to the girl. Taken all in all this is a very adroit blending of sentimental conventions that perhaps is a little too accomplished, suggesting a knowingness that subverts that which it seeks to create. This certainly was the view of posterity: writing at the end of the century the American Henry Frederic Reddall remarked that Bayly had *considerable wit and humour, but his sentiment was too often sentimentalism, his love lackadaisical, and his melancholy very genteel and effeminate - wearing white gloves and wiping its eyes, in which there were no tears, with a highly perfumed cambric pocket-handkerchief - a very Mantilini of the art of poetasty* (quoted in Turner 1972, 31). But like Moore before him Bayly never aspired to be a Keats, and (as with so many analyses of Moore) Reddall's critique draws attention to the very features of his work that probably made him a success in his day: his gentility and sentimentality (*there is pathos in...Bayly* another later commentator remarked [Cumming 1936, 40]). Bayly's grasp of sentimental conventions was never in any doubt as he demonstrated in another of his much-loved songs :

*Upon a hill he turn'd,
To take a last fond look.
Of the valley and the village church,
And the cottage by the brook;*

*He listen'd to the sounds, so familiar to his ear
And the Soldier leant upon his sword,
And wip'd away a tear.*

*Beside the cottage porch,
A girl was on her knees,
She held aloft a snowy scarf,
Which fluttered in the breeze,
She breath'd a pray'r for him,
A prayer he could not hear,
But he paused to bless her as she knelt,
And wip'd away a tear.*

*He turn'd and left the spot,
Oh! do not deem him weak,
For dauntless was the Soldier's heart,
Tho' tears were on his cheek;
Go, watch the foremost ranks,
In danger's dark career,
Be sure the hand most daring there,
Has wip'd away a tear.*

('The Soldier's Tear')

Here Bayly articulates the Dibdinian theme of the manly tear in no way compromising one's fighting resolve: following the rough trades of soldier or sailor - as they surely were at this time - did not obviate a susceptibility to tears, and the paradigm of manliness suggested here is one of fierce bravery and a 'feeling heart'. (One of Dibdin's songs was *The Soldier's Adieu*, and Bayly in *The Pilot* creates a nautical *scena* that Dibdin-like is pathetic at the same time as extolling providence). The key sentimental moment in *The Soldier's Tear* is an enforced separation from home, and elsewhere Bayly works the theme of being unable to return to the house of one's childhood in a way that is remarkably similar to that of Lady Nairne (in *The Auld Hoose*):

*The old house at home where my forefathers dwelt,
Where a child at the feet of my mother I knelt...
My heart, 'mid all changes, wherever I roam,
Ne'er loses its love for the old house at home...
But now the old home is no dwelling for me,
The home of the stranger henceforth shall it be...
Yet still, in my slumbers, sweet visions will come
Of the days that are pass'd, of the old house at home.*

('The Old House at Home')

We have seen how 'Home' in the broadest sense has been a preoccupation of sentimental songwriters since pioneers like Ramsay (whose *Farewell to Lochaber* - a piece *full of yearning*... [Willson Disher 1955, 35] - was a prototype). Henry Mackenzie's influence is again important: *...he was one of the first to emphasize the 'idea of Home' which, even exclusive of its relation to people, represented a silent and consoling friend in the midst of a 'tumultuous' world* (Dwyer, 1035), and his disciple Burns put something of this into his sentimental Highland arcadias. Burns in turn was inspirational for Moore, much of whose work had been *of a 'home' not too precisely defined, now lost forever*... (Austin, 132), including one his best-loved songs:

*Sweet vale of Avoca! how calm could I rest
In thy bosom of shade, with the friends I love best,
Where the storms that we feel in the cold world should cease
And our hearts, like thy waters, be mingled in peace,
And our hearts, like thy waters, be mingled in peace.*
(*'The Meeting Of The Waters'*)

Dibdin, too, had produced similar work - and his *Home's Home* has a chorus that concludes with a phrase prescient of the archetypal Home song:

And, damn it!, home's home, be it ever so homely.
(*'Home's Home'*)

'Home! Sweet Home!': an emblematic 'special case'

Certain songs of sentiment outlive those of more artistic composition simply because they touch the hearts of the people...Such a song is 'Home, Sweet Home'.

(W.L. Hubbard quoted in Hamm 1979, 169)

...a group of Zulus, members of the only tribe in South Africa to resist the might of British imperialism, were reported to have been melted by a performance of this song...

(Scott, 15)

Discussion of the increasing prevalence of Home as a motif in sentimental song must now lead to an examination of that most famous Home song of all, *Home! Sweet*

Home!. There is another link here with Bayly, for he had provided an early prototype lyric for Henry Bishop's music, although the words we know today are those of the American J. H. Payne. Bishop, despite professorships at Edinburgh and Oxford and a knighthood - the first given to a musician - was as much of a musical hack as his predecessors and contemporaries: ...*he...furnished...music in any vein that was profitable. If this meant cashing in on the success of others, so be it* (Scott, 15). He set 130 of Bayly's lyrics and was a sometime arranger for Moore but was principally a theatre composer, in which capacity he ...*ensured English Opera's survival as rival to the Italian variety* (Ibid., 16). He may be seen therefore as continuing the tradition started with the ballad-operas of providing an indigenous and accessible musical theatre reflecting a more bourgeois taste. His appeal to that taste however is not remembered in his complete works, but rather in one particular song from an otherwise indifferent opera with libretto by Payne.

Home! Sweet Home! (1823) might be justly said to be more a phenomenon than a mere song: *the greatest home song of all time* (Spaeth 1948, 57), and *an almost sacred text for middle-class Victorians* (Waite and Hunter 1984, 16) yet with an influence starting thirteen years before Victoria's accession and extending world-wide: *Mrs Anna Bishop made it the key work of her concert career, which took her to Africa, India and China, as well as America, North and South* (Austin, 144). Jenny Lind always closed her recitals with the song; one observer wrote ...*the Swedish singing sensation's performance of 'Home! Sweet Home!' had caused such an emotion as I never before experienced; it might be "exquisite home-sickness"...* (quoted in Lott 1993, 191). Another popular diva, Adelina Patti, had it in her repertoire for four decades, using it for an encore (a notoriously difficult spot to fill) with ...*extra top notes...* for additional effect (Willson Disher 1955, 88), and it will come as no surprise that the other great singing sensation of the time, Nellie Melba, used the piece when returning to her native Australia for the first time after achieving world renown, when her rendition, to her own piano accompaniment, left few dry eyes at her opening concert.

As the song percolated into the culture it gained an ubiquity that was to befall other key sentimental 'texts' like *Abide With Me* and *Danny Boy* that was hard to escape. It cropped up in the most unlikely places: it was used in the lesson scene in Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*, and Robert Louis Stevenson (who called the song *wallowing naked in the pathetic*) ...*heard it played by a fiddler on an immigrant train crossing (the) western plains (of America)* (Spaeth 1948, 57).

*'Mid pleasures and Palaces though we may roam,
Be it ever so humble there's no place like home!
A charm from the skies seems to hallow us there,
Which seek through the world, is ne'er met with elsewhere.
Home! Home, sweet sweet Home!
There's no place like Home! There's no place like Home!*

*An Exile from Home, Splendour dazzles in vain!
Oh! give me my lowly thatch'd Cottage again!
The Birds singing gaily that came at my call,
Give me them with the peace of mind dearer than all!
Home! Home, sweet sweet Home!
There's no place like Home! There's no place like Home!
(Home! Sweet Home!)*

Note the excessive use of the exclamation mark and capital letter to signal an overwrought tone, a device borrowed from eighteenth century sentimental literature. (The exclamation marks in the title are frequently omitted: at the expense of consistency I reproduce the punctuation in subsequent quotes about the song as given.) The persuasiveness of the song's theme of 'home' is examined later, but its unprecedented initial success owes much to techniques of repetition and identification, which were utilized in a very modern way. *Home! Sweet Home!* was first featured in *Clari, or The Maid of Milan*, a play with music, adapted from the French (like much else for the stage at that time). Even by the standards of the day the plot was feeble: *Clari*, the peasant heroine has been more or less abducted from her childhood home (which seems to be in a suburb of Milan) by the dashing Duke Vivaldi, who has promised her marriage and nobility but clearly has other plans once she is safely locked in his castle. Much of the action consists of *Clari* ungratefully resisting the Duke, rejecting his gifts and singing 'Home, Sweet Home'. Comic relief is provided by two servants, *Vespina* and *Jocoso*, with the second act given over to a curious *divertissement* in the form of a 'Hamlet'-like play-within-a-play in which the story of *Clari* and the Duke is reenacted by a group of strolling players to no discernible purpose. There is a happy ending after *Clari* breaks through the castle's apparently feeble security system, walks back to her village, confronting her parents who forgive her for permitting herself to be abducted, and is finally united with the conscience-stricken Duke amid the cheers of the villagers (Jackson 1976, 270). Such an unappetising scenario heightens the suspicion that the whole piece was an excuse for an extended essay in pathos, with *Home! Sweet Home!* as its rallying-cry. The song is sung by *Clari* at her first entrance in Act I and is subsequently heard throughout the play (Ibid.). This repetition means the song

becomes a *leitmotif* for both the character of Clari and the theme of home. In this it anticipates film music practice as an example of what Claudia Gorbman calls *connotive cueing*: ...*(it) expressed the moods and connotations which, in conjunction with the images, aid in interpreting narrative events and indicating moral class ethnic values of characters* (Gorbman 1987, 84).

This was to become such a ubiquitous feature of all subsequent dramatic entertainment with music (melodrama - literally a play with music - musicals, and eventually film and television) as to render it a cliché, and an often redundant cliché at that. Eisler and Adorno were to argue that the function of music as a *leitmotif*...*has been reduced to the level of musical lackey, who announces his master with an important air though that eminent personage is clearly recognisable to everyone...* (Ibid., 107).

This however was all still far in the future, and in 1823 *Home! Sweet Home!*'s function as a 'signature' tune was a significant part of its launch on its trajectory of world-wide popularity. Equally important in ensuring this initial appeal was its dramatic context, the way it was 'set up' in the play: it is introduced by Clari not just as a song about her home, but also as a song of her home: *It is the song of my native village, the hymn of the lowly heart, which dwells upon every lip there, and like a spell word brings back to it the affection which e'er has been betrayed to wander from it. It is the first music heard by infancy in its cradle; and our cottagers, blending it with all their earliest and tenderest recollections, never cease to live* (quoted in Spaeth 1948, 56).

It is a clever twist for the (fictional) Clari to endow her signature tune with a (fictional) non-fictionality: being presented as a folk-song *Home! Sweet Home!* is given a documentary *gravitas*. Equally shrewd is the way Clari is made to directly articulate the appeal of the Home song: being like *a spell word* it has a magic ability to call people back.

There is considerable irony in that both Bishop and Payne were dismal advertisements for what their song promoted. (If it indeed it was their song: doubts have been voiced about the originality of both music and words. See Turner 1972 pps.144-5]). Bishop, far from venerating homes, destroyed them, being *...a noted reprobate, home-wrecker and spendthrift...* and Payne, in a suitably pathetic twist, never really had a home of his own. John Howard Payne *...cultivated a number of large, ambitious, unsuccessful plays and was, in general, a failure at everything he attempted, including a love affair with Mary Wollstonecroft Shelley...he was always near poverty and always in debt...* (Jackson, 268). Payne did get engaged *...to appear at Drury Lane and became part of the circle that revolved around Thomas Moore*

(Sanjek 1988 vol.II, 54), and it is tempting to speculate if Moore provided Payne a model for writing self-consciously sad songs. One also wonders whether Payne was influenced by Moore's histrionic personal style: an entry in his diary, found after his death, says plaintively *How often have I been in the heart of Paris, Berlin, London or some other city, and have persons singing or a hand-organ's playing 'Home, Sweet Home', without having a shilling to buy myself the next meal, or a place to lay my head. The world has literally sung my song until every heart is familiar with its melody, yet I have been a wanderer from my boyhood* (Spaeth 1948, 57). Shortly before his death Payne wrote to C. E. Clarke *Surely there is something strange in the fact that it should have been my lot to cause so many people in the world to boast of the delights of home, when I never had a home of my own, and never expect to have one now...* (Ibid., 58).

Like *Woodman, Spare That Tree*, mythology surrounds the song, and one might speculate such legends do something to sustain as well as reflect the song's appeal. There was, for instance, the strange informal law that forbade the playing of *Home! Sweet Home!* on ...calliopes, the steam pianos of the Mississippi show-boats, for superstition had it that the vessel playing the tune would end up on the bottom of the river before next sunset (Turner, 145) and more benignly (and in keeping with its sentimental character) it was sung by both sides during a temporary truce in the American Civil War: *The two armies, locked in fierce and mortal combat, had stopped their killing for the length of a song to share a common emotion* (Silber 1960, 120). Its effects weren't always as beneficent: the musicologist Percy Scholes ...quoted with satisfaction from an Oklahoma newspaper of 1935 to the effect that a local lawyer sang 'Home, Sweet Home' as a plea for clemency toward his client, a bank robber, who was promptly rewarded by the jury with a life sentence (Spaeth 1948, 57).

We have noted the historical precedents for this song: the Home song would be a dominant theme in Stephen Foster's work, and thereafter have an ubiquity in popular song repertoire second only to love songs: Turner (1975) notes as much from a word count of key words in the parlour songs he anthologises.

The resonance of this particular class of song - of which *Home! Sweet Home!* is the archetype - is considered in detail in the final chapter. For the present I merely want to stress its prevalence. I have (at home...) a frame displaying sheet-music covers for four such titles, *I Want To See The Old Home Again*, *Home Once More*, *Home Again* and *The Dear Old Home Songs*. They are in no way remarkable: a casual search would soon uncover four other titles - and it is significant that *The Dear Old Home Songs* (G. B. 1870's) is actually a song about Home songs. It was

not alone, and there are songs concerning *Home! Sweet Home!* itself like Julian Jordan's *The Song That Reached My Heart*, (G.B. 1888), and many more that in some way reprise the title like *In The Harbour of Home, Sweet Home* (U.S.A. 1920's), *That's What Puts the 'Sweet' in Home Sweet Home* (U.S.A. 1928), *Letter From Home Sweet Home* (G.B. 1939), *Down the Road to Home, Sweet Home* (G.B. 1930's), *Irish Home Sweet Home* (U.S.A. 1920's), *Home Sweet Home On The Prairie* (U.S.A. 1930's) and *Home, Sweet Home Again* (G.B.1941). Similarly there have been brand new songs constructed using the original title as in the Calypsonian *Home, Sweet Home* (G.B. 1938), and many more incorporating it in the lyrics - as in Irving Berlin's patriotic anthem which concludes: *God Bless America/ Our Home, Sweet Home* (U.S.A. 1939).

For there to be Home songs celebrating their archetype seems proof enough of that category's popularity. Like other favoured sentimental song themes, it was eventually accorded the tribute of mockery in the sardonic *Any Place That I Make Money (Is 'Home, Sweet Home' to Me)* (U.S.A. 1928), yet very disparate artists found it expeditious to continue featuring (straight) Home songs: the Vaudevillians, Flanagan and Allen, had a hit with *Hometown* (G.B. 1936), and five years later the quasi-operatic Deanna Durbin had a success with *Beneath the Lights of Home* (U.S.A. 1941).

Home songs varied; many remained unspecific about the house or place of origin, whilst others celebrated a particular location. (The original *Home! Sweet Home!* was unspecific; the 1938 *Home, Sweet Home* hymned Trinidad.) One can understand the attraction of achingly exotic places that any of us would be glad to return to: *I Want to Go Back To My Little Grass Shack In Kealakua, Hawaii* (U.S.A. 1930's), *(Home in) Pasadena* (U.S.A 1923) or *My Home In Wyomin'* (U.S.A. 1933). Yet for every such south-sea idyll, balmy orange grove or honeysuckle-entwined cabin nestling in the hills - 'flagged' on the sheet music covers by illustrations of idealized sun-lit visions - other less fanciful destinations were honoured: Aberdeen is doubtless charming, though not perhaps the most immediate choice for an alluring 'wanna-go-back' scenario, yet it boasts at least two fine Home songs, *Aberdeen For Me* (G.B. 1963) and *The Northern Lights Of Old Aberdeen* (G.B. 1951). Even Ashby De La Zouch has its own (eponymous) song (U.S.A. 1945), and again comedy songs, like *I'm Going Back To Himazas (Him 'As 'As The Pub Next Door)* (G.B. 1927), *Omaha, Nebraska* (U.S.A. 1930's) and *Mention My Name In Sheboygan* (U.S.A. 1947), in sending-up the type, proclaim its popularity.

These songs are most obviously and immediately about 'The Power of Place': lost on Life's rocky road we long to return to our place, and regain a sense of

belonging that will replace the anomie and anxiety of the present. (Willson Disher suggests that however specific [and unlikely] the location we 'read' such songs as being about our home [1939, 35]). Yet the power of this archetype rests on something more than a purely geographical nostalgia, and I will be suggesting in the conclusion that the location of 'home', the place where we belong and are at peace, is a metaphor for the blissful state of belonging, of content, we have all known. As age and experience reveal the stark realities of life's evanescence, of loss and decay, we desperately seek a way back 'home'.

Edward Fitzball: a forgotten and admired journeyman

Fitzball was a quiet, sentimental man. 'Gentle Fitzball' was his nickname...He was so much of a hack writer that Britain's august 'Dictionary of National Biography' could not bring itself to mention him.

(Turner 1975, 26)

Edward Fitzball (1792-1873) is probably the least familiar of the writers so far considered; most have reputations that extend into this century (though some, like Haynes Bayly, are remembered only grudgingly, as in *The Cambridge History of English Literature*, which refers to the whole school of lesser poets of his class as 'twitterers' [Cumming 1936, 40]). Fitzball isn't even accorded that doubtful distinction, and is largely forgotten today. Fitzball was a hack, but this is less to stigmatize him than to record that he belonged to the condition of many eighteenth and nineteenth century writers, who, to make a living, displayed a necessary versatility producing journalism, plays, libretti and essays as well as novels, poetry and lyrics. This eclecticism was certainly the case with many of the writers so far considered and doesn't imply, *per se*, either a paucity of talent or lack of originality. Besides, specifically sentimental writing, in common with much popular culture, tends to be about reworking familiar (i.e.'unoriginal') motifs to produce something new. This of course is rarely startlingly new, rather a variation of what has gone before - and such progress is a defining aspect of the tradition. The sentimental lyrics of Burns or Moore derive both from their own, similar, work - one piece is often virtually indistinguishable from another - and from earlier writers in the tradition. In these respects they were therefore no less hacks than Fitzball, and although they are remembered for non-sentimental work, one feels it is their extra-literary reputations (Moore as a member of Byron's 'set' and Burns as a nationalist icon) that partly

recommends them to posterity. It is unfortunate for Fitzball, moreover, that the areas where he was most productive and influential - melodrama and sentimental song - are little regarded today.

That he was influential in his day is undeniable: Fitzball was central in the establishment of nautical melodrama as a sub-genre (its tone and subject-matter derived significantly from Dibdin) and his plays were some of the most frequently performed in the populist theatrical 'interregnum' between Goldsmith and Wilde. He was not only a prolific and successful melodramatist, but an innovatory one too, as for instance when he presented simultaneous action playing in different areas in a four room cross-section scene in *Jonathan Bradford, or The Murder at the Roadside Inn* (1833; Booth 1965, 141).

Melodrama and sentimental song are similar in that they are both concerned with eliciting immoderate emotional response. Fitzball's songs were as popular as his plays: if one uses the number of appearances in contemporary anthologies as a measure of success, it is interesting to see how he comes out ahead of more familiar names. For instance in *The Exhibition Song Album No.1*, a typical song collection from the 1870's, the number of songs per writer is as follows:

Fitzball	5
Foster	4
Moore	3
Bayly	2
Dibdin	1
Burns	1

Fitzball provided lyrics for the Vauxhall pleasure-garden and was a librettist for Michael Balfe's early operas, and one of his few remembered pieces is *Let Me Like a Soldier Fall* from William Vincent Wallace's opera *Maritana*. However, because his more explicitly sentimental material did not survive, it might be considered a particularly pure example of current taste. Also, having no wider literary aspirations, Fitzball can be seen to represent that taste in a very unambiguous way. His songs indeed articulate the sentimental 'credo' in a remarkably explicit fashion: he refers directly in one to *...sweet, tho' sad, regret...* in another to *...pity's voice revealing...* and gives his own account of 'liquid virtue' in the couplet *Let this little tear proclaim Mother, I was not to blame.*

The extent of Moore's influence is apparent again and Fitzball re-works Moore's floral theme:

*There is a flower that bloometh,
 When autumn leaves are shed,
 With the silent moon it weepeth,
 The spring and summer fled.
 The scaly frost of winter,
 Scarce its brow hath overcast,
 Oh! pluck it ere it withers,
 'Tis the meaning of the past.
 Oh! pluck it ere it withers,
 'Tis the meaning of the past.
 It wafteth perfume o'er us,
 Which few can e'er forget;
 Of the bright scenes gone before us,
 Of sweet, tho' sad regret...*

('There Is a Flower That Bloometh')

Here he directly - unsubtly - contends what Moore only implies, that the flower signifies the past. In another song he uses music as a link not to a lost past, as in Moore, but to death. Here - like Russell - he moves death 'centre-stage' in typical nineteenth century manner (with typical nineteenth century infelicities, as in line four):

*Alas! those chimes...so sweetly stealing
 Gently dulcet, gently dulcet to the ear
 Sound like pity's voice revealing,
 To the dying, death is near.
 Still he slumbers how serenely!
 Not a sigh disturbs his rest;
 Oh! that angels now might waft him
 To the mansions of the blest.
 Oh! that angels now might waft him
 To the mansions of the blest.*

*Yes, those chimes...so sweetly stealing,
 As from some holy sphere above,
 As from some holy sphere above,
 Sound like hymns of spirits telling,
 To the dying, death is near.
 Come! abide with us in heaven,
 Come! approving angels wait thee;
 In the mansions of the blest.
 Come! approving angels wait thee;
 In the mansions of the blest.*

('Alas! Those Chimes So Sweetly Stealing')

The song's ending, with its ecstatic redemptiveness, is reminiscent of Watts or Wesley. Such religious optimism is markedly lacking in another piece:

*Scenes that are brightest
May charm for a while,
Hearts that are lightest,
And eyes that smile:
Yet o'er them above us,
Though nature beam,
With none to love us,
How sad they seem.
With none to love us,
How sad they seem.*

*Words cannot scatter,
The thoughts that we fear,
For though they flatter,
They mock the ear.
Hopes will deceive us,
With tearful cost,
And when they leave us,
The heart is lost.
And when they leave us,
The heart is lost.*

('Scenes That Are Brightest')

Ostensibly a love-lament, the song also points to the (pathetic) ubiquity of the truth - a truth that *words cannot scatter* - that behind all *bright moments* nothing lasts: love, youth, or life itself. This is easy to dismiss as a psychological phenomenon, that of morbidity; might it not equally be construed as a philosophical statement of 'aloneness-in-the-world'? Schopenhauer has already been mentioned in relation to Moore's lyrics; it seems his formal articulation of a pessimism unknown before the nineteenth century found informal (and possibly unconscious) expression in popular culture like sentimental song.

Stephen Foster, the poignant professional: the plantation song and much more

All Foster's songs yearn for the 'Good Old Days'. But their yearning is not innocent, as real folk music is, since they express modern man's consciousness of that loss. That is why, in no discreditable way, they are sentimental...

(Wilfred Mellers in Sadie and Latham 1985, 503)

Stephen Foster is one of the giants of western popular music tradition, a musician whose work is known the world over and who, with Tom Moore, provides the standard by which popular songs were judged for most of the nineteenth century. Foster's tragically premature death was felt as keenly in London as New York (Austin 1975, xv) for like Moore he enjoyed transatlantic success (although the commerce now was in the opposite direction). As in Moore there is a strong (some would say dominant) sentimental flavour to his writing, but being nearer to us in time his writing appears less archaic. Moore, although representing the intersection between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, is essentially a romantic *littérateur*; Foster represents the nineteenth century professionalization of song-writing, its transformation into yet another area of capitalist endeavour. Foster was the most obviously talented of all the writers so far considered: apart from his familiar 'hits' he produced sprightly polkas, elegant quasi-operatic duets and rousing war songs, revealing himself as a fluent and inspired delineator of very disparate song styles (see for instance Nonesuch H-71268 and H-71333 for authentic performances of a range of his work). This surely reflects the fact that Foster was a more thorough-going professional than previous writers in the sense that, firstly, as a formally trained musician steeped in earlier popular music he was ideally suited to produce work in several styles, and secondly he was among the first to make his living solely from doing so. Nearly always writing both words and music, his songs, like those of later lyricist/composers like Berlin and Porter, have a seamless quality not always evident in collaborative work. This integrated feel to his writing may have been a factor in its success: from the two hundred-plus songs he wrote there emerged a greater body of enduring work than from any other writer so far considered. Much of this - maybe two thirds - is sentimental, although in very contrasting styles: elaborate Italianate confections, *faux*-folky Hibernian and Caledonian influenced numbers, as well as the limpid simplicity of Foster's most 'classic' work, the plantation song. To speak of Foster's *...leaning towards sentimentality...* as Spaeth does (1948, 108) seems an understatement.

This emphasis should be of no surprise given two axiomatic facts: firstly there is considerable evidence (see Austin 1975, 111f.) to suggest that Foster, like the rest of his family, was by temperament very sentimental (even by the standards of a much more sentimental age); secondly it also seems highly likely that the unfolding pathos of his own life reinforced this tendency: there was much to pity, and an increasing reliance on alcohol fed self-pity. Foster was born in 1826 - the year of Jefferson's death - into a comfortable middle-class family outside Pittsburgh. He was however regarded from the first as something of a problem child, and his life was rarely tranquil and never settled (he moved several times before he was out of his teens). His marriage to Jane McDonald, a doctor's daughter, was disastrous. Increasingly bereft of those he loved - his parents and his daughter Marion - he drifted into alcoholism, selling songs written on discarded wrapping-paper for drink. Reduced to living in seedy rooming-houses whilst in one such on the Bowery he fell on a wash-stand and badly cut himself - ironically due to fever not alcohol. He was admitted to a charity hospital, but died two days later, leaving in his wallet thirty eight cents, and a scrap of paper with the words *Dear friends and gentle hearts* (a possible song title?). He was not yet forty.

An unsettled, unhappy life then, and it is tempting to ascribe his 'working' of melancholy in his sentimental songs directly to it: *If Stephen had never smiled, he might have been excused...* (Austin 1975, 119). Commentators who favour this view (Spaeth 1948, Austin 1975) have claimed he equated music *...with pain and sorrow...* (Austin 1975, 111), ignoring the fact that a significant strain in his work is humorous.

A more persuasive explanation might be that he chose in part to utilize an existing song tradition like the sentimental one, with its potential for pathos, both to articulate his own emotions and to make a living by exploiting a proven musical model. (Much as musically talented Blacks in the 'twenties utilized the Blues tradition both to express deep feelings and to pay their way.) Thus a Foster song like *Farewell, Old Cottage*, has at once a special resonance for him (he was particularly distraught at the early move from his birth place), as well as being a contribution to an existing tradition of sentimental 'house' songs (a sub-genre of the Home song) established by Lady Nairne and Haynes Bayly.

It is indeed remarkable how deeply he was immersed in the comparatively young sentimental song tradition: enough documentary evidence exists to suggest the extent to which he was formed by it. His early life, for instance, involves exposure to many of the 'key texts' already mentioned; consider the following:

(i) the earliest reported musical memory is of him, aged five, marching with a drum and whistling *Auld Lang Syne*; although aware of more 'elevated' music - for instance Beethoven and the Operatic composers ...*what sounded at home was typified by 'Auld Lang Syne' (1788) and 'Home, Sweet Home'(1823)...* (Austin 1975, 110);

(ii) Foster's older sister Charlotte - to die tragically at twenty - was a keen performer of the songs of Bishop and Haynes Bayly;

(iii) eighteenth century songs must also have been available in the Foster home, for some of his earlier work shows the influence ...*of the songs written...for Vauxhall and the other pleasure gardens* (Hamm 1979, 205);

(iv) his debt to Moore and Russell was obvious, although it was the former who exerted the stronger influence: *He'd studied Tom Moore's books of songs very carefully* (Whitcomb 1994, 305, and see Austin 1975, 233; Hamm 1979, 205, 214, 215; Hamm 1983, 235, 239, 240).

Moore's defining tone of nostalgia for lost youth and lost times is also Foster's, and Foster at times expresses this in a lyric writing style that is pure Moore: *There seems little doubt that his language as a poet was shaped in large part by Moore...* (Hamm 1979, 217). Especially in his earlier career Foster seems almost to be pastiching Moore: he even adopted the *nom de plume* 'Milton Moore' for some early work and set the words of one of Moore's disciples, Denis MacCarthy. The McCarthy lyric, *Summer Longings*, and Foster's own *Ah! May the Red Rose Live Alway* show the potency of Moore's legacy: (This style of song simply didn't exist before him.)

*Spring goes by with wasted warnings,
Moonlight evenings, sunbright mornings;
Summer comes, yet dark and dreary
Life still ebbs away.
Man is ever weary, weary...*

('Summer Longings')

*Lulled be the dirges in the cypress bough,
That tells of departed flowers!
Ah! that the butterfly's gilded wings
Fluttered in evergreen bowers!
Sad is my heart for the blighted plants -
Its pleasures are aye as brief -
They bloom at the young year's joyfull call,
And fade with the autumn leaf.*

('Ah! May the Red Rose Live Alway')

If Moore is the key influence, Russell's example is also important for ...*Foster heard him in Pittsburg and was inspired to imitate Russell's songs* (Sanjek vol. II, 64). If *Ah! May the Red Rose Live Alway* is homage to Moore - (it ...*evokes, more than an echo of the deep nostalgia of Moore's 'Irish Melodies', specifically 'The Last Rose of Summer'*, [Hamm 1979, 205]) - then *Farewell, Old Cottage ...is Foster's tribute to Henry Russell*; ...*it is so reminiscent of Russell's Italianate ballads that it appears a parody, with even the lithograph reminding one of those decorating the covers of the older composer's more popular songs* (Ibid., 220). Here Foster incorporates Russell's penchant for 'old' motifs - homes, arm-chairs, trees, showing how stylistically defined the sentimental song tradition had become in such a short time.

The sometime philanthropic cast of Foster's work can also be attributed to Russell: whilst he had none of that writer's reforming zeal Foster's pro-Union songs like *We Are Coming Father Abra'am* and *Better Times Are Coming* are unequivocal and practical in their clear moral endorsement of Lincoln's policies. This moral dimension is perhaps inherited from sentimentality's eighteenth century roots, although Foster's celebrated *Hard Times Come Again No More*, whilst a personal plea for a better world, is also - typically - very pathetic. (Foster had heard Dickens on one of his lecture tours, and the song's title is supposedly inspired by the recent Dickens novel.)

By both temperament and influence therefore Foster may be regarded as *au fond* a sentimentalist. In him one has a remarkable example of sentimentality in Life (both *a priori* in his temperament and *a posteriori* in his sad life) and Art (in his thorough professional grasp of that song tradition) existing symbiotically. His importance for this study is therefore a compound of a considerable innate talent, shaped and harnessed by an immersion in the sentimental song tradition, the whole mediated by a personality with a natural affinity for sentimentality. The sureness of his touch enabled him both to shore up existing areas of the tradition as well as expand sentimentality to new areas of popular song. Moore's tone is heard in much of his work, and stayed with Foster all his life; it can be deduced from song titles alone - *Our Bright Summer Days Are Gone*, *Old Memories* and *The Voice Of By-Gone Days*. Mooresque melancholy finds particularly poignant expression in his last songs like *Beautiful Dreamer* and *Down in the Canebreak* (...*Once I could laugh and play/ When in life's early day...*). Here the contrasting of a bright happy past with the grim present is no poetic conceit (as in Moore), but reflective of the all-too-real destitution and loneliness of Foster's final months in New York. Moore's lyric sentimentality, full of vague yearning, was extended to new areas like the plantation songs and even informs Foster's *Old Dog Tray*, his 'contribution' to the evolving

sentimental dog song tradition. Tray was a very different creature from Russell's heroic *Carlo (The Newfoundland Dog)*. In a genre where we have come to expect dogs either to rescue someone or die (or, if it can be arranged, both) Tray does neither. He stands rather as an exemplar of stolid 'dogginess' in dog/human relations: affection and loyalty unquestionably given - but principally he is the focus for another elegy for the old days *à la Moore*:

*The morn of life is past,
And evening comes at last;
It brings me a dream of a once happy day,
Of merry forms I've seen
Upon the village green,
Sporting with my old dog Tray.*

(Chorus):
*Old dog Tray's ever faithful,
Grief cannot drive him away.
He's gentle, he's kind;
I'll never, never find
A better friend than old dog Tray*

*The forms I call'd my own
Have vanished one by one,
The lov'd ones, the dear ones have all passed away.
Their happy smiles have flown,
Their gentle voices gone;
I've nothing left but old dog Tray.*

(Chorus)

*When thoughts recall the past
His eyes are on me cast;
I know that he feels what my breaking heart would say.
Although he cannot speak
I'll vainly, vainly seek
A better friend than old dog Tray.*

(Chorus)

('Old Dog Tray')

Tray was hugely popular in his day, both in America with initial sheet music sales of fifty thousand, and England, where he merited a (slighting) mention in the Rev. Haweis' *Music and Morals: Even 'Old Dog Tray', a really pathetic thing, seems dead*

at last... (Haweis 1882, 548). Given our national predilection for pets this is perhaps understandable. Also animals, in both their loyalty and simple emotionality, can be a richer source of pathos and a keener analogue of the 'feeling heart' than humans. (In Western song there is a rich literature of faithful horse songs; the late Leonard Slye - 'Roy Rogers' - made a speciality of them, culminating in *A Four-Legged Friend* [1952, Brooks]: *He's honest and faithful, right up to the end/ That wonderful/ One, two, three, four-legged friend.*)

One doesn't need to be a Foster specialist to realize how another aspect of the tradition, the Home song, was incorporated in his *oeuvre*: two of his best-known pieces reveal as much in their titles - *Old Folks At Home* and *My Old Kentucky Home, Goodnight!* The first of these songs is ... *the best known of all Stephen Foster's songs, and deservedly so, for it ranks with 'Home, Sweet Home' as one of the world's great home songs. It is sung in almost every language known to man ... (and) its appeal is so universal that it has gone beyond the limits of nationalism, of race, and of time* (Howard 1946, 87).

There was also *Do They Miss Me At Home?* and *Do They Think Of Me At Home?* His song that most directly celebrates the pleasures of home and hearth is *Happy Hours At Home*:

*I sit me down by my own fireside
When the winter nights come on,
And I calmly dream, as the dim hours glide,
Of many pleasant scenes now gone;
Of heathful plays in my schoolboy days,
That can never come again;
Of summer joys and Christmas toys,
And rambles o'er the stream.*

(Chorus)

*Happy hours at home!
Happy hours at home!
Happy hours at home!
How the moments glide
By the bright fireside,
In the happy hours at home.*

*I sit me down by my own fireside
Where the children sport in glee,
While the clear young voice of our household pride
Makes melody that's dear to me.
And by ev'ry art that can charm the heart,
They allure my cares away ,*

*To prepare my soul as the swift hours roll,
For the duties of the coming day.*

(Chorus)

('Happy Hours At Home')

Despite the seemingly ubiquitous ... *pleasant scenes now gone ... that can never come again...* the tone of this piece is one of a domestic tranquillity familiar from other Home songs. Foster worked this sub-genre throughout his career: a posthumously published piece written in collaboration with George Cooper has the line *Dear is the welcome when homeward we rove* (Dearer Than Life!). Recalling the situation of the 'homeless' John Howard Payne, the lyricist of *Home! Sweet Home!*, it is piquant to consider how Foster - with no settled home of his own - nonetheless wrote so effectively (and extensively) of such a haven.

To see Foster's songs only as talented précis of what had gone before however would be quite incorrect: as previously stated he extended the subject-matter of sentimental song. This is possibly to do with the fact that his work, despite the extremes of his timeless hits and some really hack pieces (for instance having written *I Would Not Die In Spring Time* in 1850 he wrote *I Would Not Die In Summer Time* the following year, and under the pseudonym of 'J. H. Milton' *I Would Not Die In Winter*; John Hill Hewitt terminated the series with the publication in 1852 of his *I Would Not Die At All*) had a higher than usual standard, and more of his pieces had at least a temporary popularity. A measure of quality of his work can also be gleaned by the extent to which even his song titles were prescient of later Tin Pan Alley sentimental song: he wrote *Old Memories* (1853) and *I See Her Still In My Dreams* (1857) thereby possibly influencing the Alley lyricist Gus Kahn who produced *Memories* in 1915 and *I'll See You In My Dreams* in 1924. Similarly Foster's *Nelly Was A Lady* (1848/9) and *I Cannot Sing Tonight* (1853) prefigure 1890's pop standards like *Mother Was A Lady* (Edward B. Marks, Joseph Stern, 1894) and *Ring Down The Curtain, I Can't Sing Tonight* (Robert H. Brennen, Pauline B. Story, 1902). In looking at Foster's complete catalogue one is also aware of certain recurring themes that suggest new categories of song. For instance there is a sub-section of songs entirely about absent young women; sometimes they are asleep, but mostly they are dead: *There are precious few who* (like 'Gentle Lena Clare') *apparently remain alive and well at the song's finish. The fatality list is grim: Annie* (of 'Annie My Own Love'); 'Cora Dean' (described as the fairest of 'all Long Island's lovely daughters');

Ella (of 'Little Ella's an Angel'); 'Ellen Bayne'; 'Eulalie' (the 'bride of death, lost Eulalie'); *Eva* (of 'My Loved One and Own'); 'Jeannie With the Light Brown Hair'; 'Laura Lee'; *Lena* (of 'Lena Our Loved One Dies Tonight'); *Lula* (of 'Lula is Gone'); *Lula* (of 'Where Has Lula Gone'); *Mary* (of 'Where Is Thy Spirit, Mary'); *Nell* (of 'Nell and I'); *Nelly* (of 'Nelly Was a Lady'); 'Virginia Belle' (Jackson 1974, 175). I also found *Little Belle Blair* and *Little Jenny Dow*. Whilst the eponymous heroine of *Lizzie Dies Tonight* is the most unequivocal of all these fatalities, the most appealing is surely *Gentle Annie*: ... (it) is one of Foster's tenderest songs, and although it is highly sentimental, it is far from saccharine and is definitely superior to the general run of 'under the willow' and 'standing at the grave' ballads which flooded the song-market in these years (Jackson 197, 175). It was inspired by an actual event - the accidental death of a neighbour's daughter - and its unremarkable (if typical) lyrics are wedded - as so often with Foster - to a modestly appropriate and affecting little tune:

*Thou wilt come no more, gentle Annie,
Like a flow'r thy spirit did depart;
Thou art gone, alas! like the many
That have bloomed in the summer of my heart.*

(Chorus):

*Shall we never more behold thee;
Never hear thy winning voice again
When the Spring-time comes, Gentle Annie,
When the wild flow'rs are scattered o'er the plain.*

*We have roamed and loved mid the bowers,
When thy downy cheeks were in their bloom;
Now I stand alone mid the flowers,
While they mingle their perfumes o'er thy tomb.*

(Chorus)

*Ah! The hours grow sad while I ponder
Near the silent spot where thou art laid,
And my heart bows down when I wander
By the streams and the meadows where we stray'd.*

(Chorus)

('Gentle Annie')

There were unfortunate male protagonists too - as in *Willie's Gone To Heaven*, *Larry's Goodbye* and *Our Willie Dear Is Dying* - but they did not constitute such a numerous group as the girls. This focusing - one hesitates to say 'harping' - on death is typical of the time and serves to differentiate Foster from the earlier writers. Fitzball and Russell had used death as a theme for some songs (for instance *There Is A Flower That Bloometh* and *The Old Sexton* respectively) but Foster specifically and continuously evokes death, especially child death, as the prime cause of that melancholy (as in the above songs). The nineteenth century's obsession with death is much remarked on; it is seen as their *idée fixe* as sex is ours. This is reflective of two related social facts: that mid-nineteenth century culture was both more touched by death, and much less reticent about talking about it. It is easy for us to forget the extent to which *Life was interrupted by death...Anyone who lived long would have to memorialise many deaths: Gladstone recorded, among others, those of his parents, his infant daughter, and a sister-in-law who died at 44 of puerperal fever after the death of her 12th child... A.C. Tait, a future Archbishop of Canterbury, ...lost five children to scarlet fever in five weeks...* (Kermode 1996 in section 7, 7). (And of course Foster's own family was similarly affected: his elder sister Charlotte was dead at twenty and two brothers died in infancy.)

The way Foster dealt with death in his songs is also typical of his time in that, whilst recording its fact in an almost celebratory way, he also stressed the redemptive power of religion in 'conquering' death. Thus whilst for Moore lost love and departed friends lived only in memory, for Foster memory might offer temporary consolation, but those lost feelings and people would live again on the Other Side. Religion was central in defining nineteenth century culture, and a key concept was that of unequivocal redemption: death is not the end and everything would be made right in heaven. In this sense Foster (and those who followed him) linked two elements of the sentimental song tradition: the ecstatic religiosity of the non-conformist hymns and the celebration of melancholy. This is not to say earlier writers reflected necessarily less religious times, but that a quasi-religious factor now invaded secular song (a fact we examine later). As the century progressed these elements increasingly melded to produce a fervent hybrid whose defining line was that, however bad things might be in this Vale of Tears, reconciliation, reunion and eternal bliss awaited. Given the high incidence of child mortality we can accept Foster's songs like *Under The Willow She's Sleeping*, which relate that fact in nineteenth century expressive mode (*Under the willow I breath prayer Longing to linger forever/ Near to my angel with golden hair In lands where there's no sorrowing never*). Here at least we have an obvious cause for extreme sentimentality;

what is less easy for us to understand, perhaps, is the way the nineteenth century seemed 'in love' with death to the extent of seeing it everywhere, even in happy events: ...*a wedding inevitably suggested a requiem...* (Howard, 175) as in Foster's *The Village Maiden*:

*The village bells are ringing,
And merrily they chime;
The village choir is singing,
For 'tis a happy time;
The chapel walls are laden
With garlands rich and gay,
To greet the village maiden
Upon her wedding day.*

*But summer joys have faded
And summer hope has flown;
Her brow with grief is shaded,
Her happy smiles are gone;
Yet why her heart is laden,
Not one, alas! can say,
Who saw the village maiden
Upon her wedding day.*

*The village bells are ringing,
But hark, how sad and slow,
The village choir is singing
A requiem soft and low;
And all with sorrow laden
Their tearful tribute pay
Who saw the village maiden
Upon her wedding day.*

('The Village Maiden')

This piece anticipates somewhat the 1940's hit *Les Trois Cloches* (Jimmy Brown). But while this later song traces a life from birth to death, giving it a philosophical cast, Foster's song seems only self-indulgently morbid (the happiness at its beginning is merely invoked the better to demonstrate death's awful capriciousness). Standing back a little, and seeing the song in its cultural context again helps explain its 'stance': *Foster was...a child of his time and somehow felt the currents of sentimentalism which engulfed the writers and musicians of all nations. It became almost a world fashion to sing of sorrow and death with longing and anticipation* (Howard, 175).

Foster's most bleakly self-pitying songs, like much of Moore's repertoire, offer no religious consolation and are in addition devoid of much of the poetic prettiness that mediates Moore's melancholy:

*Why have my loved ones gone,
Like the dew 'neath the early sun?
Why am I left alone,
When all their troubles are done?
My days of youth have passed away
And the shades of life are near,
But I still remain to mourn the happy days
When dear departed friends were here.*

(Chorus)

*Why have my lov'd ones gone,
Gone to return no more
Calmly gliding o'er a summer sea
Whilst I'm left plodding on the shore?
Why have my loved ones gone,
From the joys and pains of life?
Why do I still live on,
Alone to battle in the strife?
Alone to struggle in the fray
Till my earthly cares are done;
While the young, the fair have vanish'd from the day,
Before their sorrows had begun.*

(Chorus)

*Why have my loved ones gone,
While the springtime is on the breeze?
Gliding the hillside farm,
And breathing music thro' the trees?
The birds are singing in the air,
And the flow'rs are in their bloom;
All things around are beautiful and fair,
But still my spirit lies in gloom.*

(Chorus)

('Why Have My Loved Ones Gone?')

This is self-pity on a scale so far unencountered; some have attempted to contextualise it by seeing it as a proto-blues or a threnody in nineteenth century wrapping: *Songs of this genre were in a very real sense the 'torch songs' of the Civil*

War decade and for a considerable time thereafter. Musically they were wholly unlike the 'blues songs' of our day which tell of lovers vanishing. Yet Foster's self-pity songs voice fundamentally the same emotions (Howard, 183). This seems a little fanciful: for one thing Blues and Torch songs are quite distinct phenomena, and in both self-pity is only an occasional component. Foster's self-pity by contrast is oceanic, his songs reflecting both public taste for such material and his own predilection for it. The reference to the Blues (whilst unhelpful) is perhaps understandable given that his most distinguished body of work, the plantation songs, are ostensibly about black life. Actually Foster had little knowledge of negro culture, and attempts to link him with black song experience fail because his music is so patently European, and his lyrics clearly an artifice deriving from sentimentality rather than lived black experience. His situation is therefore like Moore and Burns: all exploited sentimental possibilities of 'colourful' cultures at the expense of 'authenticity.' Foster's 'negro' songs derive their racial character principally from minstrelsy, the nineteenth century tradition of white performers 'blacking-up' to present versions of negro life in song and sketches.

The link between the minstrel song and the mainstream of nineteenth century popular music is a complex one, made more problematic by the fact that the minstrel song evolved through distinct stages starting with itinerant solo performances and ending with lavish shows presented by large troupes. Early in its history it had a rumbustious eccentricity that might not have been to middle-class taste, yet within a short time it was helping define that very taste. This was largely due to an increasing sentimentalization of its repertoire: *The core of the minstrel repertoire during the 1840's and 50's was this new type of 'plantation song', with musical and poetical ties to sentimental balladry...* (Hamm 1979, 137) *...minstrelsy became a vehicle for the dissemination of...American popular music...including sentimental song...* (Malone 1993, 55). Thereafter the minstrel song and the minstrel show were increasingly part of the mainstream of entertainment on both sides of the Atlantic, an early example of 'all-round' family fare as comments on the celebrated Christy troupe show: *Unlike some of the earlier black-face acts, this was a family show, suitable for a family audience ...E.P.Christy was concerned with taste; with decorous words...* (Austin 1975, 17).

One proof of minstrelsy's popularity can be gauged by evoking what might be called 'The Prince of Wales Factor'. This hypothesis cites the situation of a Prince of Wales - that of fun-loving, man-about-town - as being an ideal one for the elucidation of fashionable musical taste. Thus in the 1930's the more *soignée* end of the British Dance Band scene received an imprimatur by virtue of the Prince of

Wales's habit of 'sitting-in' on drums whilst at smart clubs like *Ciro's* or *The Berkeley*. Similarly in the 1880's minstrelsy received the royal assent when the then Prince of Wales took banjo lessons (and became adept enough to duet with the American virtuoso, Vess Ossman). There is no doubt about minstrelsy's significance as a theatrical and musical phenomenon in the last century. It was one of the most powerful forces in the development of the popular music industry in the nineteenth century, specifically in the area of music publishing. (For instance one of the key English popular music publishing houses was formed by an alliance between rival minstrels Harry Hunter and the Francis brothers). Similarly, the combined impetus of minstrelsy and the Civil War gave the American publishing houses a more competitive edge that prepared the way for Tin Pan Alley.

However, minstrelsy's *raison d'être*, its presentation of putative negro life, has attracted much subsequent adverse comment. It has been perceived, for instance, as a *commodicisation of blackness for a white audience* (Lott 1993, 171); worse still the black experience represented, although largely benign, is also largely fraudulent - and expresses both overt and covert racial hostility. This reading ascribes a (malign) significance to minstrelsy in the wider debate on the development of race relations in the nineteenth century. Such judgements mitigate against serious study of the repertoire, yet it is this very constructed ('fraudulent') aspect of minstrelsy's presentation of slave life on the plantations in the Southern states of America that has importance for the development of sentimental song. This is due to the situation and psychology of these presentations.

The situation of the Southern plantation was ideal for the representation of sentimentality in that it possessed a pastoralism similar to the Irish and Scots traditions, yet arguably more exotic, more apart; the South was, of course, responsible for a whole litany of lushness in pop: magnolias, cotton-fields, whippoorwills. It also shared with the Celtic visions in its Edenic, 'land-of-lost-content'-ness. Arguably the Civil War was partly about the South's perception of itself as such a place, an 'older' society of ordered serenity in an increasingly brutish world. The fact that this society was predicated on slavery is not the point: the South sacrificed itself for a certain, sentimental, vision of the way things should be. This idealised South is truly magical ...*as pictured in Foster's songs (it) is a dreamlike paradise of eternal sunshine, happiness and music. It is the home of all cherished loved ones and friends; it is the source of all cherished memories. It is a land where even back-breaking labor in the fields or on the docks is somehow pleasant. It is the haven to which all long to return, either to live or die* (Jackson 1974, 174). This would have been a particularly potent vision to the nineteenth century because it

...spoke at once to restless migrants moving west, recently transplanted rural folk in cities, and rootless urban dwellers beginning to experience the anomie of urban life; turning the South into a kind of timeless lost home, a safe, imaginary childhood, these (plantation) songs proved extremely satisfying to a wide variety of white audiences (Alexander Saxton quoted in Lott 1993, 190).

The situation of the plantation however is also the situation of the slave. Slavery - humans denied freedom - is intrinsically pathetic, and this had already been invoked by essayists like Defoe, as well as song-writers like Dibdin and Russell. (The sentimentalisation of slave life in theatre song was well established by the end of the eighteenth century, and pieces like *The Poor Black Boy* [G.B.1794] were well-known on both sides of the Atlantic.)

In addition to its pathetic potentiality slavery was becoming an increasingly visible 'social issue' - whether via Wilberforce or Mrs Beecher Stowe - and this provided an additional philanthropic *frisson* associated with the most satisfying sentimental response.

The psychology of plantation life concerned the near universal depiction of the negro as innocent and naïve, with a child-like open-ness to emotion; if exuberance, vanity and occasional dissembling were represented, it was always within this child-like frame. This might be seen as offensive stereotyping at one level, but at another it makes the slave perfect as an exemplar of 'the feeling heart'. (...*He never kill de lovin' heart/ Of the Poor Back Boy...*) The negro's continual expression of such direct emotionality despite the way the world buffets his simple trust is directly analogous to the way Ur-sentimental heroes like Harley, in Mackenzie's *The Man of Feeling*, are presented. (...*There's still a faithful soul and true/ In the Poor Back Boy...*)

The condition of slavery offers more potential poignancy than Mackenzie could ever provide for even a 'professional' sentimentalist like Harley. This perception of the situation and psychology of the negro in minstrelsy above all allowed for a general 'heightening' of sentimentality in songs: *It uses the black mask to intensify pathos* (Austin, 233) - and the man who most successfully and inventively utilized these perceptions was Stephen Foster. This sentimentalising of slave life might seem offensive to modern sensibilities, yet it allowed Foster to do something remarkable: by harnessing sentimentality to plantation life, Foster, far from being racially suspect, was able to present a radically new version of slave life where all men - masters and slaves alike - are subject to a single emotional imperative. This derives from sentimentality's original optimistic egalitarian ideal of all stations united by the fundamental signifiers of tears and a 'feeling heart'. Thus

slaves in Foster's songs are presented not as exotics or savages (or even as oppressed) but - at least in matters of the heart - as equals. Thus, however uncongenial the dialect and stereotyping of the negro in the songs (*...a white man's idea of black men's speech ...*[Lott, 171]), Foster, a-political and having none of the crusading zeal of a Russell, was able to bring about the beginnings of a sea-change in white perceptions of blacks. This might seem *...a small step from our perspective, but it was important in the conscience-raising process necessary to bring whites to the point of regarding slavery as a crime and a sin* (Hamm 1979, 212).

Like Beecher Stowe, Foster used sentimentality to broaden the appeal of existing representations of negro life: it is salutary to remember that the minstrel show - where many of his songs started their life - was a crucial instrument of information for many white people about black life.

All these aspects of Foster's writing can be seen to advantage in a remarkable series of seven plantation songs he wrote in a five year period between 1848 and 1853. These include three of his best known songs, and all have some element of the strong dialect that marks out his most ostensibly 'black' material:

<i>Old Uncle Ned</i>	1848
<i>Nelly was a Lady</i>	1849
<i>Oh! Boys, Carry Me 'Long</i>	1851
<i>Old Folks at Home</i>	1851
<i>Farewell My Lilly Dear</i>	1851
<i>Massa's in de Cold Ground</i>	1852
<i>My Old Kentucky Home, Good-Night!</i>	1853

These songs are united by a mood of sadness - tears are directly mentioned in four of them - and all have an extravagant melancholy. Arguably this extravagance of expression is only possible because of the greater perceived lability of the negro personality: not only does *'...the black mask intensify the pathos...'* but the negro is allowed to display self-pity to an extent that would be unseemly for a white bourgeoisie. This is more excessive than in previously cited songs, and again invokes sentimentality's eighteenth century origins: one is closer here in spirit to Mackenzie or Lillo than Moore or Bayly. There is no doubt this less muted approach worked, as the writer Thackeray attested: *I heard a humorous balladist not long ago, a minstrel with wool on his head and an ultra-Ethiopian complexion, who performed a negro ballad that I confess moistened these spectacles in a most unexpected manner. I have gazed at thousands of tragedy queens dying on the stage, and expiring in appropriate blank verse, and I never wanted to wipe them. They have looked up, be it said, at many scores of clergymen without being dimmed, and behold! a vagabond*

with a corked face and a banjo sings a little song, strikes a wild note, which sets the heart thrilling with happy pity (quoted in Lott, 187).

In this sense the negro in the plantation song is also a purer example of the 'feeling heart' and his more efficient link to that heart allows his more restrained (repressed?) audience a vicarious enjoyment of an intensity not to be found in the more circumspect drawing-room songs. Foster's genius was to set off the high emotion of his lyrics - which could be seen as almost too much - by placing them in the most exquisitely simple of musical settings. Contemporary musicologists who searched for authentic negro musical influences were doomed to disappointment. Charles Mackay, the journalist and musician (who had provided lyrics for Russell and edited the songs of both Burns and Moore) ...*considered the airs called 'negro melodies' (are) 'concocted for the most part in New York', as merely 'refacimenti' of old English, Scottish and Irish tunes* (Henderson 1908, vi).

The lyrics of these seven plantation songs all evoke a sadness derived from some notion of loss; in three (*Kentucky Home*, *Old Folks*, and *Lilly*) this is occasioned by enforced exile. In the remainder imminent or recent death is the cause. In all but one the extent of the loss is evoked by poignant description of the idyllic plantation that dispossession or death will now forever deny. These evocations are lush pastorals that owe more to a colouring-book view of Eden than the reality of the cotton fields in the pre-bellum South:

*The corntops ripe and the meadows is in boom,
While the birds make music all the day...*
(*'My Old Kentucky Home, Goodnight!'*)

*We wander through the clover
Down by the riverside...*
(*'Farewell My Lilly Dear'*)

*One little hut among the bushes
One that I love,
Still sadly to My mem'ry rushes
No matter where I rove,
When will I see the bees a-humming
All round de comb?...*
(*'Old Folks at Home'*)

*Farewell to de hills
De meadows covered wid grass...*
(*'Oh! Boys, Carry Me 'Long'*)

*Now de orange tree am blooming
On de sandy shore.
Now de summer days are coming...
(‘Massa’s in de Cold Ground’)*

*Down in de meadows ‘mong de clober
Walkin wid my Nelly by my side...
(‘Farewell My Lilly Dear’)*

The ersatz nature of Foster’s landscapes is perhaps most piquantly captured in his most famous song, *Old Folks At Home*. As all the world knows, the song is set ‘way down upon the Swanee river’. Whilst there is a Swanee river - or at least a Suwanee river - in the South, it was not chosen to typify the area as the song might suggest, but because it was a two-syllable word ending in ‘ee’. Foster had rejected his original choice of ‘Pedee’ as being insufficiently euphonious: *Drafts of (the song) ...in his workbook (now in the Foster Hall Collection at the University of Pittsburgh) read:*

*‘Way down upon de Pedee ribber
Far far away*

and then

*Swanee
‘Way down upon de ~~Pedee~~ ribber*

Both names were apparently picked at random from the atlas since Foster had no first-hand knowledge of the southern rivers. He undoubtedly decided to use the two-syllable corruption of Florida’s Suwanee because the initial vowel is certainly more graceful for singing. It is hard to imagine what subsequent generations of Tin Pan Alley lyricists would have done without the corrupt but musical Swanee to fall back on ... It is difficult to believe, too, that even a George Gershwin could have produced the hit song of 1919 if it had been named ‘Pedee’ instead of ‘Swanee’ (Jackson 1974, 179).

It is remarkable how the word became a sentimental shorthand, serving ...almost as well as the mythical Dixie to conjure a stereotyped southern setting (Ibid.). Like *Home, Sweet Home*, *Old Folks At Home* has a central place in the sentimental repertoire, and, like the earlier piece, was a phenomenon in its own right: *Piano’s and guitars groan with it night and day; sentimental young ladies sing it, sentimental young men warble it in midnight serenades...* (quoted in Sanjek vol.II, 77).

Foster is accused of distracting attention away from the economic and social injustice of slavery by prettily placing it in picturesque surroundings that recall nothing less than Isaac Watts' heavenly landscapes. Yet he used this idyllic backcloth to moral advantage: because it was not recognisable as a real place, Foster could suggest an emotional parity between blacks and whites that would have been unacceptable had the locale been more authentic. In Foster's idealized South benevolence flourishes despite an unequal social system (as it does in *Sentimental Journey* and *The Man of Feeling*); it is the unifying human-ness of the 'feeling heart' that unites master and slave. Foster especially uses death - the focus of more extreme emotion perhaps than anything else - to exemplify this parity. He starts by acknowledging its contingency: like *Hard Times* *Death comes a-knocking at de door*. And he knocks on everybody's door, and then social distinctions of plantation life count as nothing. United in their helplessness against death, master and slave grieve for each other as mortal human beings. Foster paints a picture of absolute equality: when the master in *Massa's in de Cold Ground* dies ... *all de darkeys am a-weeping* and when the slave *Old Uncle Ned die Massa take it mighty bad, De tears run down like de rain*. There is a hint that death offers an equal peace to both: *massa is sleeping* and *Ned has gone war de good darkeys go*. And in death both master and slave themselves again become part of that idyllic landscape:

*Where de ivy am a-creeping
O'er de grassy mound,
Dare old Massa is a-sleeping...*
(*Massa's in de Cold Ground*)

*Close by de margin ob de water
Whar de lone weeping willow grows,
Dar lib'd Virginny's lubly daughter
Dar in death may she find repose.*
(*Nelly was a Lady*)

Despite the celebrity of *Old Folks At Home* Foster's best and most typical song is generally thought to be *My Old Kentucky Home, Goodnight!* :

*The sun shines bright in the old Kentucky home
'Tis summer, the darkies are gay,
The corntop's ripe and the meadow's in the bloom,
While the birds make music all the day.
The young folks roll on the little cabin floor,
All merry, all happy, and bright:*

*By'n by Hard Times comes a-knocking at the door,
Then my old Kentucky Home, goodnight!*

(Chorus)

*Weep no more my lady,
Oh! weep no more today!
We will sing one song for the old Kentucky Home,
For the old Kentucky Home, far away.*

*They hunt no more the possum and the coon
On the meadow, the hill and the shore,
They sing no more by the glimmer of the moon,
On the bench by the old cabin door.
The day goes by like a shadow o'er the heart,
With sorrow where all was delight:
The time has come when the darkies have to part,
Then my old Kentucky Home, goodnight!*

(Chous)

*The head must bow and the back will have to bend,
Wherever the darkey may go:
A few more days and the trouble all will end
In the field where the sugarcanes grow.
A few more days for to tote the weary load,
No matter 'twill never be light,
A few more days till we totter on the road,
Then my old Kentucky Home, goodnight!*

(Chorus)

('My Old Kentucky Home, Goodnight!')

This is in many ways similar to *Old Folks at Home*: both have simple yet memorable tunes and lyrics suffused with wistful yearning, but *My Old Kentucky Home* manages something else, being at once the most specific of songs, at the same time as having a mood that has a universal resonance. Its specificity derives from its being written on the back of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* - an original unpublished chorus went *Oh, goodnight, goodnight, goodnight/ Poor Uncle Tom* - and having the definite geography (Kentucky) and references (darkies, the old cabin) of a standard plantation 'pastoral'. How then does it come (...) close to being *all things to all men*? An early commentator suggests this might be because, despite its apparent parochiality, it hints at universal themes: *The song rings true and expresses an emotion deep-rooted in the human soul. Its only rival in the affectionate esteem of the multitudes is 'Old*

Folks At Home which it resembles in spirit. Both songs sing of loneliness and longing, of yearning over the days gone by (Earhart and Birge 1969, 12). Thus, whilst ostensibly about the 'local' situation of slaves and the South, it is also about a much more general sadness. This goes beyond any parlour attitudinising: the '*sold-down-the-river*' (Lott 1993, 189) aspect of *My Old Kentucky Home, Goodnight!* is therefore about the hardship of existence itself as well as the hardships on the plantation. The loss of eighteenth century optimism about the human condition, and its replacement with a more modern bleakness (which finds formal articulation in writers like Schopenhauer) has already been remarked on in relation to Moore; Foster actually uses the same metaphor as Schopenhauer in speaking of the 'shadow' that blights the present:

*The day goes by like a shadow o'er the heart,
With sorrow where all was delight...*

A similar world-weariness informs a final plantation song deserving of special mention. *Old Black Joe* was late-period Foster written in 1860 just before he made his final move from Pittsburgh to New York. It is possible this piece had wider middle-class currency than the previous seven plantation songs because it represented the complete gentrification of the genre: there is no negro dialect in it, and it was written seven years after Foster had stopped expressly writing for the minstrel stage. Because of its title it is frequently invoked as a visible badge of Foster's endorsement of slavery ...*a way of life both vicious and corrupt...* (Jackson 1974, 178) It is more helpful to see the piece as the culmination of Foster's humanising of the Negro persona noted earlier. He ascribes to Joe two sentimental facets, age and blackness, which then enable him to paint a benign - if stereotypical - picture. This is given a concrete realisation in the lithograph on the cover of the original song-sheet: Joe is shown as a venerable and dignified figure who is helping the small (white) daughter of the family to read (...or is it the other way round?). *Old Black Joe* is a spiritual heir to old Edwards in *The Man Of Feeling*, the loyal (yet awfully pathetic) aged retainer and would have excited sympathy from a parlour audience; it is however the tone of existential desolation that dominates the song:

*Gone are the days when my heart was young and gay,
Gone are my friends from the cotton fields away,
Gone from this earth to a better land I know,
I hear their gentle voices calling 'Old Black Joe'.*

(Chorus)

*I'm coming, I'm coming, for my head is bending low:
I hear their gentle voices calling 'Old Black Joe'.*

*Why do I weep when my heart should feel no pain,
Why do I sigh that my friends come not again,
Grieving for forms now departed long ago?
I hear their gentle voices calling 'Old Black Joe'.*

(Chorus)

*Where are the hearts once so happy and so free?
The children so dear that I held upon my knee,
Gone to the shore where my soul has longed to go.
I hear their gentle voices calling 'Old Black Joe'.*

(Chorus)

('Old Black Joe')

The public and private aspects of Foster's sentimental writing again fuse: the song is an effective contribution to the tradition, but like *Beautiful Dreamer* it can also be seen as a coded reflection of his increasingly desperate final years: *...with his mother, father and various other members of his family dead, with his marriage on shaky ground and his finances unstable, and with his drinking probably increasing, he could well have longed for former times when his 'heart was young and gay' and could have almost heard the 'gentle voices calling'* (Jackson 1974, 178).

A 'familiar and handy convention' and excitable songsters: the tradition consolidated

Foster's work endures, transcending period and place. Whilst a product of both his time and his temperament (for good and ill), he was nonetheless a professional in the best sense, and understood the crafting of popular songs better than anyone before. His work can be variously interpreted, but there would be widespread agreement that a significant part of his legacy concerns his representation of a (sentimental) sensibility. At the heart of Foster's story is the way both he and his public had been 'schooled' in sentimentality: we have seen the themes and construction of his songs

were clearly influenced by earlier sentimental writing. As Foster had registered the salient points of the way such previous work was constructed, his public was now becoming increasingly familiar with sentimental song in a non-technical way. We may therefore agree with Bill C. Malone that *Much of his success ...came from immersion in the sentimental tradition...* (Malone 1979, 21) for as Wilfred Mellers points out in both the production and consumption of popular song *...those conventions that were the handiest, and most familiar through usage, seemed the best* (Mellers 1985, 245), and the sentimental tradition was arguably now one of the most 'handy' and 'familiar' in popular song.

The difference between the situation at the end of the eighteenth century and that half a century later is the extent to which popular song had become a favoured way of sentimental enjoyment. Indeed, by the middle of the nineteenth century, the line of development in sentimental song lyrics that had started with Watts, Ramsay and Gay in the first quarter of the previous century, flourished to the extent of constituting the dominant tone within popular song. This shouldn't be surprising: both creator and consumer belonged to the same 'taste public', and by both temperament and talent, writers like Moore and Foster were able to produce clear and memorable examples of that taste. Of course the eighteenth century writers and their public had also had much in common, and sentimentality was a key component in the formation of a new non-exclusive and accessible aesthetic, but the increasing familiarity and acceptance of a sentimental tradition in popular song facilitated the work of the nineteenth century songsmiths. This allowed them to emphasize and extend the tone and domain of sentimental song in way that has endured. Particularly notable (and particular to their century) is the enjoyment of a Shopenhaueric pessimism: like Moore, *Foster's reaction to both personal and national problems: (was) to withdraw into nostalgia, to see the present as a poor substitute for the past* (Hamm 1979, 215). (The prevalence of such a stance cannot be overestimated: for instance two mid-century successes, *Ben Bolt* (1848) and *Twenty Years Ago* (1856), both contrast blithe barefoot days with a desolate present through the contemplation of the [recent] graves of friends.)

So far I have stressed the philosophical character of this position, its relation to the death of the Enlightenment dream and Romantic world-weariness, but it might equally be construed psychologically, where it could be seen as depressive, and slightly hysterical, the result of an inability to engage with the world as-it-is. (And judged mildly pathological.) Certainly a rather highly-strung neuroticism has informed many of our writers: Gay's sentimentalism was *ascribed to a temperamental tendency* (Fairchild 1939, 231), Russell's career was terminated early

on by a nervous breakdown and his sometime lyricist, 'Monk' Lewis could be reduced to *a fit of nervous weeping by a single kind word* (Quennell 1970, 37) - and of course delicate health made Watts and Cowper, like Shaftesbury, recluses.

One sees, however, a particularly overwrought 'flight from life' in the savouring of a sense of loss that is first seen in Burns songs. It then becomes Moore's 'trademark', and is taken up and extended by Foster. It is interesting to see how such a (technically) neurotic position like this might have been encouraged by the psychologies of the three men. All were addicted sentimentalists, and even by the standards of more sentimental times seemed particularly at the behest of their emotions. (Burns and Moore were frequently in tears.) There was real pathos in all their lives: Lear-like tragedy blighted Moore's later life, and illness and alcohol speeded the premature deaths of Burns and Foster. Alcohol is particularly relevant in this discussion: we have already noted I. A. Richards's point that drink makes sentimentalists of us all. How much more would this be true for this pair, both temperamentally sentimental and heavy drinkers: *Burns further confessed that he was sometimes 'fond of my anguish'. Morrison (Foster's brother) knew that 'sentimental' Stephen was just as fond...Burns proceeded to seek enjoyment often in the 'big-belly'd' bottle', and Morrison knew that Stephen did the same* (Austin, 102-3).

Whilst a sentimental stance is itself, by definition, excessive, these three key writers seem to have been emotionally labile to a degree, and in the case of two of them that agitated emotionality was exacerbated by alcohol. One should perhaps not make too much of this, but there seems evidence to suggest the immoderate indulgence of loss found in their songs was informed partially by their immoderate personal psychologies and histories.

There would now seem justification in speaking of 'a tradition established' in relation to sentimental popular song. This is due to the talents of the group of writers we have followed in the last two chapters, who incorporated sentimentality into vocal material in persuasive and popular ways: a 'beachhead' was established in the eighteenth century, which was then consolidated in the first half of the nineteenth century. In *The Exhibition Song Album No.1*, a typical song collection from the 1870's, we saw how generously represented were both key figures like Moore and Foster (three and four songs respectively) as well as those whose reputations haven't survived like Bayly and Fitzball (two and five songs respectively). And pioneer writers like Dibdin and Burns were also represented. Similarly the initiatory eighteenth century congregational hymns augmented their popularity in the next

century - they constituted three of the top four hymns in a survey of 400,000 people in 1892 (Scholes 1938, 501) - and a sentimental tone deriving directly from that work informed much subsequent sacred song, as we shall see in chapter 7.

Without the achievements of these secular and sacred songwriters sentimentality might have flourished in popular fiction and painting, but only been a sporadic influence in popular song; what happened was the opposite of this - the development of an increasingly thriving and profuse tendency in a variety of song styles.

Stephen Foster's work stands as an exemplar of mid-century predilections in popular song, as Dickens's work reflects preferences in popular literature. The extent to which both men's work was informed by sentimentality is significant, and by Foster's death there is an acceptance and ubiquity of a sentimental tone and sentimental themes in popular song that is beyond doubt: *The Victorian love of sentiment is most clearly seen in lyrics, however, and in these we see the love of tears, found in eighteenth century audiences, had become even more pronounced* (Lee 1970, 98). *Flowers had to wither, hearts to be shattered, birds to fall with broken wings, children to be orphaned, orphans to starve, chairs to be left empty, and sailors to drown whenever they were subjects of Victorian song* (Willson Disher 1955, 85).

It is to such orphans and chairs we now address ourselves.

Chapter 6

The Tradition Secured: hegemony and favoured motifs

Hegemony: sentimentality as a 'virus in the culture.'

The consolidation of the tradition into such an authoritative position by the mid-nineteenth century is a function of more than the technical achievements of the pathfinder songwriters, and the increasingly dominant line of influence they represent: hegemony was only achieved because sentimental song chimed so well with other, wider aspects of mid-nineteenth century society. Because such aspects inevitably interact with each other it is hard to isolate discrete influences. One may start however by a mention of particular social facts that actively favoured mid-nineteenth century music-making, within which sentimental song was a key component: these are of a quite different order from those that encouraged the birth and first flowerings of sentimentality - indeed many were either unknown or far less prevalent in the previous century.

First there was the rise of domesticity - a private home-life - and the increase of the importance of music-making within that domestic arena. *At some time in the last two hundred years most middle-class people shifted the focus of their daily lives from the street into the home* (Weber 1975, 10). This shift, although starting in the eighteenth century, is essentially a nineteenth century phenomenon: *According to the cultural historian Walter Benjamin it was in the early 1800's that for the first time the living space became distinguished from the space of the work. If we isolate the values that compromise domesticity - separation from work, privacy, comfort, focus on the family... Domesticity, in sum, is a specifically modern phenomenon, a product of the influence of capitalist economics, breakthrough in technology and the Enlightenment strain of individuality* (Reed 1996, 7). It is significant therefore that it is public arenas of music-making in the eighteenth century (like the pleasure garden) that are stressed; music-making existed in the home, but its place as a more private enjoyment *en famille* was essentially a function of the rise of domesticity in the next century. The existence of domestic music-making was initially a bourgeois phenomenon depending on a certain modicum of wealth and leisure, and its appeal compared to other possible cultural 'investments' was greatly facilitated by technological advances that allowed for both the mass-production of instruments and music and improvements in their promotion and distribution. The piano (introduced

by Dibdin in 1767) was initially neither popular nor cheap, but production costs began falling significantly by mid-century and this was reflected in sales - for instance in the U.S.A. 2500 were sold in 1829, 21,000 in 1860. Much has been written on the centrality of the piano in bourgeois music-making. It represented a status-ful piece of furniture in its own right - *the foremost fetish of domesticity* (Leppert 1993, 201) - and its self-contained nature as a musical instrument (providing chords and tune simultaneously) recommended it to women (Edmund de Goncourt called it *the ladie's hashish*). Technological advances similarly increased sheet-music sales: Aloys Senefelder's invention of lithography in 1796 freed publishers from having to deploy costly and inflexible music type and allowed the easy incorporation of a pictorial title sheet, *which ...proved to be invaluable for the packaging of music as a means of lending additional desirability to the commodity on offer* (Scott, 54). Similarly improvements in the forming and marketing of sheet music developed earlier in the century by Walsh and Cluer increased its availability (Mackerness, 106).

The making of music within the family afforded both symbolic and practical benefits. Symbolically it provided a private serenity, a spirituality, that stood against the encroachment of the twin Molochs of industrialization and urbanization (again both factors that assumed a voracity unknown during their origins in the previous century). Richard Sennett has argued that many nineteenth century bourgeois families *attempted to preserve some distinction between the sense of private reality and the very different world outside the home* (quoted in Tawa 1990, 105) and Russell Sanjek comments on how the words of *Home! Sweet Home!* - for him *the quintessential nineteenth century sentimental ballad - reflect a spiritual and social impulse in their buyers, who were searching for basic values while sinking in a sea of mechanical and technological progress that threatened to engulf old-fashioned manners, taste and morality. Sentiment became prized for itself alone, and songs were written to touch the heart and not trouble the mind* (Sanjek 1988, 55). Sentimental songs provided a secular sublimity - a non-religious spirituality - that tempered the ugliness of progress as well as affording a lofty retreat where the potentially disquieting aspects of life - social problems or intellectual questioning for instance - couldn't intrude. Social problems might however appear in a sentimentalised form, where feeling about a situation was a convenient substitute for doing anything about it. (As for instance in the lyrics of George R. Sims; see Calder-Marshall 1968.) Even work which tried to address social difficulties could be hijacked by sentimentality: in Dickens's treatment of Stephen Blackpool's death in *Hard Times* *...he exploits the techniques of popular theatre to encourage an*

emotional, indeed sentimental response to the story, and seems to evade the awkward questions about class, capitalism and social justice that he himself has raised (Lodge 1981, 45). Henry Russell's 'philanthropic' songs are similarly at the behest of their excessive emotionality - and one is left with the impression that dire social plight was most typically used simply to generate tears (as they had done in Mackenzie's *The Man of Feeling*).

At a more practical level the songs lent cohesiveness to family life: *...music provided activities which members of the family could pursue together...* (Weber 1975, 30). Specifically *musical pursuits provided a means for socialization of children. The watchword of middle-class values was discipline, and musical training helped instill it in young people. For girls especially, learning the piano was virtually a puberty rite...*(Weber 1975, 30). The Reverend Haweis, author of the best-selling *Music and Morals*, recommended the piano because *...it makes a girl sit upright and pay attention to details* (1882, 505). Music was also an ideal domain for appropriation by women, who, with much increased power in the home, used it not only as an educative and validating tool, but also a suitable cornerstone of entertaining and performance (as in the *soirée*). However, musical pursuits also increasingly involved men, playing a significant part in courtship ritual (if we are to believe a plethora of paintings and fiction). This represented a significant change from the early eighteenth century when Lord Chesterfield, writing to his son *grants that a gentleman may occasionally listen to music...but...it does not befit his dignity, and perhaps his manhood, to take part in the performance of it* (Mellers 1950, 141). By the mid-nineteenth century the situation was reversed: absence of musicianly skills in a man represented a social lack: *That extravagant Victorian, Sir George Sitwell, reports his son Osbert, was looking down upon a two-year-old infant slumbering in his perambulator. 'I do hope', he remarked in sentimental tones, 'that they won't forget to teach the little man to sing after dinner. Nothing makes a man so popular'* (Turner 1972, 1).

I stress the domestic arena for sentimental song because of its relative novelty; this is not to deny the significance of the public performance of music in the nineteenth century, and there were significant developments here too - an increasing audience for the concert and Music-Hall for instance (See Pearsall 1979, Russell 1987, Scott 1989, Weber 1975, Willson Disher 1938). In the latter one could see how the sentimental was incorporated into working class musical life in a more communal way that contrasted with its expression in bourgeois domestic life. Mrs. Ormiston Chant, famous as the scourge of risqué performers like Marie Lloyd, visited a Music Hall in *...the poorest part of London...* and hearing the audience

repeat the chorus of *My Old Dutch* ...until one could not listen without the tears coming into ones eyes... suggested that ...the feeling arising...taking hold of the public heart might be a means of introducing into lives a tenderness and a sentiment not hitherto displayed (Lee, 1982, 104). This is an interesting (if patronising) reiteration of the eighteenth century notion of sentimental art being an acceptable way of acquiring a suitable (and commonly agreed) taste (which still had vestigial connotations of moral correctness - the linking of *virtu* and *virtue*).

The performance of sentimental song - whether in working class Music Hall or middle-class parlour - offered a public demonstration of that correct sensibility and moral probity (something sentimental literature could not do).

The growth of both home and 'concert' music-making were united by the fact that the professional and the amateur increasingly shared the same song repertoire. Here several social facts converge: musical literacy increased significantly (Curwin and his introduction of the Tonic sol-fa system was central here - see Turner 1975, 12) and mass production allowed wider access to sheet music (the visible expression of that literacy). Finally, although many songs were sung first by professionals - 'introduced' was the phrase - most were within the amateur's range. (Had they not been sales would have been compromised.) Among those with some ability, music making had yet to fracture absolutely into those who pursued it for a living and those who did not: music-making was informed by an unselfconscious enthusiasm to 'have a go' at even challenging material, and people aspired to tolerable standards of musicianship in a general way that didn't survive into this century. Most critically such confidence and enthusiasm were not yet undermined by media like the phonograph recording or radio broadcast that continuously and unequivocally demonstrated the ability gap between amateur and professional.

The particular strength of the sentimental strain within both public and private music-making now needs to be assessed. It will be remembered that sentimentality was rejected as a serious force by the end of the eighteenth century, but it was suggested that by then it had become established as a defining component of the popular taste, and the first half of the nineteenth century saw its increasingly widespread incorporation into popular forms. It is significant that this took place at a time when there was a *movement towards social unification, giving more people a share in popular culture. The popular audience, sharing tastes and attitudes, embraced members of several social groups, who enjoyed the same songs, though often in quite different surroundings* (Bratton 1975, 23).

What is equally salient is that, along with more people partaking of popular culture, one finds also an increasingly similar 'tone' in the differing expressions of

that culture, and the dominant tone was indubitably sentimental. Thus the poems of Mrs. Hemans (*who loved the pathetic* [Kunitz 1936, 291], and was as popular in her day as Wordsworth), the melodramas of Douglas Jerrold and the songs of Russell are cognate in tone and content, and this was reflective of a *confluence of taste, style and subject matter*, specifically *the swing of popular taste to sentiment and sensation* (Bratton 1975, 40-1) (phenomena derived respectively from eighteenth century predilections for the sentimental and the Gothic). Commenting on nineteenth century popular song Mellers observes it *...was neither better nor worse than the common denomination of taste permitted* (Mellers 1987, 254). By the mid-nineteenth century not only is the prizing of tender feelings now no longer in any question, but is actively 'taught' in popular song: *A blind child's lament for the glories of the sky - the husband's tender mourning for one departed - the regretful thoughts of brighter and purer days...all this finds voice in a ballad, a voice that soonest reaches the heart* (from 1851, quoted in Tawa 1985, 11).

As in the eighteenth century, such a 'hegemony of the heart' was principally characterized by profuse lachrymosity, but whereas tears for the eighteenth century were 'liquid virtue' - a specific indication of a certain sort of quality - they had, by the middle of the next century, become incorporated into the national psyche as a more generalized mark of sensitivity: *Tears were considered good and right and natural. And trembling, weeping, swooning were common occurrences... Chancellor Bismarck of Germany wept often with Wilhelm I. Prime Minister Gladstone of England broke down in private and public* (Whitcomb 1994, 7). Cardinal Newman, hymnodist and leader of the Oxford Movement took as his motto *Cor Ad Corloquitor* ('Heart speaks unto Heart'). *He is said to have written much of his 'Apologia' with tears streaming down his face; and walking from Oxford to Littlemore with Albany Christie just before leaving the Church of England, 'Newman never spoke a word all the way, and Christie's hand when they arrived was wet with Newman's tears'* (Kunitz, 469). Eminent twentieth century figures who had a Victorian childhood like Chaplin and Churchill frequently shed tears in public throughout their lives (Nicholson 1960, 515).

Arguably all this bespeaks a certain sort of culture, sincere certainly, and - by our standards - naïve. It was predicated on a morally unequivocal, uncomplicated and essentially religious view of the world. Later factors, be they challenging ideas (like those of Darwin, Marx and Freud), or terrible events (like the slaughter in Flanders) would make such limpid purity of heart less tenable.

The single most significant aspect of nineteenth century culture to encourage receptivity to the sentimental was Christian religion (see Harrison 1971, 123). I have

already suggested that Christianity can be viewed as an intrinsically sentimental project and there is one specific aspect of its theology that was - and is - highly significant in sustaining the sentimental repertoire. A devout unreconstructed Christianity - as was the norm in the last century - had at its core an unequivocal eschatology that promised eternal life in paradise after death. This stark fact 'underwrote' the unhappiness and suffering endemic in the manufacture of pathos in so much of the sentimental *oeuvre*, for even the most ghastly suffering in this life would be redeemed in the next; such had been the message in Dibdin's slave song, *Negro Philosophy* (1796). Ironically such absolute certitude about a blissful life eternal discouraged tackling the distresses of this world (especially if they didn't affect one directly): God, after all, would redeem society's Unfortunates in heaven. Given the general acceptance of such an uncomplicated eschatology, the adoption of extravagantly pathetic scenarios in nineteenth century sentimental art - and the particular centrality of death-bed scenes - is understandable: however harrowing the demise of Eva in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* or Eric in *Little By Little* all would yet be well, for Death Is Not The End. The culture was surely more engaged with death because its presence was more keenly felt then: infant mortality was prevalent in all classes and ...*few had not walked behind a small coffin at some stage...*(Kermode 1996, section 7, 7). The relish of the fatally pathetic in songs, novels and plays is therefore also reflective (in an albeit heightened way) of mortality's much greater visibility in the last century. Sentimentality provided a structure for the representation (and transformation?) of the brute social fact of infant mortality. One finds the sentimental death presented in the novel - most famously in Dickens - and in painting - as in Frank Holl's pair of narrative paintings, *Hush!* and *Hushed* (1877): *Holl often chose bereavement as a subject particularly the grief of a mother for her baby. Child death was sadly a common occurrence in Victorian society. These two pictures were once described as ' a pathetic little story in two chapters'* (accompanying notes at the Tate Gallery). It was also central in song and the drama, as in song titles like *Cradle's Empty*, *Baby's Gone* or little Willie's celebrated death in the dramatisation of Mrs. Henry Wood's *East Lynne* (*Dead! Dead! And never called me Mother!*). Indeed *East Lynne* and *Uncle Tom's Cabin* - plays predicated on pathetic child deaths - were the two most frequently performed pieces of the century on both sides of the Atlantic (Kilgarriff 1974, 275).

This increasingly dominant influence of sentimentality in British and American society by the middle of the nineteenth century - which one might represent as a cultural virus that had infected the social body - gives it an ubiquity that informs

every area. One such area is popular song, where a thriving tradition of sentimental lyric writing had been developing for over a century. The general and the specific meld, an increasingly dominant general tendency to the sentimental reinforcing its specific manifestations in already established areas. However, at the same time that this is happening, society is becoming more complex and the arenas where sentimental song finds expression increasingly diverse. For instance, on the one hand, the expansion of musical literacy favoured active music-making of all sorts, whilst on the other, the concert-going habit and (at the end of the century) the development of recording technology favoured passive music consumption. The increasing ubiquity of sheet-music meant the same song might be heard in scores of venues both private and public. Never before had there seemed so many opportunities for both the social and individual enjoyment of popular song.

The proliferation of such disparate popular music situations with their differing economic, social and aesthetic axes mean that it is neither possible nor profitable to trace a single, linear sentimental song tradition via a dominant historical 'narrative' (as has been the case up to now). However, if the volume and diversity of sentimental material prevent this approach, they actively favour another, for the increased visibility of the sentimental in popular culture leads to a natural selection of its preferred emblems: Bratton (1975, 107), speaking of an *established range of sentimental subjects*, gives examples from later in the century, but Tawa referring to Francis Jeffrey's influential *Essay on Beauty* (1811) suggests Jeffrey's general theory that writers employ "*objects...that are the inseparable concomitants of emotions, of which the greater part of mankind are susceptible*", favoured the production of popular songs *often suffused with self-pity, suffering, loneliness and yearning, experienced by stock figures in stock situations...*(Tawa 1985, 147). Evidence presented in this work has suggested even earlier origins for such stock themes in sentimental song, and the expression of extreme sentimentality increasingly coalesces around certain favoured subjects or motifs. They transcend both genres - *The stock of types was shared between music-hall and drawing-room writers, and indeed their material became...to a large extent interchangeable* (Bratton 1975, 41) - and historical or national specificity (for instance Union Square, New York in the 1880's as opposed to Denmark Street, London in the 1930's) becoming a *lingua franca* that bridges time and expressional modes, uniting the most disparate writers. A successful motif such as the pathetic child crops up in diverse popular music situations: *Waifs were common ground for all classes, music-hall, drawing room, and fairly superior concerts* (Willson Disher 1955, 215). (The reference here is to

nineteenth century practice, but pathetic children continued to be popular in twentieth century Tin Pan Alley and Country repertoires.)

It is with these favoured themes and aspects that our account of the tradition concludes. They will be examined in three ways: first the presentation of some dominant motifs that are not specific to any style (or time). This will be followed by a survey of the Irish sentimental song, a clearly defined sub-set that has utilized a similar set of themes over 140 years. Finally one particularly dominant theme, that of a blissful afterlife, is examined as it is expressed in a variety of song styles.

All these themes have antecedents in earlier pioneering work: Irish sentimental song, for example, follows from the example of Tom Moore, and the 'yearnings for heaven' from non-conformist eighteenth century hymnody.

Trees, Chairs and Clocks

Dogs, Mothers and Tots - Preferred Things, People and Pets

Things: empty chairs, houses and saddles; admonitory clocks and pathetic letters

The use of things to evoke a sentimental response has an honourable tradition, and the example of Sterne and Mackenzie has been noted in discussing the pioneering 'object' songs of Lady Nairne. Sterne's commitment was, proto-Romantically, to natural objects especially trees, and we have already seen how they became a motif in the sentimental repertoire with popular pieces like Nairne's *The Rowan Tree* and Russell's *Woodman, Spare That Tree*. They were influential: a performance (by Russell) of the latter inspired the American song writer John Hill Hewitt to compose *Fall Of The Oak* in 1841, and this Romantic arboreal mood found expression as late as 1922 in Joyce Kilmer's *Trees* (with its enduring end couplet: ...*Poems are made by fools like me/ But only God can make a tree*). The main business of all these songs is, as Mackenzie noted, the summoning of sentiment, and a final example of the 'Tree song' - again from the 1920's - shows both how little and how much things had changed:

*Stop awhile and listen to my story
I've just come down from the hills.
I went there to find my childhood sweetheart
'Mid the roses and the whippoorwills.*

*I returned to look for the old pine tree
That haunted my memory so.
It was there that she said she'd be waiting
Where we carved our hearts long ago.
But the old pine tree was gone
Still my love for her lingers on*

*They've cut down the old pine tree
And hauled it away to the mill.
To make a coffin of pine
For that sweetheart of mine:
They cut down the old pine tree.*

*Still she's not alone in her grave tonight
For there my heart will always be.
Yes they cut down my heart
When we drifted apart
And they cut down the old pine tree.*

(*'They Cut Down The Old Pine Tree'*: U.S.A. 1930's)

The title of this song suggests merely another variation of Russell's hit, yet the sentimental mechanisms are much more varied, for here pathos is invoked in a masterful fashion as the tree is used to simultaneously symbolise different sadnesses. Its destruction at once stands for the loss of the old settled ways (the rural, the natural) and entails the obliteration of testimony to the tragic lovers (*...Where we carved our hearts long ago...*). The violence done to the tree (*...cut...haul...*) tacitly invokes prosopopoeia, and finally - in an ultimate sadness - the tree 'becomes' a coffin for the singer's loved one. (Once thus transformed trees constituted a favourite sub-genre being particularly linked with trains, e.g. *There's A Little Box Of Pine On The 7.29*. [U.S.A. earlier 20thC] and *Mother's Body's Lying in the Baggage Coach Ahead* [U.S.A. 1896]).

The nineteenth century, however, was surely the century of the man-made artifact. The fruits of industrial mass-production reached more people, and the ever increasing urbanization rendered familiarity and appreciation of the natural less likely. Equally the increasing prevalence of the domestic offered a new 'theatre' for the appreciation of the triumphs of factory production. It is hardly surprising therefore to find items like chairs and clocks becoming popular in the sentimental canon: *...chairs seem to have awakened Victorian emotions with remarkable frequency...* (Turner 1975, 320). The way forward had been established by some of

the pioneers. One of Russell's most popular pieces was his setting of Eliza Cook's *The Old Arm Chair*:

*I love it! I love it! And who shall dare
To chide me for loving that old arm chair?*

One of Fitzball's lyrics had operated similarly:

*In this old arm chair my father sat,
In this my mother smil'd...*

The most celebrated 'chair' song of the century was probably George Root's setting of Henry S. Washburn's lyric *The Vacant Chair* (initially a huge hit in the American Civil War). The vacant chair was a potent symbol of loss: Dickens used it in *Great Expectations*, and the extent of the casualties in the Civil War gave grim authentication to Washburn's song: *Death struck many homes, and in 'The Vacant Chair' a soldier's place at the Thanksgiving table stands unoccupied, the family consoled only by knowing he had fallen bravely in battle.* (Crawford 1977, viii). Although written by Northerners, tellingly the song was popular with both sides:

*We shall meet, but we shall miss him
There will be one vacant chair;
We will linger to caress him
When we breath our ev'ning prayer.*
(*The Vacant Chair*: U.S.A. 1861)

Thirty years later and four thousand miles away this type of song approached its apotheosis with *The Empty Chair*, a Music Hall song (*'sung with enormous success by Charles Bignall'*):

*There stands a chair, a vacant chair,
The joy of my life once sat there;
'Twas my young wife - my all in all
Who now has gone beyond recall.
I see her with a mother's joy,
Bending o'er our baby boy;
Alas! death came when all seemed fair,
And left for me an empty chair!*

(Chorus)
*The cage is empty, the bird has flown,
I am left here all alone,*

*I've no friends I can call my own,
My joys or sorrows to share.
I've but one joy - that's a baby boy -
Without him the world is bare,
He holds me to life, all I've left of the wife,
Who's gone from that empty chair.*

*Last night, I had a sweet, sweet dream -
We sat within the fire's bright gleam,
My wife and I, and on her knee
Our little one slept peacefully.
I smoothed her hair, I kissed her cheek,
Too full of bliss I was to speak!
When I awoke - ah! my despair,
I only saw - an empty chair!*

(Chorus)

*How lonely seems my shattered life,
I cannot live without my wife -.
Sometimes I yearn to snap life's chain
And be in her dear arms again.
But I've a young life to defend
I will not die a coward's end!
No! No! I'll live to baby true!
My boy - her child - I still have you!*

(Chorus)

('The Empty Chair': G.B. 1895)

Unsurprisingly the First World War provided potential for re-working the theme:

*I am sitting by the fireside as the evening shadows fall,
Gazing idly at the pipe-rack, hanging sideways on the wall;
Underneath it in the corner I can see an empty chair
And a pair of well-worn slippers that are waiting for you there:
They remind me that across the seas you've gone,
And I am left alone to carry on:-*

('Somewhere in France': G.B. c.1915)

And the same theme was still being worked in the late 1930's in the following piece recorded by Jack Savage and his Cowboys. Nothing has changed in the seventy years

since Washburn's *The Vacant Chair* - indeed as in so much Country sentimentalia the tone and expression is resolutely nineteenth century:

*There it stands in the corner with its back to the wall
That old wooden rocker so stately and tall.
With nought to disturb it except duster and broom
For no-one now uses that back-parlour room.*

(Chorus)

*Oh how well I remember in days long gone by
How we stood by that rocker my sister and I;
And we listened to the story that Grandma would tell
In that old wooden rocker we all loved so well.
As she sat by the fire she would rock, rock, rock,
And we heard but the tick of the old french clock;
Eighty years has she slumbered in that chair grim and tall
In that old wooden rocker that stands by the wall.*

*Now dear Grandma is gone and her stories are done
Her children have follow'd her, yes, one by one.
They've all gone to meet her in that Sweet By and By
No-one is left but dear sister and I.*

('The Old Wooden Rocker': U.S.A. 1930's)

From the same period and in the same style came work that extended the range of significantly vacated furniture: Jack Guthrie, who worked with his cousin Woody as a singing cowboy duo in the late 1930's (long before the latter's 'canonization' as godfather of the Folk revival), was celebrated for his rendition of *There's An Empty Cot In The Bunk House Tonight* (Klein 1980, 89). Again the influence is nineteenth century, where similar items of furniture might signal yet more harrowing facts. Despite its sentimental garnish the following lyric records an all-too-familiar situation in Victorian households:

*Little empty cradle, treasured now with care,
Though thy precious burden it has fled;
How we miss the locks of curly golden hair,
Peeping from thy tiny snowwhite bed.
When the dimpled cheeks and little laughing eyes
From the rumped pillow shone, then I gazed with gladness.
Now I look and sigh;
Empty is the cradle, baby's gone.*

('The Empty Cradle': U.S.A. 1881)

In later, more poetically adventurous popular song, pathetic furniture was accorded its own feelings; chairs again are the favoured item:

*The chairs in the parlor all miss you,
The pictures all frown from the wall;
The flowers won't grow
For they seem to know...*

*...They want you, only you,
But I miss you most of all.*

(*'I Miss You Most of All'*: U.S.A. 1913)

*The chairs and then the sofa
They broke right down and cried
The curtains started waving
For me to come inside.
I tell you confidentially
The tears were hard to hide:
We just couldn't say good-bye.*

(*'We Just Couldn't Say "Good-Bye"'*: U.S.A. 1932)

Pathetic chairs even made their way into jazz-inflected pop - usually inimical with full-strength sentimentality - as in the 'gal-been-done-wrong' piece *Daddy Won't You Please Come Home* (U.S.A. 1929). In fact the evocation of melancholy furniture in self-pitying songs became close to cliché, as in this particularly maudlin piece:

*Twelve o'clock at night
I'm heavy-hearted;
Twelve o'clock at night
When friends have parted.
Walking all alone,
The streets are empty and bare;
There's no use hurrying home
'Cause no-one's waiting there (who cares about me...)
Climbing up the stairs
I feel so lonesome;
And the dusty chairs
Seems lonesome too.
My poor heart aches for a glimpse of Dad and Mother
And my sweetie back home;
Twelve o'clock at night
When I find myself all alone.*

(*'Twelve O'clock At Night'*: U.S.A. 1923)

(As a leavening to all this doom there is a parallel [and equally long-lived] tradition of comedy songs about chairs, stretching from John Read's *Grandmother's Chair* [G.B. 1879] to Max Miller's *Sitting In The Old Arm Chair* [G.B. 1940's]).

Strong prosopopoeic tendencies are found in other household artifacts: from the mid nineteenth century onwards there was a particular obsession with clocks. A clock, whilst embodying the perfect automaton - a useful piece of machinery no home should be without - was also a powerful emblem. The engineering triumph of this increasingly prevalent mechanical marvel typified optimistic progress, a domestic artifact at once aesthetic and utilitarian: *To judge from nineteenth century popular songs, the most admired of all mechanisms...was the clock* (Vinson 1997, 124).

Yet its symbolic function was far from optimistic: the clock was equally suitable for evoking the sadness of past times lost and of future times not to be. Its mechanical perfection render it a cold, detached recording angel. It is profoundly indifferent to our time, and our chronometry survives us: *The perfect machine, admirable though it may be, provided grim comfort as it marked the passing of time* (Ibid.,128).

Practically this presented song writers with a rich vein of potential melancholy: in *The Old Cuckoo Clock that Hangs upon the Wall* this is voiced by the clock itself:

*When seated at evening before the open grate,
While peacefully passing the quiet hours away.
And lulled by its music, the ticking on the wall,
I fancied I heard the old clock speak to me and say,
"Ah! where are the faces that once we used to see,
The faces of dear ones we loved so well to know,
Kind father, sweet sister, and gentle mother dear,
With hands feebly trembling as they wound me long ago?"*

(*The Old Cuckoo Clock that Hangs upon the Wall*: U.S.A. 1870's)

Similar feelings are evoked less directly in *The Old Cottage Clock*:

*Its heart beats on though hearts are gone,
That warmer beat and younger;
Its hands still move though hands we love
Are clasped on earth no longer.*

Though the mood then darkens:

*Tick, tick it said,
To the churchyard bed,
The grave hath giv'n warning,
Up, up and rise,
and look to the skies,
And prepare for a heavenly morning.
(‘The Old Cottage Clock’: G.B. 1868)*

Another chastening piece, *Our Old Clock*, uses sinister imagery to better summon the cruel unconcern of the clock:

*Its blackened hands still creeping,
Creeping as they go,
Unmindful of life's passing scenes
Of sorrow, sin and woe,
Of hearts once light, now weary,
Of joys forever fled,
Of homes now sad and dreary,
Of lov'd ones long since dead.
(‘Our Old Clock’: U.S.A. 1872)*

And of course everyone knows how Henry Work's *Grandfather's Clock* went for *ninety years without slumbering, tick, tock, tick, tock. His life seconds numbering...* Despite the fact that that clock sympathetically ceases with its owner, the melancholy of the *...invidious comparison...between human frailty and mechanical immortality* (Vinson, 129-30) remains prevalent in popular song, from Bricher's setting of Longfellow's *The Old Clock on the Stairs*:

*Half way up the stairs it stands,
And points and beckons with its hands;
From its case of massive oak
Like a monk who under his cloak
Crosses himself, and sighs alas!
With sorrowful voice to all who pass:
Forever - never!
(‘The Old Clock on the Stairs’: U.S.A. 1846)*

to Jacques Brel's *Les Vieux* who

*...tremble as they watch the old silver clock, when day is through,
It ticktocks oh, so slow, it says 'yes', it says 'no'
It says, 'I'll wait for you.' -
- That old, old silver clock,*

*That's hanging on the wall -
That waits for us all.*

(*Les Vieux*: French 1963, this U.S. translation 1968)

The 'vacant' theme could also apply to houses as well as the items they contained. It will be remembered Lady Nairne used the dereliction of *The Auld Hoose* to symbolise lost happiness, and concluded with the image of an abandoned sundial in a decayed garden. Bayly's *The Old House at Home* had been 'abandoned' to new owners. As with the furniture songs the popularity of this theme endured: it would be quite feasible to produce a paper entitled '*Vacant Possession*': *A Hundred Years of Abandoned Houses in Song from 'The Auld Hoose' (G.B. 1830) to 'Cottage For Sale' (U.S.A. 1930)*. That last named song, despite its very different 'frame' as a piece about the end of a marriage, is still essentially concerned with the construction of pathos - which it achieves in a remarkably similar way to Nairne's piece:

*Our little cottage - with ev'ry dream gone
Is lonely and silent - the shades are all drawn;
My heart is heavy as I gaze upon
A Cottage For Sale.
The lawn we were proud of - is now waving hay
Our beautiful garden - has withered away
Where you planted roses - the weeds seem to say
'A Cottage For Sale'.
From ev'ry single window
I see your face;
But when I reach a window
There's empty space.
The key's in the mailbox - the same as before
But no-one is waiting - for me any more;
The end of our story - is told on the door:
'A Cottage For Sale'.*

(*A Cottage For Sale*: U.S.A. 1930)

(Like many other aspects of sentimental song this particular theme finds continuing expression in Country music: Red Sovine had a hit in 1962 with *Dream House For Sale* [Walker], and the following year George Jones wrote and recorded *The Old, Old House*. The year after that the Bluegrass duo, Reno and Smiley, put out *The Old Home Place*. Similarly *The Old House* [O'Connor 1940] is a staple within the Irish sentimental song tradition, with recordings by John McCormack and Joseph Locke, whilst Kenneth McKellar's *The Old Home* [1964] is a Caledonian example of the subject. Perhaps the most familiar title of the sub-set is *This Ole House*, a hit world-

wide in a perky arrangement by Rosemary Clooney, yet originally written [and recorded] as a sad song by another Country songsmith, Stuart Hamblen. Hamblen tells how the inspiration for the song came during a hunting expedition in a remote part of the Sierras when he discovered a dead prospector in a seemingly abandoned broken-down shack, and Hamblen's telling of the story prior to his performance of the song on Word WDS 3007 brims with sentimental acoutrements: the prospector's faithful dog has remained with his dead master, and leads Hamblen to him; the curtains in the shack bespeak the presence - at some distant time - of a woman; a broken toy, the presence of children.)

Images of emptiness in song could also be used to signify both a very specific loss - as in *The Empty Sleeve* (U.S.A. 1860's) from the Civil War - or a less personal, more generalized perdition, the loss of a particular time and a particular way of doing things. This is diffuse melancholy *à la* Moore, and it found expression in several styles of popular song; again we find a particularly effective example from the *faux-cowboy* repertoire in Billy Hill's *Empty Saddles*:

*There's something strange in the old corral
There's a breeze, tho' the wind has died,
Tho' I'm alone in the old corral
Seems there is someone by my side.*

(Chorus)
*Empty saddles in the old corral,
Where do ya ride tonight?
Are ya roundin' up the dogies,
The strays of long ago,
Are ya on the trail of buffalo?
Empty saddles in the old corral,
Where do ya ride tonight?
Are there rustlers on the border
Or a band of Navajo
Are ya headin' for the Alamo?
Empty guns, covered with rust
Where do ya talk tonight?
Empty boots, covered with dust
Where do ya walk tonight?
Empty saddles in the old corral,
My tears will be dried tonight
If you'll only say you're lonely
As ya carry my old pal,
Empty saddles in the old corral.*

*There is no smoke in the old corral
There's no song, still I hear guitars,
There is no dust, still the ghosts return
Softly to vanish thro' the bars.*

(Chorus)

('Empty Saddles': U.S.A. 1936)

Hill based his lyrics on a poem by J. Kiern Brennan - who had provided the words for some of the best known of Chauncey Ollcott's sentimental Irish songs - and made something of a speciality of the 'object' song. (For instance *Little Black Shawl* [G.B. 1934]: *My hearts wrapped up in a little black shawl/ A plain old fashioned little black shawl/ I kiss each stain that may remain/ Of the tears I caused to fall...*)

The particular culture whose loss Hill calls forth in *Empty Saddles* is that of the old West, and this stance provided a rich source of sentiment for songwriters between the wars. The parallels with Moore's work a hundred years earlier extend beyond the evocation of sweet sadness, for the old West is a chivalric and pre-urban locale like Moore's Ireland-of-the-long-ago. The legend of a picturesque place of honour and decency now vanished is a powerful one, and certainly informed the popular culture 'make-over' of the old West from the paintings of Frederic Remington and the novels of Zane Grey in the last century to Western movies in this. It is similarly enshrined in emblematic songs like *Home On The Range* (U.S.A. 1873). Billy Hill himself was part of this process: as a young man he had worked as a cowboy, and he successfully transmuted his (unsentimental) experience of the West into Alley elegies for an idealised locale in pieces like *The Call Of The Canyon* (U.S.A. 1940), *Prairie Lullaby* (U.S.A 1930's) and *The West, A Nest And You* (U.S.A 1930's). Arguably these romanticised visions became increasingly attractive as life became more morally compromised (the necessary price for 'progress') and ubiquitously urban. The fact that this was again all so much myth-making (the old West in reality was an extremely unpleasant place, 'wild' as the epithet has it - see Horan and Sann, 1954) is demonstrated by the alacrity with which British songwriters - who had no connection with the American past beyond making some money out of it - adopted it. Thus from Denmark Street - London W.C.2 - we had *There's an Old Covered Wagon for Sale* (G.B. 1937) and *The Wheel of the Wagon is Broken [The Days of the West are Through]* (G.B. 1935).

Aloneness was a standard motif in the self-pitying canon; the verse of that last mentioned song is particularly to the point: *...Lonesome and friendless, sometimes I wish I were dead: I hate to hear the clock on the wall, I'm so tired of it*

all. And then there was Me and My Shadow (...And when it's twelve o'clock We climb the stair/ We never knock For nobody's there...) (U.S.A. 1927) and several variants of the splendid *When The Rest Of The Crowd Goes Home [I Always Go Home Alone]* (...I envy the others who have love affairs Who go out in couples and come home in pairs...) (U.S.A. 1931).

Prosopopoeia was introduced into such self-pitying material to lard (an already over-rich) cake as in *Alone at a Table for Two*:

*...Even the flowers at your place have withered -
They know that we're through;
I'm alone at a table for two.*

('Alone at a Table for Two': U.S.A. 1936)

All manner of objects were 'worked' for sentimental effect, from *This Wedding Ring of Mine* (an abandoned lover) to *The Unfinished Rug* (a deceased mother) [former U.S.A. quoted in Spaeth 1927, 34 no attribution or date; latter U.S.A. 1940's], though letters have a popularity in the tradition that equals that of furniture, flowers and clocks. Letters most usually are love-letters, and nearly always summon past (lost) happiness, for as Jimmie Rodgers tells us

*...Their pages recall
When you were my all
Love-letters bring memories of you.*

('Old Love Letters': U.S.A. 1934)

The most resolutely gloomy of all these is the still-popular *The Little Rosewood Casket*:

*In a little rosewood casket, That is resting on my stand,
Is a package of old letters, Written in a lover's hand.*

*Will you go and get them, sister? Will you read them o'er to me?
For oft-times I've tried to read them, But for tears I could not see...*

*...When I'm dead and in my coffin, And my shroud around me fold,
And my narrow grave is ready, In some pleasant churchyard grove,*

*Place his letters and his locket All together o'er my heart,
And the little ring he gave me, Never from my fingers part.*

*You have finished now, dear sister, Will you read them o'er again?
While I listen to you read them, I will lose all sign of pain.*

*While I listen to you read them, I will gently fall asleep,
To wake again with Jesus - Darling sister, do not weep!*

('The Little Rosewood Casket': U.S.A. 19thC)

And letters afforded songwriters more lachrymose possibilities than the mere summoning of a pleasing melancholy for past love. As Spaeth has commented: *Songs about letters have always been popular, and the temptation to give them a touch of the morbid has naturally been almost irresistible* (Spaeth 1927, 36). Letters could bring bad news as in *The Letter Edged in Black* [U.S.A. 1890's] - which the postman somewhat insensitively delivers with a cheery whistle - or the Country stalwart, *A 'Dear John' Letter* [U.S.A. 1953]. They could fail to arrive (as in *The Letter That Never Came* [U.S.A. in Spaeth 1927, 36 no attribution] - *Was it from a grey hair'd mother, a sister or a brother?* We never find out). Or they could bring good news....but not in time (as in *The Pardon Came Too Late* [U.S.A. 1891]).

Our list of sentimental 'object' songs is perforce incomplete, and would repay further research. For instance the cuttings from Moore's *The Last Rose of Summer* have flourished for 150 years in every genre of popular song - Parlour: *Mighty Lak' a Rose* (Stanton/Nevin), Operetta: *Only a Rose* (Friml/Hooker), Hawaiian: *The One Rose (That's Left in my Heart)* (Lyon/McIntire) and Country: *Yesterday's Roses* (Autry/Rose). From Fred Weatherly's First World War anthem *Roses of Picardy* to Bob Wills's Western Swing anthem *San Antonio Rose* varieties of the genus 'Rosa' are the hardy perennials of pop: in the end the only reaction to this floral over-kill is that of the Groucho Marx satire: *Show me a rose, and I'll show you a girl named Fred/ Show me a rose; or leave me alone...* (Kalmar/Ruby).

People and Pets: Rover, Dobbin, Mother and Little Jim

Despite considerable ingenuity on the part of songwriters, objects would never offer quite the same breadth of sentimental possibilities as people and pets; sentient beings after all have a heart-rending potential denied even the most resonantly pathetic thing. We have already seen how animals have been used to touching effect in Russell's *Carlo*, *The Newfoundland Dog* and Foster's *Old Dog Tray*. Dibdin was an early practitioner of the type: he had written *Tray* (1801), a song celebrating a poet, who writes a song celebrating his faithful and pathetic dog, and the protagonist's *faithful Tray* is featured in another Dibdin piece, *The Labourer's Welcome Home* (1796). Whilst these are surely the models for what follows, folklore is scattered with affecting canines - one has from Scotland *Greyfriars Bobby* and from America *Old Blue*; in popular cinema too there is a line that extends from the melodrama of the *Lassie* films to Disneyfication in *Old Yeller* (*The best doggone dog in the West* according to its theme song [U.S.A. 1957]). However, thanks to the Elvis Presley version, Red Foley's 1940 composition *Old Shep* stands in most people's minds as the quintessential sentimental dog song. It will be remembered the song reaches its emotional apogee when Shep, after a life of devotion (including an heroic rescue of his master - an increasingly standard 'scena'), has to be put down. Here one again detects the unseen hand of the sentimental Ur-text, *The Man of Feeling*. Compare this from Mackenzie's 1779 novel:

I called to him; he wagged his tail, but did not stir: I called again; he lay down; I whistled, and cried Trusty; he gave a short howl, and died! - I could have lain down and died too...

with lyrics from the Nashville song made familiar by Elvis:

*Old Shep he knew he was going to go
For he reached out and licked my hand...
...I just couldn't do it; I wanted to run:
I wished they would shoot me instead.
(‘Old Shep’: U.S.A. 1940)*

Traditionally this final stanza is talked rather than sung, a standard procedure for upping the emotional ante. Perhaps the performer is indicating he no longer has the emotional control needed to sing, and therefore breaks down into speech. (Mid-

period Ink Spots recordings always upped their affect quotient by featuring a spoken chorus by their bass, 'Hoppy' Jones.) A final breakdown comes when even speech becomes too much, and tears take over (echoing the eighteenth century enjoinder that *words are for lighter griefs*). This doesn't make for very engaging or coherent popular music, though several performers - most notably Al Jolson - come perilously close to total lachrymation.

Deconstructing Shep's final predicament reveals how rich in pathos it is. He, of course, is blameless, having lived a life of unimpeachable loyalty; his only 'crime' is that he is old (itself reason enough for pathos). He, however, cannot know his fate, whereas his master has the anguish of having to deliberately kill one he loves in order to be kind. Shep - a 'dumb animal'- obviously can't understand this and sees only his trusted master turning murderer. This *mise en scène* was not new; it had for instance featured in *There's Only Five Bullets in My Old Six-Shooter* (G.B. 1934). This is not a saucy *double-entendre* song as might be thought, but rather an essay on the anguish of having to kill a faithful, but now lame, horse. The Music Hall repertoire also makes reference to the loss of staunch 'four-legged friends', as in Teddy Mosedale's *My Chestnut 'Orse* (G.B. later 19thC): *Like a hengine he could go/ To 'Ackney, 'Ampstead 'Eaf, or Bow/ I never shall survive the lorser/ Of poor old Jack, my Chestnut 'Orse* or that arch-sentimentalist Albert Chevalier's lament for his donkey, *'Jeerusalem's' Dead* (G.B. 1895): *Come 'an 'ave 'arf a pint - there's a lump in my chest... .* Some loyal animals survive: the emblematic horse song, *Old Faithful* (G.B. 1934) has its subject happily retired (*When your round-up work is over/ There'll be fields all white with clover/ For you Old Faithful, pal o' mine*) and Tex Ritter's *Ol' Shorty* (U.S.A. 1940's) is a comically maladept - yet cherished - hunting dog. The favoured mode, however, remained morbid: Carson Robison's *There's a Bridle Hangin' on the Wall* (U.S.A. 1936), is both 'object' song and 'animal' song, and is typical:

*There's a bridle hangin' on the wall
And a saddle in a lonely stall.
You ask me why the teardrops fall
It's that bridle on the wall...
...now that faithful friend has found the end of that trail
He's gone wherever good ponies go...*

In the accompanying recitation - another example of using the spoken voice in a song for emotional emphasis - we learn the background to the author's tears:

*Oh, I know you folks think I'm crazy
 But I don't care what you say.
 If you'd ever had a pal like him
 You'd know why I'm grievin' this way.
 We rambled the prairie together
 For over seventeen years.
 A man never had a more faithful friend
 No - I'm not ashamed of my tears.
 A faithful friend? Say listen -
 He woke me up one night
 When he heard a noise on the prairie,
 He knew what it was, alright.
 A stampede headin' right toward us
 And he saw what he had to do.
 And he ran till he dropped - but he saved my life!
 I call that a friend - don't you?*

(*'There's a Bridle Hangin' on the Wall': U.S.A. 1936*)

Like the pioneer sentimentalists two hundred years earlier Robison is ...*not ashamed of his tears*. The miraculous rescue was becoming almost mandatory and offered animals a way of redemption when faced with unappreciative humans, as in this splendid piece of narrative sentimentality:

*Two little boys and an old fam'ly dog
 By the banks of a river one day;
 The boys decided Old Rover must die
 A nuisance and quite in the way.
 The poor old fellow stood close by their sides
 His fate he couldn't quite understand
 With a wag of his tail and a heart-stopping wail
 He reached out and licked at their hand:*

(Chorus)
*'Remember I'm your best friend, boys
 No-one could love you so true;
 Tho' you may beat me and bang me to death
 I'll still play games with you.
 Tho' I am old, and quite in the way
 Life to me still has a charm:
 I've only one favour to ask of you boys -
 Let me spend my last days on the farm.'*

*A rope 'round his neck they were ready to tie
 His pleading seemed of no avail.
 Just then one of the boys tripped and fell in the stream*

*The other stood by deathly pale;
A loud cry for help and Old Rover jumped in
No sign of old age or delay -
And as he slowly swam back to the shore
They fancied they heard him say:*

(Chorus)

('Old Rover': U.S.A. 20thC)

The acme of the weepie dog song, however, is the masterful Jim Reeves number *Old Tige*. It is truly a sentimental *tour de force*: several pathetic deaths, Home, Mother, and the melancholy of passing time (as well as Tige's loyalty, fortitude and cleverness) are all served up within an elegant ghost story. (Ghost songs are popular in Country music, and display some of its most artful lyrics: one thinks of *The Long Black Veil* (U.S.A. 1959) and *Bringing Mary Home* (U.S.A. 1974), a Bluegrass version of the The Phantom Hitch-Hiker 'urban myth').

Tige was a hit for Reeves in 1961, showing again the enduring and conservative aspect of the tradition.

*Tige, you were faithful, faithful to the end;
Tige, how I miss you, you were my best friend. (Repeat at conclusion)*

*Three years of army service done, and I was headin' home at last,
I got to thinkin' 'bout my dog, and things long gone and past.
How Old Tige pulled me from the creek, when I had no pulse or breath,
And how he saved me from the charging bull, that gored my Dad to death.
As I a kid I'd dream of bears, and tremble to my toes
Till Old Tige would come up to my bed, and nudge me with his nose.
And my fears would melt away, and Tige would go lie down,
And I would drift back to sleep, without another sound.*

*The big bus stopped and I got off, 'twas dark and thick with fog,
Then something gently nuzzled me, and there stood Tige, my dog.
I wondered if my faithful dog had met the bus each day
All the dreary winter nights, since I had been away.
To have Tige meet me here like this, I was really glad
I hadn't needed Tige so much since the day they buried Dad.
Two long miles still lie ahead, but what I didn't know
A giant dam was being built, where the old road used to go.*

*I thanked the Lord for sending Tige, I followed where he led
Knowing well without his help I'd be good as dead.
Tige inched along this way and that, the going rough and slow,*

*And I could hear the water lapping at the ledges far below.
Then through the mist I saw a light, and Mother in her chair,
And I reached down to pat Old Tige, but he wasn't there.
I'm thankful, Mom, you had Old Tige, these three lonely years,
I owe my life to him tonight - I couldn't help my tears.
You say you wrote me 'bout the dam, well, God was sure with us,
I didn't get your letter, Mom, but Old Tige met the bus.
I hate to tell you, Son, she said, but now you've got to know
When you left it broke his heart: Tige died three years ago.
(Old Tige': U.S.A. 1961)*

Mother

Mother as a subject for song has been popular for many years, and one could collect 'mother' songs until one had a rather large amount..

(Maria Klamkin 1975, 60)

At the Royal Theatre in the Bronx I introduced the ballad 'M-O-T-H-E-R, the Word That Means the World to Me'. You couldn't possibly go wrong with a song like that. It was sure-fire.

(Sophie Tucker 1947, 134)

...a friend of mine, Steve Goodman, wrote (a) song - and he told me it was the perfect Country and Western song. I wrote him back a letter and I told him it was not the perfect Country and Western song because he hadn't said anything about Momma, or trains, or prison, or getting drunk. Well he sat down and wrote another verse to the song and he sent it to me and after reading it I realized my friend had written the perfect Country and Western song, and I felt obliged to include it on this album. The last verse goes like this here:

*Well I was drunk the day my Ma got out of prison
And I went to pick her up in the rain;
But before I could get to the station in a Pick-up truck
She got run over - by a damned ol' train...*

(David Allan Coe: 'You Never Even Called Me By My Name')

Of all the paradigms in the lexicon of sentimental song, few have the appeal and staying power of 'Mother': I have in front of me the sheet music to the Christy Minstrel's 1860's hit *Mother Kissed Me In My Dreams* - and from nearly a century later the sheet of Max Miller's 1954 favourite, *My Old Mum*. (The span is wider, extending back at least to James Hewitt's 1834 piece called - suitably - *Welcome*,

Mother! and forward to the 1960's and Innis Fail's *A Mother's Love* or Merle Haggard's *Mama Tried*.) As with Dog songs and House songs there was little significant evolution of the type over time (but why should there be? As a type - an ideal type one might say - it had no need of reflecting changing reality). Possibly the narrowness of the tradition is its strength: thus although the 'authorial voice' of the songs is usually male there is nary a hint of the Oedipal, for sentimentality's characteristic sugar-coated innocence can only be maintained by maintaining a safe distance from other less comfortable versions of the world. In his study of child death in the nineteenth century Lerner (1997) points out that to make its effect sentimentality needed to 'leave out the nasty bits', and that included not just disturbing physical detail, but any anti-sentimental perspectives. This severely limits what can be represented, and a cynic might say 'Mother' in the song tradition is more about absence than presence. Summoned by the same few clichés, Mother can never be more than two-dimensional; she is never allowed a personality - much less a complex or contradictory personality - because her function is to be a symbol, to stand for things in general (rather than actually be anyone in particular).

The construct of Mother in sentimental song centres on a few defining areas. First there is the moral dimension. She represents goodness in an uncomplicated way: her purity and altruism put her on a higher plane (reflected in the way the songs 'worship' her) and she symbolizes the fixed verities. Second is the psychological dimension: Mother offers unconditional emotional comfort of a kind never subsequently encountered. She provides, therefore, moral guidance and psychological comfort when the promise of life is before one, and much of the sentimental 'leverage' of the Mother song tradition derives from how that generous inheritance is subsequently betrayed by her ingrate offspring, and how fate seems generally to single out her blameless personage for harsh treatment: *...the centre of the home and family is mother, in those songs, and mother is perpetually threatened by the departures of her children, their ungrateful disrespect or disregard, by misfortune, illness, old age and death* (Bratton 1975, 107). This allows for a particularly expeditious forging of self-pity and pity: self-pity for the scandalous way we have ignored her and betrayed her trust, and pity for the integrity and steadfastness she maintains in the face of that neglect and betrayal. Mother is also inextricably linked to other key sentimental 'tropes' like Home - *What is a Home Without Mother?* as an 1854 song asked - and of course 'the happy past'. How she came to assume such a key part in the tradition is due to a general sociological trend and a specific historical event. The trend, noted at the beginning of this chapter, was the increasing dominance of women in the domestic domain, and mothers were

increasingly seen as *domestic deities* (see Turner 1972, 18). Mother songs can be seen as votive offerings to those 'deities'. Russell had produced in 1840 *what is undoubtedly one of the first "Mammy" songs...* (Ewen 1962, 149), and Stephen Foster was an early and enthusiastic proponent of the category contributing *Bury Me in the Morning, Mother, A Dream of My Mother and My Home, Give This to Mother, Oh! Tell Me of My Mother, Farewell, Mother Dear, and Farewell, Sweet Mother*. Foster's mother certainly was the key emotional influence of his life, and whilst these titles may have been partly informed by his marriage to Jane McDowell ...*who failed to become the doting mother substitute he so much needed...*(Sanjek vol II, 79) they more obviously are a result of an event, the American Civil War. This was a conflict involving the whole nation, and with casualties of seven hundred thousand it caused particularly vivid trauma on the home front: *The home bore the brunt of the war's psychic impact...a conflict of volunteer, not professional military men...*(Crawford 1977, xiii). And at the centre of the home was mother. Thoughts of her sustained volunteers on both sides: the transition from domestic tranquillity to bloody battle was often swift and cruel, and many of the combatants were little more than boys. The war was particularly well served by commercial popular song (the first time this had happened), and an increasingly vigorous popular song 'industry' excelled itself in representations of this univervally experienced conflict: *When the Civil War broke out in 1861 the American sheet-music industry was ready, artistically and technologically, to capitalize on it.* [Ibid., vi]) It is unsurprising therefore that a generally sentimental society - such as mid-century America - should use sentimental song as a way of mediating the specific emotional turbulence of civil war. The American songs were enjoyed in this country quite independently of the context that produced them. They were strong stuff, harnessing the dignified intrinsic pathos of the figure of Mother with the inevitable pathetic outcome of armed conflict, and they were numerous and unrelenting: apart from the Foster titles there was *Write a Letter to My Mother, Kiss Me Before I Die, Mother, Let Me Kiss Him for His Mother, It's Growing Very Dark, Mother, Oh! Will My Mother Never Come?* and *Tell Mother I Die Happy*. (The complete list is huge; see Silber 1960, pps. 116-7.) The tendency found fresh expression during the Spanish-American war with the enormous success of Charles K. Harris's *Break The News To Mother* [Itself an echo of earlier Civil War pieces like Frederick Buckley's *Break It Gently to My Mother* and Frank Davis's *Bear It Gently to My Mother*].)

The similarity of this material might be thought to be a function of the grim similarity of the effects of war, but subsequent Mother songs proved no less homogeneous. In fact there is a remarkable immutability in the way Mother is

portrayed in such songs across time; again the titles alone bear witness to the enduring and conservative nature of this class of sentimental song. For instance here is Kipling's *Mother 'O Mine* from the beginning of this century, then William Tracey's raggy *Mammy O' Mine* from the early 1920's, then Grant Clarke's *Mother of Mine* - a hit for Jolson in the first 'talkie', *The Jazz Singer* in 1927 - followed by a 1935 number, *Old Mammy Mine*, from the British Alley writer Jimmy Kennedy. The songs also make reference to each other: the Kipling lyric is featured as a recitation in George Jessel's performance of the *My Mothers Eyes* (1932). Indeed one senses sometimes that not only do the songs in the tradition partake of similar characteristics, surreally, they are the same song: *Just A Flower From My Angel Mother's Grave*, Harry Kennedy's 1878 hit, summons the same feelings in the same way as Johnny Cash's 1950's recording of *Don't Step On Mother's Roses*; Kennedy was a nineteenth century Vaudeville ventriloquist, Cash is a contemporary Country singer.

All this finds an analogue in the equally limited representations of Mother on the song-sheet covers. The commercial artists who produced these covers were of course concerned with packaging a product, not doing 'art' - but the similarity of the images used shows either a remarkable consensus as to the defining characteristics of the genre or a remarkable paucity of imagination in interpreting it.

The Mother of sheet music artwork is invariably a statuesque lady in a black dress with a lace collar and a brooch at her throat; her age - surely the wrong side of sixty-five - is signalled by her white hair (worn in a bun), her lined face and specs. She often wears a shawl or sits in a rocking-chair, and her expression is benign - twinkling even - as befits her function in the songs: to be constant however much her children try her.

It is both tedious and unprofitable to examine all the major songs of this type, but from the rich vein of material written over the years it is possible to isolate the defining perceptions of Mother in sentimental song. The titles and texts of the songs themselves are the best guide to this, and they are allowed to make their points in this section with a minimum of additional commentary.

'That's What God Made Mothers For' (G.B. 1890's): some definitions.

Both the moral and psychological aspects of the 'mother' ideal mentioned above are succinctly presented in this music-hall favourite:

*To watch over you when a baby, to sing you to sleep with a song,
To try to be near you, to comfort and cheer you, to teach you the right from
the wrong
To do all she can just to make you a man, and over a million things more;
She'll sigh for you, cry for you, yes, even die for you,
That's what God made mothers for.*

('That's What God Made Mothers For': G.B. 1890's)

The National Anthem of spelling songs offers an elegant elucidation of Mother. The song was a hit for Sophie Tucker in 1915, and Spaeth calls the words *unashamedly sentimental* (Spaeth 1948, 338):

*I've been around the world, you bet, but never went to school
Hard knocks are all I seem to get, perhaps I've been a fool;
But still, some educated folks, supposed to be so swell,
Would fail, if they were call'd upon a simple word to spell.
Now if you'd like to put me to the test,
There's one dear name that I can spell the best:*

*M - is for the million things she gave me,
O - means only that she's growing old,
T - is for the tears she shed to save me,
H - is for her heart of purest gold;
E - is for her eyes with lovelight shining,
R - means right, and right she'll always be,
Put them all together, they spell 'MOTHER',
A word that means the world to me.*

('M-O-T-H-E-R, A Word That Means The World To Me': U.S.A. 1915)

Mother's selflessness is particularly stressed in sentimental song, affording an obvious and moving contrast to the invariable ensuing filial selfishness.

*God's gift sent from above,
That pure unselfish love...*

('My Mother's Eyes': U.S.A. 1932)

'Mother Says I Mustn't' (G.B. 1869): Mother as ethical guide.

Mother's moral influence could effect (from afar) startling changes in hitherto dissolute life-styles. In these examples the protagonists are saved from the twin 'hells' of drink and gambling respectively:

*A story I'm going to tell of a mother old and gray,
She had children dear to her, and one, a son who ran away,
Each night at her home there's a vacant chair, and she longs just to see her
boy again,
But he's now a slave to drink, though often he stops to think
Of home and writes this tender loving strain:*

(Chorus)

*I've just come home, mother, don't feel bad,
I've led the wrong life, I know that you are sad.
But I've thrown off my comrades, I'll try to do right
And heed your gentle warning, so I'll be home to-morrow night.*

*One night he returns to his home his poor mother to surprise,
She has given up all hope, and often sits at home and cries,
He meets some old comrades just passing by, and they tempt him with
brimming glass in vain,
For he cries I'll drink no more , opens wide his cottage door,
And greets his mother with this new refrain:*

(Chorus)

('I'll Be Home Tomorrow Night': U.S.A. 1896)

*I had a home out in Texas,
Down where the blue bonnets grew;
I had the sweetest old Mother,
How happy we were, just we two.
'Till one day the angels called her,
To that debt that we all have to pay;
She called me close to her bedside,
These last few words to say.*

*"Son, don't start drinking and gambling,
Promise you'll always go straight."
Ten years have passed since that parting
That promise I broke, I must say.
I started in gambling for pastime,
At last I was just like them all;
I bet my clothes and my money,
Not dreaming that I'd ever fall.*

*One night I bet all my money,
Nothing was left to be seen;
All that I needed to beat them
Was one card and that was a queen.*

*The cards were dealt all 'round the table,
Each man took a card in the draw;
I drew the one that would beat them;
I turned it and here's what I saw.*

*I saw my mother's picture,
And somehow she seemed to say;
"Son, you have broken your promise,"
So I tossed the cards away.
My winnings I gave to a newsboy,
I knew I was wrong from the start;
And I'll ne'er forget that promise,
To Mother, The Queen Of My Heart.*

(*'Mother, The Queen Of My Heart'*: U.S.A. 1933)

When mother's guidance wasn't heeded it was with a profound sense of shame, as demonstrated by the hope expressed in the penultimate line of this piece:

*Momma always knew when I'd break a promise
She could see it when she looked in my face;
And before she went to heaven I promised her I'd change,
But my life's become a shame and disgrace.*

*I know that somewhere there's a heaven,
And I know that my precious momma is gonna be there.
I hope there's a wall around heaven;
So momma can't see me down here.*

(*'Wall Around Heaven'*: U.S.A. 1950's)

'Tie Me To Your Apron Strings Again' (U.S.A. 1938): Mother as emotional comforter.

*Tie me to your apron strings again,
I know there's room for me
Upon your knee.
Bring back all those happy hours when
You kissed my tears away
From day to day.
I thought that I was right
But I was wrong;
Please take me back tonight
Where I belong.
Sing a cradle song to me and then
Won't you tie me to your apron strings again.*

'My Mother's Old Red Shawl' (U.S.A. later 19thC): Some mild fetishism.

Mothers were frequently linked to sentimental objects - *My Mother's Bible* (U.S.A. mid 19thC.) or *The Unfinished Rug* (U.S.A. 1940's) - but the favourite item was her shawl. The devotion accorded by sons - for the implication is invariably of a male authorial voice - to what was in effect an article of their mother's clothing might be a cause for psychiatric disquiet, but remained a popular choice with songsmiths and their audience:

*It now lies on the shelf - it is faded and torn
That dear old red shawl that my mother wore...
The tears come unbidden and gently they fall
To gleam like gems on mother's old shawl...*
(*'My Mother's Old Red Shawl'*: U.S.A. late 19thC.)

Half a century later very little had changed except the shawl's colour:

*Faded and tattered and worn,
Though an angel it used to adorn...
I kiss each stain that may remain,
Of tears I caused to fall...*
(*'Little Black Shawl'*: U.S.A. 1934)

'I Want A Girl Just Like The Girl That Married Dear Old Dad' (U.S.A. 1911):
Mother as model for wife.

This was less a question of *'no-girl's-good-enough-for-my-boy'* than *'no-girl-can-aspire-to-that-acme-of-womanhood-(my mother)'*. In the 1911 song above it is mother's old-fashionedness and constancy that recommends her; could it be that she always contrasts favourably with the women of her son's generation (by definition 'modern', and by implication fickle)? The pioneer Country recording artist Carson Robison, a source of prime 1920's and 1930's sentimentality and staff *siffleur* for R.C.A., seems to imply as much in the following example. Mother as sweet-heart was a familiar trope, and any worrying hints of the Oedipal are again neutralized by a resolutely sentimental focus:

*Many times I've longed for childhood days again,
Just to be back with a pal of mine.
If I could only push aside those years long gone by,
And bring back that old sweetheart of mine.
But what's the use of dreaming*

*Of dreams that won't come true;
I'll tell you what I'm looking for
Perhaps it might be you.*

*I want an old-fashioned sweet-heart,
Just an old-fashioned girl.
One of the plain folks
So loyal and true;
Someone that's real
With big eyes of blue.
One when her hair turns to silver
Still keeps her soul divine;
I want another
Like my dear old mother,
That old fashioned sweet-heart of mine.*

('That Old Fashioned Sweet-Heart of Mine': U.S.A. 1930's)

'Tired Hands' (U.S.A. 1926): Mother as focus for pathos;
part 1 - altruism.

*Tired hands that guided me since childhood days
Tired heart that loved and understood always
Tired steps that I can't number
Tired hands that knew no slumber
Tired lips too tired for her rosary
But not too tired to pray for me
God gave to you, need I say who
Rock'd your cradle with those tired hands.*

'Rocking Alone In An Old Rocking Chair' (U.S.A. 1932): Mother as a focus for
pathos;
part 2 - abandonment.

*Sitting alone in an old rocking chair,
I saw an old mother with silvery hair.
She seem'd so neglected by those who should care
Rockin' Alone in an old rockin' chair.
Her hands were all calloused and wrinkled and old,
A life of hard work was the story they told.
And I thought of Angels as I saw her there
Rockin' Alone in an old rockin' chair.*

*Bless her old heart, do you think she'd complain?
Tho' life has been bitter, she'd do it again.
And carry that cross that is more than her share*

*Rockin' Alone in an old rockin' chair.
It wouldn't take much to gladden her heart
Just some small remembrance on some body's part.
A letter would brighten her empty life there
Rockin' Alone in an old rockin' chair.*

*I know some youngsters in an orphan's home,
Who'd think they owned Heaven, if she were their own.
They'd never be willing to let her sit there
Rockin' Alone in an old rockin' chair.
I look at her and I think what a shame
The ones who forgot her she loves just the same.
And I think of Angels as I see her there
Rockin' Alone in an old rockin' chair.*

'My Yiddishe Momme' (U.S.A. 1925): Lower East Side Realities -
Mother and the construction of American identity.

Benny Green has pointed out that if the Cossacks had been a little more assiduous in their pogroms in the Omsk area the character of twentieth century American popular song would have been very different. This is because the parents of so many future luminaries of pop fled that area to America to escape further persecution. The transit of these Russian Jews from the Steppes to the Lower East Side of New York is a remarkable story of guts - *dreistige* in yiddish - and tenacity *Russian Jews particularly were moving from a medieval to a post-Enlightenment condition...Nearly a million and a half Jews had settled in New York by 1914, a third of them on the Lower East Side...* (Cantwell 1996, 83).

In reading the accounts of those first years in America of the Balines, the Yoelsons, the Kalishs and the Gershvins (later the Berlins, the Jolsons, the Tuckers and the Gershwins) one is struck by the fact that it is the mothers who were most central in effecting this monumental transition from Old World to New. (See Tucker 1948, Bergeen 1990, Goldman 1988). Sophie Tucker's famous song acknowledges the debt those first generation American stars owed to their *Mommes*:

*Of things I should be thankful for I've had a goodly share,
And I sit here in the comfort of a cosy chair,
My fancy takes me to a humble east side tenement;
Three flights up in the rear was where my chidhood days were spent.
It wasn't much like Paradise, but 'midst all the dirt and all,
There sat the sweetest angel, one that I fondly call.*

*My Yiddishe Momme, I need her more than ever now,
My Yiddishe Momme, I'd love to kiss that wrinkled brow.
I long to hold her hands once more as in days gone by
And ask her to forgive me for the things I did that made her cry.
How few were her pleasures, she never cared for fashion's styles;
Her jewels and treasures, she found them in her baby's smiles
Oh, I know that I owe what I am today,
To that dear little lady so old and grey;
To that wonderful Yiddishe Momme of mine.*
(*'My Yiddishe Momme'*: U.S.A. 1925)

'My Mammy' (U.S.A. 1921): Jolson and Twentieth Century Minstrelsy.

If one person is to represent the transition of blackface Minstrelsy from the last century to this it would be Al Jolson - and if asked to name one Mother song most people would designate his *My Mammy*, with its hook line of *I'd walk a million miles / For one of your smiles...* Not by all accounts a pleasant man, Jolson had a tenacity and energy that took no hostages. His use of the 'black mask' persona, and his characteristic performance stance on one knee with arms spread and eyes raised in supplication were of course about the manufacture of pathos, and he was the inspiration for a host of subsequent 'Mammy' singers (see Spaeth 1948, 432).

A master of the moist handkerchief song - a recording session was judged successful if he broke down during pathetic songs - his performance blending nineteenth century blackface and twentieth century Jewish sentimentality bordered on the grotesque, but is remembered (indeed is one of the enduring images of popular culture in this century). The levels of sentimentality Jolson aspired to in performance were remarkable: if nothing else the success of his career shows the continuing popularity of such a vigorous and unsubtle sentimentality in this century.

*Ev'rything seems lovely when you start to roam;
The birds are singing the day that you stray
But wait until you're further away.
Things won't seem so lovely
When you're far from home.
Here's what you'll be saying
When you're all alone:*

*Mammy...Mammy,
The sun shines east, the sun shines west,
But I know where the sun shines best;
Mammy...mammy,*

*My heart strings are tangled around Alabamy.
I, I'm a-coming
Sorry that I made you wait;
I, I'm a-coming
I hope and trust I'm not too late.
Mammy...Mammy
I'd walk a million miles
For one of your smiles
My Mammy.
(*'My Mammy'*: U.S.A. 1921)*

'I've Just Told Momma Good-bye' (U.S.A. 1940's): Envoie.

In *My Mammy* Jolson, returning to his mother, *hope(s) and trust(s)* he's *not too late*... The anxiety was a commonly expressed one in these songs, yet some of them derive their pathos precisely because their remorseful prodigals are 'too late':

*She lies there so peaceful,
In her eternal sleep
With wreaths of pretty flowers
From her head unto her feet.
A gown of gold she wears
To match her silver hair.
A peaceful smile upon her face
That shows her heavenly rest.
(*'Gather 'Round Children'*: U.S.A. 1970's)*

*Some time ago when I said 'Good-bye',
To Mammy with tears in her eye:
I did not think, when I kissed her cheek,
It meant the last 'Good-bye'.*

*I've lost the best Pal that I ever had,
She was a Pal thro' and thro';
Always beside me,
Ready to guide me
In each little thing I would do:
But she has gone to the Heavens above,
Leaving me weary and sad;
And 'twixt my sighs
I now realize
I've lost the best pal I had.
(*'I've Lost The Best Pal I Had'*: G.B. 1922)*

'Mother's Not Dead, She's Only Sleeping' (U.S.A. 1940's): Together Again,
And For Ever.

But of course this isn't The End, because the same tradition that subjects saintly mothers to neglect (and indeed kills them off for the sake of a good funeral song, as in the first example above) is also the tradition of heavenly reunion:

*Take this message to my mother,
It is filled with words of love,
If on earth I'll never meet her,
Tell her that we'll meet above.
Where there is no hour of parting,
All is peace, and love, and joy
God will bless my dear old mother
And protect her only boy.*

('Take This Message to My Mother': U.S.A. 1860's)

*It'll be a wonderful happy day
Up there on the Golden Strand;
When I can hear Jesus, my saviour, say
'Shake hands with mother again!'*

('Shake Hands With Mother Again': U.S.A. 1940's)

{ Note for Dads: yes! there were 'Daddy' songs, but not nearly as many. *Daddy* (G.B. 1883), was an early example, and was written to capitalise on the earlier success of *Auntie* (G.B. c.1880). Such songs became increasingly effusive - *There Ain't Another Daddy In The World Like Mine* (G.B. 1900's), was typical - but few attained the popularity of the Mother songs with the honourable exception of Gene Autry's 1931 hit *That Silver-Haired Daddy of Mine* [with its memorable opening lines: *In a vine-covered shack in the mountains/ Bravely fighting the Battle of Time/ Is a dear one who's weathered Life's troubles/ That Silver-Haired Daddy of Mine.*]; Autry was in awe of Jimmie Rodgers, and was possibly inspired by the success two years earlier of Rodgers' *Daddy and Home*. And at the time of writing *The Old Man* (G.B. 1979), an elegy to fatherhood not to be confused with the less-than-respectful swingy Johnny Mercer song of similar title, is enjoying some success on the Barbershop and Folk circuits. Often a Dad's function in the sentimental canon was sacrificial, as in *Now I've Got No Daddy* (G.B. 1907), *Don't Go Down in the Mine, Dad* (*Dreams Very Often Come True*) (G.B. 1910) or *I May Be Gone for a Long, Long Time* (U.S.A. 1917) - and *Hello Central, Give Me No-Mans Land!* (U.S.A. 1918) and *Just a Baby's*

Prayer At Twilight (U.S.A. 1918) were both addressed to Dads in mortal danger 'Over There'. }

Children

The piquancy of pathos in 'Mother' songs could, however, always be trumped by songs about children. Children are the most potent sentimental 'trope': they are defenceless - therefore potentially pathetic - at the same time as being particularly and directly emotional. In these ways they are similar to other groups favoured by sentimental songsmiths, like slaves and pets (and their shared naïvity is signalled in a cross-referencing way - slaves are often called 'childlike', and pets display a 'slave-like devotion'). Our reaction to children is also similarly demonstrative: Stephen Foster caught this mood movingly in a song he wrote for his two-year old daughter, Marion:

*Her brief absence frets and pains me,
Her bright presence solace brings,
Her spontaneous love restrains me
From a thousand selfish things.*

('Little Ella': U.S.A. 1853)

Yet there is something else, something about the condition of childhood that makes children intrinsically more affecting than the other groups. Children represent potentiality, the as-yet-unrealised future, and if that potentiality is compromised in any way we react: a loss or tainting of their promise necessarily moves us (whether or not we have children ourselves). The particular vulnerability of children derives from their innocence, and is manifested aesthetically in their unflawed and diminutive physical nature and morally in their unworldly ingenuousness. The separate state of childhood received valorization in the first third of the nineteenth century when a home-based domesticity allowed for a more private life lived *en famille* away from the workplace. It is no accident the high period of sentimental songs about children comes after this time, yet before alternative, less benevolent, views of childhood - such as those of Freud - had wide cultural currency.

(This explains why the eighteenth century sentimental song pioneers produced little work on children: childhood was one of the few aspects of life that

century didn't sentimentalize precisely because it wasn't 'foregrounded'. For instance Burns was typical in that, whilst a loving father, he only had occasional contact with his family). Nineteenth century domesticity by contrast privileged the child. Given the intrinsically affecting qualities of childhood (detailed above) it might be thought that adequate sentimental pleasure could be derived simply from a straightforward representation of the child and its world (as in the Foster song above). This was reckoning without the excesses of a by now well-established sentimental song tradition: the potential pathos in the operation of malign fate on an already innately pathetic group was too tempting, and in the pursuit of a yet more piquant sentimental *frisson* children in the songs were orphaned, crippled and blinded. This of course reflected - in a distorted way - social realities: for instance childhood deaths, another grim song topic, were all too real. However, the alacrity with which the songsmiths submitted their juvenile protagonists to the most baroque of fates was less a reflection of any sociological truth than a response to the old sentimental imperative to devise the most exquisitely Affecting Moment. If one were to summarize the way this project was achieved it would be by variously disadvantaging the songs' heroes and heroines: again the precedent is eighteenth century - it will be remembered how Old Edwards in *The Man of Feeling*, already a pathetic figure in respect of his age, is further 'disadvantaged' by a remarkable series of misfortunes (Bankruptcy, a faithful dog shot, a favourite son fined, imprisoned and press-ganged...).

The misfortune visited on children in sentimental song is of varying strengths. At the less harrowing end of the spectrum there are various degrees of disregard. In *Only Me* (U.S.A. later 19thC) the heroine is ignored in favour of a more attractive sibling (*In The House of Too Much Trouble* has a similar plot); in *There's Another Picture In My Mamma's Frame* (U.S.A. 1907) the protagonist is ignored by her re-married mother; in *Always in the Way* (U.S.A. 1890's) by her step-mother; in *Why Don't They Play With Me?* (U.S.A. 1904) by her friends. And in *Little Black Me* (U.S.A. later 19thC) the heroine fears rejection in the afterlife (*...Mama, are there any angels black like me?*). More recently children evacuated in the last war can be regarded as being 'necessarily abandoned', and a song dedicated to them, *Goodnight Children Ev'rywhere* (G.B. 1939), both exploited and sought to ameliorate the pathos of their situation.

Moving up the scale of pathos there are songs where children are lost (*The Little Lost Child*: U.S.A.1894), sold (*For Sale - a Baby*: U.S.A. 1890's) or become destitute (*Little Barefoot*: U.S.A. later 19thC). Endings are rarely happy - the lost child in the last song is unusual in that he is found and brings his parents back together. More typical are the baby in *For Sale* and *Little Barefoot*: neither survive.

Also familiar - and quintessentially pathetic - are protagonists who are lame or blind: the nineteenth century produced two much loved songs entitled *The Blind Boy* (U.S.A. 1842 and G. B. 1890's). Similar sentimental opportunities were offered by another form of handicap, orphanhood, and depriving children of one or both of their parents was a recurrent disadvantaging mechanism in the tradition. *The Orphan Boys* (U.S.A. 1840) is an early example: an idyllic childhood is sketched in the first verse, but in the second their father dies and in the third verse their mother. If only one parent dies that loss is often compounded by the fecklessness of the other: *Father's a Drunkard and Mother is Dead* is a typical text (U.S.A. 1868).

The motif was an enduring one - fifty years later it was reprised (to the letter) in *The Drunkard's Child* (U.S.A. 1930) which opens in memorable, to-the-point mode: *My father is a drunkard, My mother she is dead/ And I am just an orphan child, No place to lay my head.* The death of a parent is exploited sentimentally by playing on the ingenuousness of the child's view of the event: in *Now I've Got No Daddy* (G.B. 1907) that fact is recognised poignantly at Christmas -

*"Santa Claus" is coming! with his load of toys
All so bright and pretty for little girls and boys.
Once he used to bring some for my Christmas tree
But now I've got no Daddy he never comes to me.*

And in *Shall I Be an Angel, Daddy?* (G.B. 1897) the motive behind the question becomes apparent at the end of the chorus: *If I go to heaven, oh! tell me, daddy, / Will I see mother there?* Evoking pathos via childish reaction to parental demise was a favourite and enduring sentimental strategy, and there is a whole sub-set of songs where children mistakenly attribute to various new technologies the ability to reach heaven (where at least one parent is now residing). There are songs involving the post - *I'm Writing a Letter to Heaven* (U.S.A. 1932); the telephone - *Hello Central, Give Me Heaven* (U.S.A. 1901), the railway - *Give Me a Ticket to Heaven* (G.B. 1903) and the radio - *Mr. Radio Man* (U.S.A. 1924). (The template was possibly an earlier Music Hall song, *Skylark ! Skylark ! or The Boy's Message* (G. B. 1870's), where the bird of the title affords a more old-fashioned means of communication.) They all rely for their effect on the (child-like?) notion that heaven is just another place - albeit a distant and special one. The device was so familiar as to be accorded the tribute of pastiche in the 1962 Robert Aldrich film *Whatever Happened to Baby Jane?* when Bette Davis (as Baby Jane Hudson) lisped *I've written a letter to Daddy His address: 'heaven above'...* In all of these songs the focus is on the loneliness felt by the remaining parent and the child: *My mother's an angel up there And we do*

*miss her so you see... ('Skylark'); Oh! I feel so sad and lonely I need a mother's care... ('Letter'); For I want to surely tell her/ We're so lonely here... ('Central'); Mother died when I was born, sir/ And left Dad and me all alone...('Ticket'); Mr. Radio Man, won't you do what you can/ I'm so lonely...('Radio'). Orphanhood often necessitates work of some kind for survival, and children in sentimental song are given occupations which, whilst invariably unsuitable for them, are ideal for generating pathos. These jobs are typically outdoor ones, where the children are exposed to the elements, and to hazard: the repertoire has more than its share of flower-sellers like *The Primrose Girl* (U.S.A. 1794), crossing-sweepers like *Tatters* (G.B. 1870's), and news-boys like *Jimmy, The Pride of Newsboy Row* (U.S.A. 1900). *The Primrose Girl* sets the tone: *Friends and Parents I've none/ I'm looked on with scorn/ Ah! better for me that I'd never been born... but Won't You Buy My Pretty Flowers?* (U.S.A. 1860's) is probably the text *ne plus ultra*: *With absolute unanimity the entire English-speaking world accepted (it) as the perfect 'pity me' song, for whose sake they were resolved to forsake dozens of others* (Willson Disher 1955, 215).*

Less hackneyed (but equally risky) al fresco occupations were represented in songs like the cowboy classic *Little Joe the Wrangler* (U.S.A. 1908), an orphan - or as the song has it: *a little Texas stray* - who died trying to head off a stampede. The most perilous occupations of all, however, were in the armed services: Dibdin's *Little Ben*, a main-top look-out, is an early example (G. B. 1790), and his influence is still clearly felt over half a century later in the Parlour favourite, *The Powder Monkey* (G. B. 1860's):

*But little Jim was book'd, for as the fight was won,
A musket bullet pick'd him off, afore his song was done.
They took him to the cockpit, where a smilin' he did lie,
And the sailors - well, there warn't a man but somehow pip'd his eye.
Says Jim - "my lads, don't fret for me, but if the shore ye see,
Give a kiss to dear old mother, an' say it came from me"...*

The tradition continued into this century with songs like *A Little Boy Called Taps* (U.S.A. 1900), but it was the American Civil War, however, produced the most resonant samples: *If we are to judge by the song literature of the Civil War, fully one third of the casualties on both sides were ill-fated drummer boys who marched into battle unarmed except for their instruments of doom. Of course, the image of a beardless youth of twelve marching bravely into battle, his drumsticks sounding a martial tattoo, defenceless, and, undoubtedly, the pride of a mourning family, was designed to appeal to a generation which thrived on sentimentality.* (Silber 1960,

120). These percussing hebetico heroes had a preternatural ability to deliver - in the midst of battle - affecting final words: a plea to a mother in heaven in *The Drummer Boy of Shiloh* (U.S.A. 1863), a patriotic rallying call in *For the Dear Old Flag I Die* (U.S.A. 1863) and an (ignored) plea for water in *Little Major* (U.S.A. 1863).

These stylized and picaresque *scena* hid the quotidian reality of nineteenth century childhood mortality, and it is the domestic deaths of children that provide the most melancholy narratives. Lawrence Lerner has recently written about real and fictional child-deaths in the last century (Lerner 1997), and the sentimental songs on the subject are at once reflective of the undeniable fact of child mortality and the cultural representations of that fact. As Turner puts it *The little heroine of (this) song is descended directly from Dickens's Little Nell* (Turner 1972, 201) and Spaeth points out how *a whole harvest of songs... (is)... watered by the gentle rain from Dickens's Little Nell and Mrs. Stowe's Little Eva*. (Spaeth 1926, 99; for song details see Gilbert, 33). These famous fictional childhood deaths - one might also want to include that of Little Willie in *East Lynne* and those of Verny and Eric in *Little By Little* - were leitmotifs of nineteenth century culture. It was a *sine qua non* that these unfortunates would utter affecting final words, and this practice was duplicated in song: ...*Give them all my toys, but Mother/ Put My Little Shoes Away* was the hook line from an 1873 ditty of that name and ...*So cold, so cold...* were the last words of *The Little Orphan Girl* [1860's] (whose destiny, like so many others of her kind, was to die in the snow). It is a moot point how much such artistic portrayals of life do themselves, over time, modify the aspects of life they seek to represent.

(The sentimentalization of childhood death in fiction continued through the century - Hans Andersen's *The Little Match-Girl* [1860's] and Wilde's *The Happy Prince* [1888] are examples presented for children themselves.)

Willson Disher has pointed out that whilst *Only a few of the Victorian novelists made themselves known in song* (1955, 154), their characters and story-lines were frequently 'recycled' into song, as for instance in *Little Eva's Parting Words* (G.B. mid 19thC) and Miss Young and George Linley's *Little Nell (They told him gently, she was gone/ And spoke of Heaven and smil'd/ And drew him from the lonely room/ Where lay the lovely child* [G.B. mid 19thC]). Dickens actually did provide one 'purpose-built' song lyric when he collaborated with Henry Russell on *The Green Ivy*, which - interestingly considering his penchant for the sentimental - *didn't find much favour in the home because it lacked heart* (Ibid., 154). The most celebrated reworking of his fiction in song was the Parlour ballad, *What Are the Wild Waves Saying?* (G.B. 1849) about the demise of Paul Dombey in *Dombey and Son*. (The same subject was the topic of a popular lithograph by C.W. Nicholls, another

example of the simultaneous representation of favourite Affecting Moments in different media.)

These cultural representations of childhood death, as much as the grim statistics that attest them, were bearable because death's awfulness was always balanced by the certitude of reunion and bliss in the afterlife. That certitude allowed the deaths to be almost savoured, and an uncomplicated Christianity eschatology informs these premature fatalities from *Little Footsteps* of 1868 (U.S.A.) to *That Little Kid Sister of Mine* from 1930's (U.S.A.). In both heavenly domiciliation is guaranteed: *Little footsteps now will journey in the world of sin no more/ Ne'er they'll press the sandbanks lightly, by that golden river's shore* ('Footsteps'); *She was only seven/ When she was called to heaven...* ('Kid Sister').

As Lerner (1997) points out, such faith did nothing to lessen the anguish of witnessing mortal illness in a child; the helplessness in the face of that fact is captured hauntingly in sentimental song:

*I'm tying the leaves So they won't come down
So the wind won't blow them away;
For the best little girl In the wide, wide world
Is lying so ill today.
Her young life must fade When the last leaves fall -
I'm fixing them so they'll stay.
I'm tying the leaves So they won't come down
So Nelly won't go away.*

('I'm Tying the Leaves So They Won't Come Down': U.S.A. 1907)

(A similar sentimental mechanism was used in other songs about premature death, for instance, *Please Paint a Rose on the Garden Wall* [U.S.A. early 20thC])

The loss of a child could also be evoked by the more familiar strategy of making objects the sentimental focus:

*The little toy dog is covered with dust,
But sturdy and staunch he stands;
And the little toy soldier is red with rust,
And his musket moulds in his hands....
...And they wonder, as waiting the long years through
In the dust of that little chair,
What has become of our Little Boy Blue,
Since he kissed them and put them there.*

('Little Boy Blue': U.S.A. 1891; sometimes known as 'Toddles')

Lest all this is dismissed as something associated only with a certain time or group or sensibility it is salutary to remember that even post-Rock 'n' Roll popular song features sentimentalized children. This can be the result simply of a search for novelty material, as in Rolf Harris's resurrection of the 1903 piece *Two Little Boys*, or from more honourable motives, as in Eric Clapton's elegy for his son, *Tears In Heaven* (1992). The motif is still current, and the most celebrated 'standard' in the field is *Nobody's Child* (U.S.A. 1949), which stands in relation to pathetic children songs as *Old Shep* does to pathetic dog songs; the relatively recent composition of both songs attests the durability of the tradition. *Nobody's Child* has an illustrious recording history, affording successes for an eclectic group of artists: Lonnie Donegan in the 1950's, Karen Young in the 1960's The Alexander Brothers in the 1970's and The Travelling Wilbury's in 1990. Like *Shep* it even makes some nineteenth century excesses seem tame: its hero is an orphan and blind (making it an example of the 'incremental' school of sentimental songwriting: - more disadvantages = more pathos). In the course of the song these two disadvantages conspire to produce a third: the child is passed over for adoption:- *I know they'd like to take me/ But when they see I'm blind/ They always take some other child/ And I am left behind.* (Or in the alternative version given in some recordings: *They say they like my curls of gold/ They like my eyes of blue/ But they always take some other child/ And I'm left here with you.* Handicap is always picturesque in these songs, the result of the same editing process that removed physical distress from child deaths in literature).

The most resolute monument to post-Victorian sentimental 'child' songs however lies with one man, Al Jolson, and one song, *Sonny Boy*. This shouldn't be too surprising: Jolson was in a sense the last 'old-fashioned' pop star, who despite modern jazzy inflections essentially represented a nineteenth century sensibility in both his stentorian, overstated singing style (a blend of Vaudeville and Minstrelsy), and in a repertoire that included the most floridly unreconstructed sentimentalism. Not for him the smooth microphone intimacies of Crosby or the sophisticated new Alley songs by smart ironists like Porter. We have already noted his success with the emblematic Mother song, *My Mammy*, but his particular sentimental persuasion was for pathetic children - and he made a speciality of the genre, having hits with *Dirty Hands*, *Dirty Face* (U.S.A. 1923), *Mr. Radio Man* (U.S.A. 1924) and *Little Pal* (U.S.A. 1929). It is however with *Sonny Boy*, the main featured number in the film *The Singing Fool* (1928), that the Jolsonian *oeuvre* reached its zenith. The film was written as a vehicle for him in an attempt to reprise the success of *The Jazz Singer*, and its plot was an extended essay in pathos - Jolson loses his beloved son first to his

unfaithful wife, and then to death. During the shooting of the film Jolson became unhappy with *Little Fella*, the Irving Berlin song he was supposed to sing to Davy Lee, his on-screen son, and late one night contacted the songwriting team of Henderson, DeSylva and Brown to provide a replacement. *What followed has become one of the most oft-told stories in show business. Buddy, Lew, and Ray were still up, but exhausted from hours of hard work. They tried to beg off when Jolson told them he needed a new song, but Al. reminded Bud of all he owed him, and the three tired songwriters reluctantly agreed to write the number.*

When Al. called back, an hour later, the new song was finished. The three tunesmiths had taken Al's suggestion of a first line ("Something like 'Climb upon my knee, Sonny Boy, 'though you're only three, Sonny Boy' ") and written other lyrics to complete it in the most banal and maudlin fashion imaginable. When Al. heard it he said it was just what he needed, and the three tired songwriters almost laughed themselves to sleep (Goldman 1988, 160).

Jolson however had the last laugh: *Sonny Boy* became the most commercially successful song of his career - he sings it three times in the film - and *The Singing Fool* (that 'essay in pathos') the most successful film of all time until *Gone With The Wind*.

Again, sophisticated taste sought to deny popular appetite for the sentimental: *Who could take a thing like that seriously?* asked DeSylva (Freedland 1972, 144). Quite a lot of people apparently: *For years afterwards, intrepid explorers were reported hearing Arctic Eskimos and African tribesmen winding up ancient phonographs to listen to scratched discs of Jolson's 'Sonny Boy'. The recording became the world's first ever disc to sell a million copies. It went on to sell two million and then three million (Ibid., 145).*

Chapter 7

The Tradition Established: two repertorial reveries

'My Ireland of Dreams' - The Irish sentimental song from Tom Moore to Johnny Cash

*There's a bit of an Isle where the green grass is greenest,
Where roses are sweetest of any that grow;
Where colleens are fairest and wits are the rarest,
And the songs are the dearest that anyone knows.
Sweet Isle O' Dreams of you I am singing,
'Tis you, sure, that mean the whole world to me,
And divil a bit of me heart is left over,
Sweet Emerald Isle, you're the gem of the sea.*

*Dear Isle o' Dreams, I love you,
Land where the shamrock grows,
Sweet Isle of smiles and blarney.
And where the Shannon flows,
Dear land of love, where laughter
Thru ev'ry teardrop gleams,
Ireland my own, I love you,
My Isle O' Dreams.*

('Isle O' Dreams': U.S.A. 1912)

*Sure if I had the wings of a swallow
I would travel far over the sea.
Then a rocky ould road I would follow
To a spot that is heaven to me.
When the sun goes to rest
Way down in the west
Then I'll build a nest
In the place I love best:
In that Dear Little Town
In the Ould County Down
It will linger way down in my heart;
Tho' it never was grand
It is my faerie-land
Just a wonderful world set apart.
Oh My Ireland of Dreams,
You are with me it seems
And I care not for fame or renown;
Like the black sheep of old
I'll come back to the fold
Little home in the Ould County Down.*

('Little Town in the Ould County Down': U.S.A. 1920)

Introduction

The Irish sentimental song is a particularly pure and self-contained class within popular music. It is also remarkably long-lived, having its origins in the birth of modern commercial popular music at the end of the eighteenth century and beginning of the nineteenth, and still flourishing as a major genre until the middle of this century: *There's No Song Like An Irish Song* as a (English) 1952 song said. It is reflective of the main historical changes in Anglo-American popular song, starting as a drawing-room confection and then becoming an Alley staple - and has found expression in every imaginable way via records, sheet-music, stage shows and movies. The repertoire is traditionally associated with one of the most enduring icons - and sounds - of (pre-Rock) popular song performance, the Irish tenor, who is enshrined in recordings from the early Edison cylinders of John McCormack to the film sound-track of *Hear My Song*, a celebration of one of the last great Irish popular tenors, Josef Locke.

It is essentially the music of exiles and foreigners, who have felt free to reinvent notions of Ireland through tear-dimmed or rose-tinted sentimental visions. As such it has largely ignored any historical or social truth about Ireland and, born out of the developing taste for sentimentality in popular music (and a subsequent market demand for the same), the Irish sentimental ballad has been more sentimental than Irish (construing 'Irish' by any standard of veracity).

It is thus a gloriously inauthentic music, 'punter art' (to borrow Rab C. Nesbitt's felicitous phrase), and is concerned principally with the manipulation of emotion. It is a constructed, artificial form written for the salon, for the show, but above all written for profit. Its relation to a real Ireland is much the same as that of pantomime scenery for an enchanted wood to a real forest. Like stage scenery it can be manipulated to maximize sensational effect. But to bemoan its artificiality - the gaudy, over-stated, simplified version of things it shares with the flats, backcloths and wings of a stage set - is to miss the point. People prefer things that way, an Ireland of Dreams (to quote a resonant phrase from the second song on the previous page) to an often unhappy Ireland of reality: as Eliot pointed out *Human kind Cannot bear very much reality*.

The Irish sentimental song is useful to this study for several reasons: not only does it provide a vivid example of a cohesive sentimental song type or style, but it also affords a window on the varying creative and business processes surrounding such material. It also throws into sharp relief questions of value in relation to sentimental

art (alluded to in the preface), especially the vexed question of its 'inauthenticity'. Not only has the Ireland of Dreams of sentimental song been summoned by a remarkably constant clutch of symbols through time but it has particular elegance as a category not created and imposed from the 'outside' by writers and theorists, but rather understood from the 'inside' by practitioners - composers and performers (and the public). This clear unanimity about its nature centres on a propitious (and rare) concordance on what constitutes its core repertoire. That repertoire is enduring and conservative, and one might posit a neo-Darwinian explanation for this: at any one time only a small proportion of songs in any style will be 'popular', but their characteristics will then be incorporated into the next generation of writing in a 'selectively adaptive' way. These successful strains coalesce to produce the heart of the repertoire (which in this case is reflective of a remarkable orthodoxy that remains consistent across time and place). The most vivid proof of this consensus lies in the way the same songs are always anthologised in 'Irish' collections, reflecting a shared understanding of what constitutes that category by publishers and publics at different times and places. For instance *Shamrockland*, a medley of Irish songs first published by the English firm of Feldman's in the early 1930's, contains essentially the same pieces as *51 Lucky Irish Classics* recently published in the United States by Warner Brothers sixty years later. This same repertoire is similarly featured in professional material prepared for musicians - for instance the lists that give the starting note and usual key of the principal songs thought to constitute a 'sub-set' of popular song (for instance 'Hillbilly', 'Italian', 'Jewish', 'Hawaiian' or 'Irish'). Because these lists are *aides mémoires* for working musicians and are not reflective of the material of any one publishing house and are free of copyright constraints - neither tune nor words are printed - such inventories *ipso facto* reflect what people understand by a song category like 'Irish'. One such inventory, from the Glasgow firm of Mozart Allan (early 1950's but still in print in 1965), lists under 'Irish' forty one songs drawn from a hundred and forty year span. Nearly all are composed pieces (that is, not 'traditional' or 'folk') by non-Irish writers; most are sentimental to a greater or lesser extent. The clear implication therefore is that for most people Irish song is intrinsically sentimental - (and 'Irish Sentimental Song' therefore is something of a tautology). It might be objected such lists are not inclusive, and Irish art songs or Irish folk songs are largely omitted; a fair enough point - but their very absence on the lists shows they have little popular currency. Popular Irish song is sentimental Irish song.

Thomas Moore's position in all this is axiomatic aesthetically as much as economically: no comparable work existed before - he effectively re-invented Irish song, and everything about his example as a songwriter presaged the future. His work can be seen as the 'prime mover' from which a line of Irish heart songs derived that extends from the drawing rooms of the Regency to 1950's Nashville.

Moore made a lot of money from songs utilizing his formula for Irish-flavoured melancholy, and their sentimentality was always more apparent than their putative nationality. Whilst many of his best-known *Irish Melodies* make no reference to Ireland, it is significant that Moore was perceived as *an Englishman's idea of an Irishman* (Moore 1926, ix), because the whole Irish sentimental repertoire is predicated on an idealized idea of Ireland created by exiles and foreigners. It is about ideas - fancies - not facts: Moore never had the curatorial nationalist zeal of Burns, and never strove for any true representation of Irish culture. He had neither the knowledge nor the interest, and his career is essentially that of an English man of letters. Though Irish by birth, Moore spoke both literally and metaphorically with an English accent (as he himself recognised): *I find the English accent (with which I always sing) is not liked by the genuine 'Pats'* (Ibid., 192).

As has been noted, the success of the *Irish Melodies* was a global phenomenon, yet Moore noted the reception of his work in Ireland itself *was much colder* (Ibid., 151). Moore's genius was for the production of a commercially viable product that was primarily concerned with satisfying public taste for the sentimental, not holding a mirror to Irish culture. Yet despite the incidental nature of Moore's reference to Ireland it was a suitable locus for such work: as in Scotland, dire contemporary conditions afforded a suitably pathetic contrast with past glories (reinforcing, Moore thought, a national tendency to tears - *Lachrymis alteria sudant*). Also like Scotland, Ireland's perceived pastoral charm favoured the representation of the picturesque and the heart-warming. The privileging of a sensibility - sentimentality - over any 'authentic' presentation of a culture means Moore's legacy is viewed suspiciously; yet it provided a lode that was then mined for the next century and a half.

Britain

The last part of the *Irish Melodies* was published in 1834, and Moore's example was not slow in bringing forth similar material: *The Rose Of Tralee* (Mordant Spencer/Glover) is from 1837, *Kathleen Mavourneen* (Crawford/Crouch) from 1838

and *The Irish Emigrant* (Blackwood/Barker) is from 1845. Like Moore's work they feature an Irishness that is peripheral or bogus: *Tralee* bizarrely posits the existence of a *pure crystal fountain* as evidence of that area's (natural) pulchritude, *Mavourneen* is a standard pathetic love ballad, tearful and vague: we never learn if its eponymous heroine is dead or asleep. Its Irishness lies largely in its title: 'Kathleen' was to become one of the most popular of girls' names used to signify Irishness, and 'Mavourneen' - with its savoury vowels - is Irish for 'my darling'. It also utilizes the favourite sentimental trope of banishment from beloved homeland, (seen in the Scottish songs and then in Moore) a theme it shares with *The Irish Emigrant*. This title promises a more specific - even documentary - Irishness, but turns out to be a standard melodrama about premature death: it is this rather than potato famine or corrupt landlords that causes the emigrant of the title to seek a new life. For all their ersatzness these pieces have become 'standards' in the repertoire, and along with Moore's songs have been central to defining the Irish sentimental song tradition to the extent that *The 'Irish' song was already a recognized category by the mid-nineteenth century. A song collection published in 1854 was entitled 'Marsh's Selection, or, Singing for the Million, Containing the Choicest and Best Collection of Admired Patriotic, Comic, Irish, Negro, Temperance, and Sentimental Songs Ever Embodied in One Work'...* (Van der Merwe 1989, 49).

The point to make here is how relatively quickly categories of popular song can become established: it has already been noted how Scottish sentimental song was being perceived as a class before the end of the eighteenth century, and it seems the process was even swifter with Irish songs. The Scottish song collections may have shown the way, but before Moore there was no comparable Irish heart song tradition, and his songs and the ones immediately following them had a crucial rôle in determining the character of all subsequent work. Not all Irish songs from this time fed this tendency, for instance some displayed a humour or sauciness that subverted any sentimental effect: it will be remembered that, long before Thompson's strictures to Burns about substituting pathos for rudery, eighteenth century sentimental drama had resolutely eschewed any bawdry or comedy as inimical to its task. (We may note for instance that the songs of Samuel Lover are more quaintly humorous than sentimental though they 'buy into' the arcadian aspect of Ireland so important to sentimentality.)

Sentimental arcadies are always beautiful places inhabited by the pure of heart (thus linking sentimentality's aesthetic and moral components); we have met them in Burns's Highlands, Foster's plantation and Watts's heaven, but the stress on geographical loveliness reaches new heights in the Irish songs. It is perhaps telling

that so many famous Irish songs in some way make reference to it as 'heaven'. This is certainly the focus of the next significant song from the tradition, *Killarney* (Balfe/Falconer) from 1861: the picturesque formed part of the eighteenth century zeitgeist, and it was the sentimentalists before the Romantics who first stressed being moved by the naturally visually striking. The song makes extravagant claims for the beauty of the locale in question (another marker soon to be clichéd), though in this case they were possibly justified: *Here grow cedars of Lebanon, arbutus, wild fuchsia...the scented orchid, which grows along the Mediterranean coast and in Asia Minor, the great butterwort, which is a native of Spain, and the blue-eyed grass, which you will only see in Canada* (Waites and Hunter 1984, 23).

The song shows Moore's imprint in its focus on the memory of a picturesque spot. Mooresque melancholy was evoked in several songs, and as with Moore, often takes precedence over any putative Irishness. For instance Gerald Griffen's *A Place In Thy Memory* has no specific Irish references, but like *The Last Rose of Summer* is anthologised as an Irish song (in this case in *40 Irish Songs* published by Bayley and Ferguson, 1880's). Even those songs that do resolutely signal their Irishness often have that Irishness 'upstaged' by their extravagant melancholy: James Molloy had produced an edition of revamped Moore songs in 1873 and his *The Kerry Dance* (1879), despite a buoyant 6/8 meter, blends personal and national sadness in a familiar evocation of a halcyon past and refers *à la* Moore to the poignant brevity of youth's heyday.

Molloy's song was introduced at a concert organised by the publisher William Boosey to promote popular song. Such events reflected an increased awareness of the market potential of songs, and this commercial impulse was aided by the already increasing standardization of the Irish sentimental song. This was becoming apparent in the previous decade. For instance Charlotte Barnard's celebrated 1866 song *Come Back to Erin* has a high cliché count - including *shamrocks* and *colleens* - and signals its Irishness in an unrepentantly stagey way: the profligate use of 'Mavourneen' as a term of endearment (seven times in the first stanza), and a dropping of 'g's on '-ing' endings. Such a tendency to the formulaic, whilst regrettable creatively, facilitated an increasingly 'production-line' approach to composition. The market success of such material also encouraged contractual and promotional agreements of an increasingly modern sort. Mrs. Barnard certainly had both a keen sense of business - she was *...one of the first ballad composers to make a royalty arrangement with her publisher, rather than selling her copyrights for a fixed sum* (Scott, 75) - as well as having a keen understanding of the popular taste: she was *entirely in tune with the sentimental tastes of her time* (Turner 1875, 213).

Come Back to Erin was also a hit in America, and it was here that the development of the Irish sentimental song as formulaic commodity would reach its zenith.

America

The gradual changes instituted by Boosey and Mrs Barnard would soon be eclipsed by an 'American revolution' of all aspects of popular song at the birth of Tin Pan Alley at the end of the century. The Alley was the creation of immigrants, foremostly Jews who had fled persecution in Eastern Europe, but also Irish who had fled the potato famines. In the 1840's starvation had driven over a million people from Ireland to the New World, but Irish influence in American cultural life didn't occur until a generation later. Understanding the nature of Irish assimilation into the cultural mainstream gives a clue as to why the Irish sentimental song was to become such a mainstay of early Tin Pan Alley.

The situation of the first Irish emigrants was grim: fleeing a desperate situation at home they found themselves at the bottom of the social pile in America. Moreover the perception of the Irish by the 'host' culture was generally as brutish - 'No Irish Need Apply' - and for much of the mid century and later American popular culture exclusively represented the Irish as comic grotesques. For all this, Irish assimilation into American culture was quick and efficient. It is often suggested that this was a function of Irish affability and gregariousness; it might equally have been because the culture favoured anglophones at a time when it was also accepting huge numbers of foreign-speaking immigrants from Scandinavia, Germany, Poland and Russia. For whatever reasons, the Irish soon started to achieve some prominence in politics, the police and theatre and music. As the folk-memory of the wretchedness that prompted them to emigrate faded, these new Irish-Americans felt free to re-invent their heritage; at four thousand miles distance it meant these re-inventions need never be tested against any tiresome reality. Success in the new country kindled a desire to re-assert the Irishness of being an Irish-American (paradoxically, initial assimilation favoured the exact opposite, stressing American-ness, and the minimizing of original cultural roots). A sentimental view of The Ould Sod was ideal for such a purpose for it not only overlaid painful memories with an idealised Ireland but had a tone that signalled the acquisition of a genteel sensibility that would serve to correct earlier perceptions of the Irish as hot-tempered hod-carriers: *As the Raffertys and Nolans hoisted themselves up in the world, so the stage mick in red*

strap whiskers and guzzling beer from a can, was howled off by the Hibernian societies. Ireland now became a celtic Dixie... (Whitcomb 1994, 52).

How much things were changing can be seen by contrasting the first American Irish sentimental hit with what followed. *I'll Take You Home Again, Kathleen* (1875) was very much in the British Parlour mode: a wistful piece of melancholy with a tentative Irish character (derived principally from its heroine's name) it had been written by a German schools inspector, Thomas Westendorf, who had sold it outright to the music publishers John Church. Church was typical of the time in its leisurely, gentlemanly approach to business. Huge 'lists' to accommodate all musical tastes mitigated against the promotion of any particular work, and music publishing like its literary sister, aspired to a certain moral and artistic superiority which was inimical to being at the sharp end of commercial practice. Market success happened therefore almost despite the publishers; there was no notion of cultivating talented writers, indeed, like Stephen Foster, they were often treated shoddily. All that was to change, and it was dissatisfaction with this complacent and undynamic status quo that led to the establishment of Tin Pan Alley. The pioneering Alley firm of Witmarks, comprising three brothers, Isidore, Julius and Jay, was formed as a reaction to another result of this haphazard business practice: Isidore had failed to receive payment due to him on a song he had written. The brothers helped re-invent music-publishing in the 1880's, giving it the brash, aggressive characteristics that became associated with the term Tin Pan Alley; this moved popular song production from an (uncertain) profession to a tough business like any other. *Like most new businesses, Tin Pan Alley was a young man's game* (Jasen 1988, 6) although the Witmarks suggested it might almost be a child's game: all were underage when the business was set up in 1886, and their father - the 'M' in the firm's name - had to be co-opted to sign legal documents. They *...took an active hand in plugging their songs instead of waiting...for singers to come to them... With an eye on the national market, the Witmarks became the first major full-line (sic) popular song publisher..., developing the personal and professional creative and marketing skills that soon became standard throughout the industry* (Ibid.).

An initial specialisation in topical songs was broadened to keep the business healthy: *As the 1890's wore on, they branched out...They handled the show scores of Victor Herbert, Chauncey Olcott and George M. Cohan, which lead also to the development of their fine Irish song catalog...* (Ibid.,7). It was this catalogue that furnished the high period of Irish-American sentimental song, and whilst Herbert and Cohan remain marginally better known today, Chancellor John Olcott's work has stood the test of time even if his name has not. Although writing both words and

music for his first hits, he later collaborated extensively with Ernest Ball (a staff pianist for the Witmarks who, like Olcott, had no Irish links). Additional lyricists were sometimes co-opted for later shows, but the talent was essentially Ball and Olcott's. The material that has survived comes from a 20 year period as follows:

<u>Song</u>	<u>Show it appeared in</u>	<u>Lyricist</u>	<u>Composer</u>
<i>My Beautiful Irish Maid</i>	? (1894)	Olcott	Olcott
<i>My Wild Irish Rose</i>	<i>A Romance of Athlone</i> (1899)	Olcott	Olcott
<i>Mother Machree</i>	<i>Barry of Ballymore</i> (1910)	Rida J. Young	Olcott/Ball
<i>Isle of Dreams</i>	<i>Isle of Dreams</i> (1912)	George Graff/Olcott	Ball
<i>When Irish Eyes Are Smiling</i>	" " "	George Graff/Olcott	Ball
<i>A Little Bit of Heaven</i>	<i>The Heart of Paddy Whack</i> (1914)	J. Kiern Brennan	Ball

Of this half-dozen four, *Rose*, *Machree*, *Eyes* and *Heaven*, stand out: for many they are Irish sentimental song. The Olcott songs have an unsubtle theatrical Irishness that bespeaks their origin in the Musical Theatre: Olcott had risen to prominence as the lead tenor in Augustus Pitou's company, and Pitou specialised in the *production of sentimental operettas on Irish themes* (Sadie 1980, 405). The songs were as garish and energetic as the shows, and American lack of reticence rendered their clichés more obvious than those in the songs from the more subdued British Parlour Irishry. As part of a variety or musical theatre tradition these songs had to make their point quickly and punchily (contrasting with the more gentle meanderings of much of the parlour tradition). As a consequence the sentimentality of Irish-American Alley songs can be seen to be markedly more crude than, say, Moore's delicate songs of yearning: it will be remembered his diffuse dreams of Erin were vague mood-pieces that sometimes did away with any specific Irish reference. The new songs were as brash as the country that produced them, and their Irishness was of a 'lapel-grabbing' variety unambiguously summoned from a small pool of hackneyed yet effective imagery that had evolved over the last century. For instance the lyric of *Where the River Shannon Flows* (Russell 1905) was described recently as *A raft of hoary but harmless clichés*. (It is indeed: Erin, roses[Irish], shamrocks[three-leaved], shillelaghs, blarney and fairies feature in inelegantly expressed proximity: *...It's the land of the shillalh (sic) My heart goes back there daily...* is typical). The same commentator continues by noting that *By 1905 hundreds of such songs were being written to an obvious commercial formula* (Lennister 1992: preface).

That formula, whilst seemingly encouraging of sloppy songwriting like Russell's, was actually narrow - for the Irish sentimental song is summoned from a conservative and circumscribed repertoire of 'tropes'. The 'laundry list' of acceptable clichés is small, for instance only certain Irish names and places will do: 'Danny' and

'Killarney' are O.K. whilst 'Declan' and 'The Giant's Causeway' are not. (This did not, however, preclude what one might term the gazetteer school of songwriting: *Sure, my heart is in Kerry, in old Londonderry, Killarney, Kilkenny and Clare...*[*Ireland Is Ireland To Me* / O'Hara and Brennan 1915]).

The continual rearrangement of a few favoured symbols and themes produced songs which were almost indistinguishable, (a situation hardly unique in popular song - consider for instance George Formby comedy songs or early Rockabilly). Similarities were encouraged in that so many of the songs were written from the perspective of the exile fondly recalling home (understandably prevalent in the Irish-American songs). There are a slew of songs involving protagonists in an emblematic American place (urban, signifying new world bustle) hankering for an emblematic Irish location (rural, signifying old world charm). The favoured American location for such easterly yearnings was Broadway: it features in four songs (*In The Valley of Sweet Aherlow* [Coughlan 20thC]; *Eileen McManus* [Crofts/Maguire 1950]; *The Old Bog Road* [O'Farrelly/Brayton 20thC]; *'Twas Only an Irishman's Dream* [Dubin/O'Brien/Cormack 1916]), but homesickness might occur anywhere, and *The Mountains O' Mourne* (French/Collisson 1937) is occasioned by urban anomie in London and *If We Only Had Old Ireland Over Here* (Farrell 20thC) is a wistful 'letter home' from Melbourne.

The restrictive orthodoxy of the tradition is seen in the parasitic way the 'back-catalogue' of earlier popular numbers was continually raided. This varied from re-cycling some aspect of a previous number (or more likely several small aspects of several previous numbers) to quoting complete chunks of earlier songs. This reached its apotheosis in a piece like *My Irish Song of Songs* (Dubin/Sullivan 1920's), which is almost exclusively a *mélange* of what has gone before: the conceit of producing a chorus composed entirely of existing titles may seem tired, but how many other styles could accommodate such extensive quoting so seamlessly? *My Irish Song of Songs* was by no means unique in citing earlier bits of the tradition: *It Takes a Great Big Irish Heart To Sing an Irish Song* (Herman/Glogau 1915) refers to *Mother Machree* and two Tom Moore songs, *The Harp That Once in Tara's Hall* and *Believe Me If All Those Endearing Charms*. Other songs merely appropriated a single title: another of Moore's successes was still being reinvoked a century later in *Like The Last Rose of Summer (You Just Said "Good Bye")* (Gilbert/Lynton 1924). (This incidentally demonstrates unequivocally the continuing influence of Moore as the founding father of the tradition, particularly remarkable given his songs had a weaker 'flavour' and were often only peripherally 'Irish' compared to twentieth century pop Irishry). The references were not just to other earlier songs but to those who

popularized them: Chauncey Olcott himself received a mention in the Schwartz/Jerome 1903 hit *Bedelia* (a song also interesting for its popularization of an entirely hybrid Irish name).

A more cynical utilization of the back-catalogue occurred in 'sequel' songs, an unashamedly blatant practice that attempted to reprise a success - the Alley equivalent of cinema's *Rocky II* or *Return to Planet of the Apes*. It was fortuitous for business therefore that both *Rosie O'Grady* (Nugent 1896) and *Mother Machree* - grande dames of the tradition - had thoughtfully produced daughters: *The Daughter of Rosie O'Grady* (Brice/Donaldson 1920's) and *She's the Daughter of Mother Machree* (Nenarb/Ball 1915). This established the pattern for later song colleens: *Peggy O'Neil* (Pease/Dodge/Nelson 1921) generated *The Daughter of Peggy O'Neil* (Pease/Tobias/Kisco 1930).

If Irish sentimental song 'borrowed' from itself it also adopted any plausible current trend in popular song writing, and one reflection of its mass-produced character is the way it partook of the general Alley trends that had nothing whatsoever to do with Ireland. For instance 'spelling songs' were big at the beginning of the century, so why not an Irish spelling song? The 1915 hit *M-O-T-H-E-R* for which *Howard Johnson* wrote the unashamedly sentimental words (Spaeth 1948, 338) provided the model for the subsequent Irish spelling song *That's How I Spell I-R-E-L-A-N-D* (McConnell/Downey/Sandford 1931).

Britain again and 'Danny Boy'

Finally, if any doubt about the engagingly opportunistic nature of the tradition remains, we may consider the case of the Irish sentimental song, *Danny Boy*. Although the new American Alley songs dominated the market in this century they didn't completely replace the British ballads, and *Danny Boy* (1913) represents a late flowering of the British Parlour Irishry. It is necessary to make some reference to its melody, for, more than many pieces, its success is essentially that of the marriage of a memorable lyric and plangent tune. The tune, *The Londonderry Air*, is usually presented as being an anonymous folk melody: it was published as such by William Petrie in 1855 (having been 'collected' by a Miss Ross at Limvady market a few years earlier). Its status of being in the public domain is important for two reasons: it meant it could be appropriated with impunity by lyricists, and the resulting songs would have the cachet of being at least partially 'traditional'. In truth the melody seems most unfolk-like: its mode, range, construction are all untypical of such work,

and the attempt to provide it with a bogus antiquity by linking it with Moore in the early nineteenth century and Handel in the eighteenth century (see Lennister, vi) are absurd given that it was only known from 1855. For such a resonant tune not to have been noted earlier, and for that tune to be of such an anomolous and sophisticated character, all bespeak a more recent, composed, genesis. From its first publication in Petrie there was *a scramble to set words to the tune* (Dr. Jim Hunter in Lloyd 1996); and there have been scores of lyrics put to the piece - the great Irish tenor John McCormack recorded three separate versions including one of his own. This at once represents a tribute to the intrinsic 'specialness' of the melody as well as a cynical desire to cash in on that 'specialness' on the part of publishers and performers. For such a haunting piece to be 'composer unknown' was a gift: no composer royalties had to be paid and no musician needed hiring, so a product could be got together with minimum effort and outlay. Supplying a lyric was a canny move, for it at once created a more viable product - song rather than instrumental - at the same time as enabling copyright to be claimed on that product. Each publisher hoped that their lyric would be the one that would gain currency as the one associated in the popular mind with *The Londonderry Air*; in the meantime it was good enough to have a version on file, for such was the power of the tune a setting of even the most dreary stanzas might still sell: The main publishing houses were represented as follows:

Ascherberg, Hopwood and Crew

As Chimes That Float O'er Silvery Seas
(Dr. George Sigersen)

Francis, Day and Hunter

Acushla Mine
(Terry Sullivan)

Boosey

Danny Boy
(Fred. Weatherly)

Novello

The Derry Vale
(W.C.Rothery)

Chappells

Would God I Were the Tender Apple Blossom
(Katherine Hinkson)

It is of course the Weatherley version published by Boosey that we remember. The fact that the world now largely 'hears' *The Londonderry Air* as *Danny Boy* is eloquent testimony to the importance of lyrics in popular music: not only has the tune become inseparable from Weatherly's lines, but it gains a specificity, a currency and power, from them. Fred Weatherly was an English barrister with a successful side-line in

greeting card verse and song lyrics. His forte was the sentimental - he is remembered for the Russellian 'grand scena' *The Children's Home* (1881), the sacred barnstormer *The Holy City* (1892) and the First World War hit *Roses of Picardy* (1916) - and was responsible in all for 1500 titles between 1875 and 1920. It was this thorough immersion in the practicalities of songwriting that ensured Weatherly 'won' the battle to set *The Londonderry Air*: he understood the public taste for the sentimental and - more importantly - understood the ways a song might be crafted to satisfy that taste. (By comparison with which the other versions - two of which, Sigersen's and Sullivan's, are also deeply sentimental - seem the work of amateur dabblers.)

*Oh, Danny Boy, the pipes, the pipes are calling,
From glen to glen, and down the mountain side,
The summer's gone, and all the leaves are falling,
It's you, it's you must go and I must bide.
But come ye back when summers in the meadow
Or when the valley's hushed and white with snow,
It's I'll be there in sunshine or in shadow,
Oh, Danny Boy, Oh, Danny Boy, I love you so.*

*But come ye back, when all the leaves are falling
If I am dead, as dead I well may be
You will come and find where I am lying
And kneel and say an 'Ave' there for me.
And I will hear, though soft you tread above me
And all my grave will sweeter, warmer be
For you will bend and tell me that you love me
And I will sleep in peace until you come to me.*

(Danny Boy)

The Weatherly lyric gives us separation, pathetic death and heavenly reunion; leaves fall and flowers die. Like many other songs noted, the only Irish feature is the protagonist's name. It is a very economical and artful piece of writing, and if one accepts the thesis advanced above that its melody is similarly an artful composition (rather than a folk tune) then *Danny Boy* becomes another piece of ersatz Irishry - brilliant to be sure - but as sham a piece of shamrockery as the other songs in the Irish sentimental song tradition. Two hallmarks of the tradition are therefore illustrated in its success: business cynicism and sentimental craftsmanship - the song was initially produced out of a commercial desire to exploit a 'free' resource; but it succeeded because Weatherly knew about the construction of the 'affecting moment' in song. That is, he respected and understood the tradition.

Along with many other styles the Irish sentimental song didn't endure in the popular music mainstream after the advent of Rock 'n' Roll. It still survives as minority taste, although its adherents tend to be of an age and a background, and the mechanisms for its transmission - sheet music and pub sing-songs - are dying. One triumphant final flowering of the tradition was composed just before these upheavals, and it shows how much it had solidified into a collection of well-loved clichés that anyone could tap into. There was indeed nothing in Johnny Cash's background to suggest an affinity with Irish heart songs, yet his *Forty Shades of Green* (1961) stands with the best of Olcott or Moore. It is a splendid twist that the last great song from a tradition that started in the drawing-rooms of the Regency was by a Rockabilly songspieler from Arkansas with a prison past and a taste for black stage-wear.

Moore's example, 'Truth' and Choice

It will be apparent that the reality of the Irish experience has so often been totally at odds with the 'Ireland of Dreams' of sentimental song. For instance the quaint rural life-style hymned in the songs was in reality often desperate: the emblematic Irish sentimental song, *Galway Bay* (Colahan 1948), refers to *turf-fires in the cabin* and *bare-foot gossoons* - that is to say the very aspects of agrarian poverty and a failed way of life that actually drove the Irish from Ireland. A cramped tenement on the Lower East Side - however unpicturesque - probably did a better job at keeping out the weather than a cabin in Galway, and in New York there was work that paid enough at least to ensure one's gossoons were properly shod.

But Moore's example is not about reality. It is about the summoning of particular feelings by the manipulation of a familiar set of symbols and conventions with a more-or-less Irish flavour (less in his time, more subsequently - though it is remarkable how songs with no Irish connection at all are still accorded 'honorary' Irish status by being anthologised in 'Irish' song collections purely by virtue of being sentimental, showing again how - in song - sentimentality is assumed to define [and even bestow] Irishness. See, for instance, *101 Irish Songs*, 1996).

If truth is the criterion, then the Irish sentimental song tradition fails not once but twice. It is false firstly in the sense detailed above in that it doesn't seek to represent Ireland and the Irish as they are: the truth is too complex and disturbing - and anyway veracity is frequently inimical to the construction of the sentimental, and sentimental visions are always necessarily selective. It is false in a second more profound sense because even the fake Irishry of the songs is 'standing-in' for more

general yearnings. These yearnings - for home, for the past, for content - are given a specific and stylized (mock) Irish expression in this repertoire, but we have seen how other quite different sentimental repertoires articulate identical things. This point is taken up at the end of this work, but suffice to say now that *Mother Machree* is less about a particular fictional Irish mother than about the values of motherhood - about your mother, my mother; and *Galway Bay* 'stands in' for your home, for my home. Again one returns to the origins of the tradition and Moore, who surely understood this - the songs are but particular Hibernian examples of much more universal forms.

All this finds little favour with those who seek for a 'true' representation of Ireland in song. As the nineteenth century progressed, prompted by various political or nationalist agendas, there was increased interest in the curating of 'authentic' cultural forms. Robust time-honoured expressions of rural working-class life were particularly sought, against which sentimentality's blatant fakery was seen as an affront to 'the people'. (Such an approach persists, and is now something of an orthodoxy: see for instance O'Boyle 1976, 13 for whom Moore's *...whimsical, sentimental productions...are a striking contrast with the living ...worksongs of the Irish-speaking people.*)

Two points should be made here. First, Irish song was moribund at the end of the eighteenth century: the collector Bunting noted as much in his collections, and this was partly the impetus behind Moore's 're-invention' of Irish song as sentimental. Like it or not, the fact remains, therefore, that without Moore's interest Irish song might have collapsed completely: it is significant that when interest in 'authentic' Irish song was rekindled in the folk revival of the 1960's by groups like Tommy Makem and the Clancy brothers those musicians were surprised that audiences often assumed that it was their repertoire, not the Olcott/ Moore sentimental one, that was bogus. (As was mentioned at the beginning of this section 'sentimental Irish song' is for many a tautology). Second, the notion of what is bogus - 'true' - and what is not is far less clear-cut than the folkies would have us believe. Certainly, sentimental Irishry is self-evidently and flagrantly 'false', a commercial construction, but that doesn't make its antithesis, the folk-song, 'true'. Harker (1985) among others has shown how 'mediated' supposedly pure, authentic folk songs frequently turn out to be.

To opt for the 'folk' rather than the 'sentimental' is less about an expression of what is real and what is not rather than a simple aesthetic preference for one thing over another: in this case for the antique-obscure rather than Tin Pan Alley-familiar, Gaelic and modal melodies rather than rhyming dictionaries and pop chord sequences, foot-stamping earthiness rather than pathetic tearfulness. Encapsulated in

these aesthetic choices are of course moral stances: folk implies political engagement (and correctness); sentimentality, self-indulgence. Yet both are similarly leisure choices, and it is not a little ironic that both the 'folk' and 'sentimental' have an appeal based on wresting out of a putative Irish rural past alternatives to an uncongenial present. Whilst noting aesthetic choice is informed by individual value judgements, one may nonetheless suggest that the sentimental perspective is actually more interesting than the folk perspective: having no interest in verisimilitude it seeks rather to improve reality (thus if Irish sentimental song falls short of actuality it is only because it seeks to transcend it). I believe this idea can be best appreciated by exploring the analogy mentioned earlier where the Ireland of the songs is seen as relating to a real Ireland is much the same way as the flats, wings and backcloths of a pantomime enchanted wood relate to a real forest. Such stage scenery at once both simplifies and enhances reality. It simplifies in its two-dimensionality - in the way it reduces the complexity of nature to a few coarse brush strokes on some sized hessian. Yet it also aspires to produce a different 'improved' reality, because under stage lights a collection of crude two-dimensional stage furniture can be transformed into something more fantastical and magical than was ever produced by nature. So it is with the songs: an 'Ireland of Dreams' is constructed from an unpromising clutch of clichés, yet can be an altogether more charming place than the Ireland of reality. Just as the forest stage-set can be more captivating than any real forest the Ireland of sentimental song is more bewitching than even the most effusive holiday brochure; and as the enchanted stage forest is inhabited by delightful and fanciful folk so the songs feature amusing and heart-warming characters not necessarily found in real life. The 'Ireland of Dreams' is not of course to be found on any ordnance survey map, and its critics would see this alone as sufficient proof of its phoneyess. Yet this is to miss the point: only in the most arid, literal way is Tralee as a map reference more real than Tralee as a thirty-two bar fancy (any more than Oklahoma is 'Oklahoma!' - *Let's be frank: the place is a nondescript urban sprawl in the middle of a dreary plain* [Steyn 1997, 81]). The point of such fancies - the songs - is to transcend humdrum truth. The songs are therefore not an inept attempt at representing the world as-it-is; they are an alternative version of things.

Dreams of Heaven

*There is beyond the sky
A Heaven of joy and love...*

Hymn early 18thC (Isaac Watts)

*Beyond the sunset, Oh blissful morning
When with our saviour Heaven is begun...*

Gospel song 1920's (B. and V. Brock)

Eschatology and philosophy

We have explored the sentimental cast to the new eighteenth century congregational hymnody - a less obvious species of popular song. It was noted how influential the new emotionality found in this work was, and how it informed subsequent sacred song across a wide area, (including those distanced geographically, racially and culturally from English non-conformity). Its influence is clearly felt in the next century when a sentimental religiosity, unthinkable before the example of the eighteenth century writing, comes to inform an increasing variety of song - both the obviously sacred like hymns, spirituals and gospel music as well as religiously-inflected secular repertoires like the Parlour song. Given this proliferating diversity of expression it becomes unrealistic to trace further developments in the religious strand of sentimental song sequentially; however by taking one dominant theme one may profitably trace its expression both across different styles of popular song and through time.

The aspect of Christian belief that most recommends itself for such a project is that of life eternal in heaven: it not only features prominently in all sorts of songs with religious reference, but relies on being attested emotionally. Indeed the emotional extravagance and yearning commitment of these 'Dreams of Heaven' mark them as particularly sentimental, as does their deep yearning for a future or past happiness, specifically the desire to return home. We have met this tendency in so much of the secular sentimental material - to find peace again by returning to the highland home or the plantation: idealised, heart-warming places. It seems clear for Christians that the peace found in our heavenly home represents something very similar, though on a much more profound scale, as a recent popular pamphlet makes clear: *At the end of life it is time to go home. God has kept his promise...God did not make men and women to die...there is a great consolation in our faith...* (Gallagher

and Trenchard 1993, 83; opening sentence also used as chapter heading, 3). This found clear expression in the new eighteenth century hymnody: for instance Isaac Watts continually evoked *mansions in the skies* where one would *bid farewell to ev'ry fear in seas of heav'nly rest*, and such a place is explicitly and repeatedly called *my home* (#265 in Reynolds 1963 and Fairchild 1939, 128 ex. *True Wisdom*). Similarly, Charles Wesley has the Saviour call his *ransomed sinners* (to) *return home* in his *Blow Ye the Trumpet, Blow* (#248 in Reynolds) and Newton's *Amazing Grace ...will lead us home*. A more detailed exegesis is offered in similar forthright and specific tones in a prayer card I found recently in the church at Westbury-on-Severn: its first line is *I am home in Heaven, dear ones* ...its title, *Safely Home*.

It has been noted how a melancholy indulgence of past happiness found in so many secular sentimental songs from Burns to Foster reflects a new pessimistic disaffection with the present, and such gloom also informed notions of the future: *...death as a welcome relief for the weary and troubled - was a universal nineteenth-century notion...*(Hamm 1979, 214) and *It became almost a world fashion to sing of sorrow and death with longing and anticipation* (Howard, 175).

A craving for what has been is however a very different impulse to craving what might be in one obvious way: the first is based on recollection, the second on supposition. To understand what is being 'supposed' in all the various songs that celebrate an after-life - the majority of sacred songs - it is necessary to have some account of the basis of such eschatological notions. This entails a brief philosophical investigation to make sense of the intelligibility of such beliefs; in doing so we reveal their dependence on an emotional - in this case specifically sentimental - affirmation.

What is it then that is being so consistently and ecstatically asserted in these Christian 'Dreams of Heaven'? Many religions posit a life after death, but the specific claims made in Christian belief seem as unambiguous as they are profound, and are built-in to the heart of that system. They can't be seen as an optional extra to be negotiated away by trendy theologians as a naïve piece of literalism, an old-fashioned and irrelevant metaphysical embarrassment. Nor can they be reconstituted as metaphor, the better to suit the tone of a more sophisticated, scientific age; what is being claimed quite specifically is the fact of bodily resurrection: *Christianity is of course committed to the idea of life after death, but it is heterodox to think of this as the survival of an immaterial soul after the death of a material body. The creeds explicitly state belief in the resurrection of the body, and the scriptural warrant for this is 1 Corinthians 15: 35 ff., where St. Paul says that we die as physical bodies but are raised as spiritual bodies. Of course it is not clear what a spiritual body is, but*

St. Paul does use the Greek word soma, which means body (Stevenson 1974, 39). The astonishingness of this principle should not lead to any attempt to minimize it: To interpret the doctrine just as 'the evil that men do lives after them', or to take the promise of eternal life (John 4: 14) as only a new way of life in this world, is to evacuate the doctrine of one of its essential contents. The humanist can join with the Christian in seeking a regeneration of man as we know him, an escape from selfishness and pride; it is the hope of a survival of the individual person into the eternal dimension that is distinctively Christian (Ibid., 40).

What is less acknowledged is that the whole doctrine of personal survival is actually implicit in Christian notions of deity, because it constitutes a defining part of God's sovereign purpose: *According to the New Testament, the general nature of God's purpose for human life is the creation of 'children of God' who shall participate in eternal life (Hick 1963, 103). To deny it therefore is to question the very nature of God for ...if it be God's plan to create finite persons to exist in fellowship with himself, then it contradicts both his intention and his love for the creature made in his image if he allows men to pass out of existence when his purpose for them remains largely unfulfilled.*

It is this promised fulfillment of God's purpose for man, in which the full possibilities of human nature will be realised, that constitutes the 'heaven' symbolised in the New Testament as a joyous banquet in which all and sundry rejoice together (Ibid., 52).

We may summarize then by saying that for the Christian it is an unequivocal part of God's plan that we shall be resurrected to dwell with him in Eternity; after the vicissitudes of a life *in via* comes the manifest certainty of life *in patria*, the sure and certain rebirth to an endless existence in heaven (to paraphrase the prayer book). In an important sense this could not be otherwise, given the attributes of the Christian God: notions of 'life-without-end' logically follow from construing Christian theology from first principles -

- (i) God is never 'absent' from the (His) universe, and therefore necessarily exists for all time.
- (ii) It is part of His divine purpose that we, His favoured creatures, should dwell with Him.
- (iii) This somehow involves our being transcended to His realm, and existing there with the Eternal One would seem therefore to imply eternal existence.

The problem of coherence now presents itself: having established clearly what is being asserted in Christian eschatology it is now necessary to ask what such assertions actually mean, by some standard of intelligibility. (This is about trying to investigate the comprehensibility of the doctrine, as opposed to any putative benefit from holding it.) Here one encounters a lack of lucidity that is the exact opposite of the bright visions offered in the songs. Most seriously there are fundamental category inconsistencies that threaten the coherence of any notion of an afterlife: when conscious we only ever experience through the fundamental category grids of space and time. Eternal life as a spiritual body, St. Paul's *soma pneumatikon*, therefore implies existence somewhere and at some time: *If bodies are resurrected, presumably, being bodies of some kind, they have to occupy space and time of some kind. Now it is surely not meant that they exist somewhere in the space in which we are located - no Christian should expect a spaceman to come accross the resurrected bodies of St. Paul, Napoleon, or Auntie Agatha! So it seems that what we have to try to make sense of is the idea that there is a space in which resurrected bodies exist which has no spatial relations with the space in which we exist. The question of time is at least as difficult... Is there then a time system which has no temporal relation to us, or are the resurrected bodies timeless, in which case what sense can be made of the idea of resurrected life? (For life, as we understand it, is a process in time.)* (Stevenson, 40).

This last problem of infinite existence is especially thorny: not only does infinity itself resist comprehension - but notions of finitude so profoundly structure our experience it is difficult to comprehend in any sensible way what existence without temporal bounds would mean (although there are anthropological precedents of cultures who do not structure reality in a spatio-temporal way, for instance the Hopi Indians who see everything as either 'manifest' or 'unmanifest'.) Unfortunately Christianity is a cultural artifact of a civilisation where experience is spatio-temporal, and that experience is represented by language. Some, like Edward Sapir, have argued that language structures the possibilities of everything: *The fact of the matter is that the 'real world' is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group...such categories as number, gender, case, and tense,...are not so much discovered in experience as imposed on it because of the tyrannical hold that linguistic form has upon our orientation to the world* (Almond 1995, 142).

But here is another problem, for whilst language is famously defined as a social, 'public' mechanism (in that it presupposes an agreed usage), there is something worryingly private about religious concepts like 'heaven': common sense

would suggest even amongst Christians the concept conjures up very different things for different people. It might be suggested however that such ineffable notions as those found in religion actually constitute a separate language with its own internal coherence. This might solve some problems, but not that of intelligibility, which now merely gets locked into an impenetrable 'closed system' of meaning. Further, the fact that religion lays claim to a separate language system rules out any attempt to establish the truth or falsity of its claims. Put bluntly 'truth' and 'falsity' are scientific terms and 'God' and 'heaven' religious terms, and never the twain shall meet. Yet we have seen that in eschatological belief something is being asserted, something is being claimed to be the case, namely that there is a heaven where we will live eternally. Shouldn't this assertion be subject to the same standards of veracity we apply to other assertions?

Following Karl Popper such a test would rely on there being the potential for falsifying the assertion - and this can never happen: it might prove to be false, *but that it is false can never be a fact which anyone has experientially verified* (Hick, 101). More seriously such a test relies on the result making some 'difference to things', but plainly this is not the case in assertions regarding the existence of 'heaven': *...under scrutiny it proves to lack the basic characteristic of an assertion, namely, that it must make an experienceable difference whether the facts are as alleged or not* (Ibid.,95).

Eschatological beliefs therefore distort some categories, 'space and time', to accommodate other categories, 'deistic purpose', as well as riding roughshod over rules of linguistic coherence. Approaching the doctrine therefore from one philosophical direction we find it inconsistent, from another linguistically imprecise, from another unverifiable. Which leads to the inescapable conclusion that eschatological belief is, strictly speaking, meaningless (or rather 'meaning-less'). 'Strictly speaking' in our culture of course implies objectivity, and the failure to make any objective sense of personal survival and heaven incline one therefore to the less-than-surprising conclusion that they have to be understood - can only be understood - subjectively. All this serves to emphasise that Christianity is a necessarily emotional project: it couldn't be otherwise. It also highlights its essential childishness (in a technical rather than pejorative sense) hinting at why such rococo and unlikely notions are espoused in the first place (and here again the key is in the subjective): the promise of heaven promulgated in so many religious songs is a craving for something that will deny the fatalness of life's design, and belie eternal night. Freud in *The Future of an Illusion* (1927) sees religion as an attempt to assuage the pain of

life, and the awful fact of death, by constructing a mythology that seeks to recreate the blissful security of early life. It does this by positing an all-powerful, parent-figure, God; like our earliest perceptions of our actual parents He appears inscrutable yet largely benevolent. Like them He is omnipotent, and as we have seen it necessarily follows from what is being evoked that He requires the best for us, His children. This, as we have seen, involves eventual eternal life with Him in heaven, which for the Freudians is but a projection of the 'endless' and invulnerable state of infancy. Such assertions are, according to psycho-analytic theory, merely particularly virulent forms of wish-fulfillment: faced with our own punyness in all things, but most especially in the face of that most manifest fact, our mortality, we provide ourselves with comforting narratives of safety and rapture derived from our early life to obviate its terrible threat. Eschatological beliefs are in this view a regressive and doomed attempt to deal with the unthinkable, a symbolic security blanket to ward off night terrors (except of course what they seek to ward off is infinitely worse, for night terrors are always gone in the morning). As such they must be robustly asserted, and most importantly felt to be true; like children endlessly chanting to keep some dread at bay, there is a latent assumption that, to quote the popular song, *Wishing Will Make It So* (U.S.A.1928). La Rochefoucauld wrote *One can no more look steadily at death than at the sun* (quoted in Feifel 1959, frontispiece), which finds an echo with the contemporary philosopher, Thomas Nagel. Nagel contrasts an external perception of our death with a subjective understanding of it. Objectively things seem straightforward: I wasn't around in 1880 and I won't be around in 2080. Viewed like this the inexorable logic of *Everyone dies; I am someone, so I will die* (Nagel 1986, 225) doesn't seem so bad; we might even fantasise eavesdropping our own funerals. What is much harder to countenance is death from within: *...the internal fact that one day this consciousness will black out for good and subjective time will simply stop. My death as an event in the world is easy to think about; the end of my world is not* (Ibid.). This is because *...the appropriate form of subjective attitude to my own future is expectation, but in this case there is nothing to expect. How can I expect nothing as such?... I am concerned with an adequate recognition of my own annihilation itself. There will be a last day, a last hour, a last minute of consciousness, and that will be it. Off the edge* (Ibid.).

This is the expectation of nothingness that, as La Rochefoucauld suggests, the mind shies away from. Yet it is occasionally glimpsed, and is quite different from the (objective) realization that I probably only have another 30 years or so left. This latter is easy enough to accept with a wry fatalism; the concomittant loss of being in time for ever is not. This end of all futures is what Nagel calls with good reason

the *ultimate form of abandonment* (Ibid., 226). It is, I suggest, to counter this fleetingly-glimpsed and terrible realization that religious structures of survival - of afterlife - are espoused. The engines that drive all those 'Dreams of Heaven' are so vigorous, and the solace offered by the dreams so enticing, precisely because we all experience the vertiginous terror that a subjective realization of everlasting non-being brings: an alternative has to be proffered. And nowhere is that alternative more attractively set out than in sacred song.

Heaven, personal survival, eternal life - these are the highest stakes, and I have taken some time to offer an account of the philosophy and psychology of eschatological belief to understand better the potency of songs that hymn them; it will be remembered it was said all Wesley's hymns *ended in heaven* (quoted in Booth, 134). We have seen how Christian belief is generally sentimental in respect of its necessary vagueness, pathos and high emotional tone; we can now appreciate why 'Dreams of Heaven' - the eschatological strain in Christian song - display all this in a particularly vigorous way. They also, crucially, depend on a sentimental verification: if you are moved to feel they are true, then they are true. ("*Yes, Veronica, wishing will make it so...*"). This all becomes more poignantly critical given the failure we have noted of eschatological notions to survive analytic scrutiny. The objective *text* of the song asserts the hypothesis; the subjective *experience* of the song 'proves' that hypothesis - as for instance when The Stanley Brothers unite in energetic and joyous close-harmony to tell us:

*There'll be no more sorrow or pain to bear
In that home beyond the blue sky;
We'll all be together, and ev'ryone home
In that home beyond the sky.*
(*'Home Beyond the Sky'*: U.S.A. 1950's)

'The Better Land': the representation of the Hereafter in sacred and secular sentimental song

*My Lord is in the Homeland,
With angels bright and fair;
No sinful thing, nor evil,
Can ever enter there;
The music of the ransomed
Is singing in my ears;
And when I think of the Homeland
My eyes are wet with tears.*

('The Homeland': G.B. later 19thC, in Chappel 1909, 335)

One may start with two of the most popular nineteenth century hymns from one of the most influential hymn collections of all time, *Hymns Ancient and Modern*: they bear out an earlier point about 'Dreams of Heaven' being endemic to all Christian song, not just the more simple and emotional gospel repertoire. The words, though familiar, are worth considering anew in relation to the present context:

*Abide with me: fast falls the eventide;
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide:
When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me.*

*Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see;
O thou who changes not, abide with me.*

*Thou on my head in early youth didst smile;
And, though rebellious and perverse meanwhile,
Thou hast not left me, oft as I left thee,
On to the close, O Lord, abide with me!*

*I fear no foe, with thee at hand to bless;
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness.
Where is death's sting? where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still, if thou abide with me.*

*Hold thou thy Cross before my closing eyes;
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies;
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.*

('Abide With Me': G.B. 1847)

*Lead, kindly Light, amidst the encircling gloom,
Lead thou me on;
The night is dark, and I am far from home,
Lead thou me on.
Keep thou my feet; I do not ask to see
The distant scene; one step enough for me.*

*I was not ever thus, nor prayed that thou
Should'st lead me on;
I loved to choose and see my path; but now
Lead thou me on.
I loved the garish day, and, spite of fears,
Pride ruled my will: remember not past years.*

*So long thy power hath blessed me, sure it still
Will lead me on,
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till
The night is gone;
And with the morn those angel faces smile,
Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile.*

('Lead, Kindly Light': G.B. 1861)

There are striking similarities in theme between H.F.Lyte's words for the first hymn and Newman's words for the second. Both are supplicatory of a wise and constant power, a power that has been pridefully ignored; both represent life on earth as illusory and occluded - *shadows...gloom...darkness...night* - and conclude in heaven, which in absolute contrast is the place where *night is gone* and *vain shadows flee*. *Abide With Me* (the most popular anthem ever written in English) (Studwell 1996, 157) has become the same sort of sentimental Ur-text as *Danny Boy* and *Auld Lang Syne*, transcending original context and becoming part of the English-speaking world's repertoire of 'community songs', songs lodged in folk memory. This may be largely due to its incorporation into the pre-match Cup Final ritual at George V's suggestion in 1928. However the point is surely that it would not have caught on unless it expressed something the people wanted to hear. Its vanquishing of death, and 'happy ending' as *Heaven's morning breaks and earth's vain shadows flee* plainly provides that, and gives a clue why...*the moment you hear 'Abide With Me' (you have) a lump in the throat and a tear in the eye...* (Royal, 1997).

If these two examples from the supposedly sober repertoire of the Tractarian-influenced Hymns Ancient and Modern produced such paeans to paradise, then songs from other, less restrained forms of sacred song like gospel might be expected to do the same only more so. The distinction between hymns, other sacred songs

(such as spirituals and gospel) and secular songs with a strong religious content is frequently imprecise. The demarcation sometimes suggested between what was sung at home and what was sung in church is of little help, for *Abide With Me* was certainly sung in both, as was the following. It might be merely that sacred song writers had perhaps more expressive leeway than the hymnodists, and were generally more eclectic (several had an acquaintance with purely secular popular song writing).

*Somewhere the sun is shining;
Somewhere the songbirds dwell.
Hush then thy sad repining;
God lives and all is well.*

(Chorus)
*Somewhere - somewhere,
Beautiful island of somewhere.
Land of the true where we live anew -
Beautiful island of somewhere.*

*Somewhere the load is lifted;
Close by an open gate.
Somewhere the clouds are rifted;
Somewhere the angels wait.*

(Chorus)

('Beautiful Island of Somewhere': U.S.A. 1897)

Heaven's pull - so keenly felt in the nineteenth century plays and novel - was well represented in song. Fanny Crosby was one of the most prolific sacred song writers of the century: her output runs into the thousands, and, blind all her life, she was still composing in her eighties. The vogue for spiritualism - attractive because it appeared to offer hard proof of an afterlife to an increasingly scientific age - was fed by lyrics like Crosby's:

*Spirit voices, hear the echo,
They are calling us away.
Where the roses never wither,
Where the crystal fountains play.*

('There Are Voices, Spirit Voices': U.S.A. 1864)

Like the tableau at the end of the play of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* where Little Eva is seen ascending heavenwards on a 'prop' dove through muslin clouds these songs leave

little to the imagination: in both there is a simple, literal and rather attractive confidence in paradise that our own age may marvel at.

The extent of the belief in redemption and reunion in an afterlife might have been 'taught' in religious songs, but made itself felt over nearly all the popular repertoire. It was an assumption that informed much nineteenth and early twentieth century song writing, unless the song style actually proscribed it (as for instance in humorous songs). In some cases heaven was invoked in a song's story; in some it was the song's main focus, and in many others it was used to tie things up in the final verse regardless of subject-matter. Taking some examples from the most accomplished writers of the period, one might suggest Fred Weatherly's *The Children's Home* as an example of the first tendency. As we have noted Weatherly was one of the most prolifically successful British lyricists of all time, with many celebrated titles to his name.

*They played in their beautiful gardens,
The children of high degree;
Outside the gates, the beggars
Passed on in their misery:
But there was one of the children
Who could not join in the play,
And a little beggar maiden
Watched for him day by day.*

*Once he had given her a flow'r!
And oh! how he smiled to see
Her thin white hands thro' the railings
Stretched out so eagerly,
She came again to the garden,
She saw the children play
But the little white face had vanish'd,
The little feet gone away.*

*She crept away to her corner,
Down by the murky stream;
But the pale, pale face in the garden
Shone thro' her restless dream,
The pale, pale face in the garden
Shone thro' her restless dream.*

*And that high-born child and the beggar
Passed homeward side by side
For the ways of men are narrow,
But the gates of Heav'n are wide,*

*For the ways of men are narrow,
But the gates of Heav'n are wide!*

('The Children's Home': G.B. 1881)

The song's concluding redemptive egalitarianism is only possible because it is not 'here' and it is not 'now'; if nothing else heaven would always be the mechanism whereby nineteenth century consciences could be salved. This song's popularity can be gauged by the number of times it appears in job-lots or bound collections of Victorian sheet-music. It was not cheap: 2/- in 1881 was a considerable sum. The extent of its popularity is also borne out by the number of formats in which it was offered in: a choice of five keys, with separate arrangements for the piano, harmonium and full orchestra with flute, violin and 'cello accompaniments. It was also endorsed (*sung with Brilliant Success by...*) 16 named vocalists and *by all the popular vocalists*. This however is as nothing compared to the significantly titled *Beyond* (G.B. 1903): at the head of the sheet we are told:

Sung with immediate Success by

MADAME MARIAN McKENZIE. MADAME T.J. READ.

Miss Gertrude Macaulay, Miss Edith Serpell, Miss Lillian Doreen, Miss Sarah Berry,
Mdme. Marie Michele

Miss Florence Feistel, Miss Kate Frost, Miss Maud Leslie, Miss Adèle Roze, Miss Emily Owen Jones, Miss Docie Piggott, Miss Alice Simmons, Miss Ada Flood Porter, Miss Alexandra Edwin, Miss Grace Swinburne, Mdme. Stanley Treen, Miss Blanche de Lorme, Miss Arabella Hunt, Miss Marion Brereton, Mdme. Florence Voorzanger, Miss Florence Jones, Miss Marjorie Eaton, Miss Ella Lorraine, Miss Muriel Stannard, Miss Myre d'Orth-Winterhoff, Miss Nellie Doreen, Mdme. Stanesby, Mdme. Stephanie Olive, Miss Emily Carter, Miss Amy Tyndale, Miss Fanny Oron, Miss A. H. Rosswell, Miss Leila Petherick, and Miss Ethel Miller. Mr Harrison Brockbank, Mr Hugh Gwynne, Mr. Otley Cranston, A. E. Choveaux, Mr. Ben Johnson Junr., Mr Herbert Aldridge, Mr. Hickman Smith, Mr. Walter Nicholson, Mr. Geo. Weedon, Mr. Robert Lonsdale, Mr. Percival Horn.

Mr. Herbert Grover, Mr. Herbert Emlyn.

The song keeps heaven as its focus throughout:

*There is spring beyond the winter,
When the flowers shall wake again,
And the glad and golden sunshine
Lies beyond the present rain;
There is morning with its promise
And its joy, beyond the night,
And our deepest disappointment
Shall, in time to come, seem light.*

*So believe oh heart that grieveth,
There shall dawn at last a day*

*That shall turn to joy thy sorrow,
And take all thy tears away!
So believe oh heart that grieveth
There shall dawn at last a day
That shall turn to joy thy sorrow,
And take all thy tears away.*

*There are stars beyond the dark clouds,
Ever shining bright and clear;
And the end the pilgrim longs for
Lies beyond the journey drear.
There is slumber for the weary
And the worn, beyond the day,
And beyond the storm the harbour
For the boats that strive and stray!*

*So believe oh heart that suff'reth,
Thou shall find, when all is past,
A reward both great and lasting
In the world beyond, at last!
So believe oh heart that suff'reth,
Thou shall find when this is past,
A reward both great and lasting
In the world beyond at last!*

('Beyond': G.B. 1903)

As with so many of the texts examined there is the feeling of constant movement towards the welcome release afforded by death because it is the necessary condition for life in the Hereafter. Felicia Hemans was as highly regarded as Wordsworth and Tennyson in the nineteenth century. Totally forgotten now, except for the odd resonant phrase - *The boy stood on the burning deck...The Stately Homes of England* - she was a mistress at summoning melancholy enjoyment. Her *The Better Land* (another huge Parlour success) uses Socratic interlocution to tease out precisely what heaven is:

*I hear speak of the Better Land,
Thou call'st its children a happy band,
Mother, where is that radiant shore?
Shall we not seek it, and weep no more?
Is it where the flow'r of the orange blows,
And the fireflies dance thro' myrtle boughs?
Not there, not there my child.*

*Is it far away in some region old?
Where the rivers wander o'er sands of gold,
Where the burning rays of the ruby shine,
And the diamond lights up, the diamond lights up the secret mine,
And the pearl gleams forth from the coral strand -
Is it there, sweet mother, that Better Land,
Is it there, sweet mother, that Better Land?
Not there, not there, my child.*

*Eye hath not seen it, my gentle boy,
Ear hath not heard its deep songs of joy,
Dreams cannot picture a world so fair,
Sorrow and death, sorrow and death may not enter there;
Time doth not breathe on its fadeless bloom, on its fadeless bloom,
Far beyond, beyond the clouds,
Far beyond, beyond the tomb,
Far beyond the clouds and beyond the tomb,
It is there, it is there, my child,
It is there, 'tis there.*

('The Better Land': G.B. 1844)

Even the most prevalent of all popular song types, the simple love song, might be enhanced by 'Dreams of Heaven' since celebrations of love across a lifetime could now be confidently extended to include that love continuing beyond the grave. (This received an imprimatur in scores of songs - a typical endorsement is found in the Parlour classic *Macushla* (G.B. 1910): ...*death is a dream And love is for ay..*) Eternal love is a most pleasing proposition - and reunion in the Hereafter solves the problem of mortal decay, with its inevitable conclusion in the death of one partner effecting the abandonment of the other. The following examples hint at human love surviving death on The Other Side:

*It matters little now, Lorena,
The past is in the eternal past;
Our heads will soon lie low, Lorena,
Life's tide is ebbing out so fast.
There is a Future! O, thank God!
Of life this is but a small part!
'Tis dust to dust beneath the sod;
But there, up there, 'tis heart to heart.*

('Lorena': U.S.A. 1857)

Similarly half a century later:

*There's a little brown road windin' over the hill
To a little white cot by the sea;
There's a little green gate
At whose trellis I wait,
While two eyes o' blue
Come smilin' through
At me!*

*There's a grey lock or two in the brown of the hair,
There's some silver in mine, too, I see,
But in all the long years
When the clouds brought their tears,
Those two eyes o' blue
Kept smilin' through
At me!*

*And if ever I'm left in this world all alone,
I will wait for my call patiently;
For if Heaven be kind,
I shall wake there to find
Those two eyes o' blue
Still smilin' through
At me!*

(*'Smilin' Through'*: U.S.A. 1918)

More recent love songs still end in heaven: *I'll Walk Beside You* (G.B. 1936), from the centre of the more genteel axis of the popular repertoire, is still widely performed. It concludes:

*I'll walk beside you through the passing years,
Through days of cloud and sunshine, joy and tears,
and when the great call comes, the sunset gleams,
I'll walk beside you to the land of dreams.*

Again the confidence in the existence of a *land of dreams* is touching; again, as with so much of the tradition, things change little over the years - the tone and imagery are commensurate with songs like *The Better Land* from a century earlier. Indeed a recent Country standard like *Blue Eyes Crying In The Rain* (U.S.A. 1949), despite its different expressive mode, is very much a child of mid-Victorian Stephen Foster songs like *The Voices That Are Gone*:

*When the twilight shades fall o'er me
And the evening star appears
Memory brings the past before me,*

*Joys and sorrows, smiles and tears;
Then again bright eyes are gleaming
With the love once in them shone,
Then like music heard when dreaming,
Come the voices that are gone.*

*Sweet as wood doves note when calling
To her mate as night draws on,
Soft as snowflakes lightly falling
Come the voices that are gone.
Voices heard in days of childhood
Softly at the hour of prayer,
Or loud ringing through the wildwood
When the young heart knew no care.*

*So when life's bright sun is setting
And it's day is well nigh done,
May there be no vain regretting
Over memories I would shun;
And when death is o'er, to meet me
May some much-loved forms come on,
And the first sounds that shall greet me
Be the voices that are gone.*

('The Voices That Are Gone': U.S.A. mid 19thC)

*In the twilight glow I see her
Blue eyes crying in the rain;
When we kissed good-bye and parted
I knew we'd never meet again.*

*Love is like a dying ember -
Only memories remain;
Through the ages I'll remember
Blue eyes crying in the rain.*

*Someday when we meet up yonder
We'll stroll hand in hand again
In the land that knows no parting
Blue eyes crying in the rain.*

('Blue Eyes Crying In The Rain': U.S.A. 1949)

Both songs have twilight and tears in the first verse, and both have as their emotional peak reunion after death. The fact it is a Country song that is heir to Foster's piece might be expected, for it has been said that ...*it was country music which did most to absorb and revitalize bourgeois song...* (Scott, 188), and it is with Country music that we conclude our survey of 'Dreams of Heaven'.

'Got Sweet Heaven in my View': paradise as the dominant concern of religious Country music.

*Oh, my mother she died and left me;
I'm alone in this world, I'm alone.
And my father he wont own me -
Got to find another home.*

*(Chorus)
Got sweet heaven in my view,
Hallelulia!
On my journey I press on,
Praise the Lord!
For I'm Bound for that Holy City
Got sweet heaven -
In my view*

*Oh, you needn't talk about me
Just because I am crippled and blind;
For I've got my ticket purchased -
And I'll reach heaven on time.*

(Chorus)

*And when I get to heaven
I'll take a seat and sit right down;
Looking for my heavenly father
Looking for a robe and a crown.*

('Got Sweet Heaven in my View': The Carter Family, 1930's)

*This world is not my home, I'm just a-passing through,
My treasures and my hopes are all beyond the blue,
Where many Christian children have gone before,
And I can't feel at home in this world any more.*

*Over in glory land there is no dying there,
The saints are shouting Vict'ry and singing everywhere,
I hear the voice of Nell that I have heard before,
And I can't feel at home in this world anymore.
O Lord, you know I have no friend but You,
If Heaven's not my home , Oh Lord what would I do?
Angels have taken me to Heaven's open door,
And I can't feel at home in this world anymore.*

('I Can't Feel At Home in This World Anymore': The Carter Family in Silber 1960)

In their book on eighteenth century congregational hymn, Todd and Fulwell write of *...the pining, longing and languishing (that) takes as (its) object heaven* (1982, 77) and we have noted how this tendency that characterised the first hymns in that tradition became a central (and necessarily and particularly sentimental) part of subsequent sacred song, as well as an increasingly key assumption in popular culture generally.

The proclivity might be thought to have reached its apotheosis in some of the nineteenth and early twentieth century examples given in the last section, but actually doesn't do so until somewhat later with the religious strain in Country music. Here, from the 1920's onwards, one finds an even greater omnipresence of Dreams of Heaven, made all the more striking for being expressed in plain language shorn of distracting ornate poesy, and at a time when Anglo-Saxon society in general was becoming more secular.

Sociologically this isn't too surprising. Firstly, Country music's (primary) audience and performers are from the rural south of the U.S.A. The rural South has been typically a dispersed, agrarian society of small family units scratching a living from an unforgiving land: *our country music comes mainly from part of the South where the conditions of life have favored the retention of values belonging to pioneer America* (Cantwell 1992, 206). These conditions of life made for a relentless and severe existence, and this austerity was further reinforced by religion. The South was *heir to the great tradition of British religious dissent* (Malone 1979, 10): whilst the Church of England had influence on the eastern seaboard, it was the non-conformists who established themselves in the back country. The character of the South was thus informed by the industry of the pioneering work-ethic and the piety of protestant dissent; the Methodist and Baptist influence was further consolidated in evangelical revivals at the beginning of the nineteenth century. (What marks this as different from the British evangelical revival in the eighteenth century is its scale and tenacity: for instance Wesleyan Methodism was an adaptation, a correction of the established church. American Methodism has become the church for much of the South: there are more Methodists there than anywhere else in the world, and Nashville, as well as being the capital of Country music, is the Bible capital of the South. It is germane to point out that America is a generally more devout society than Britain: there are more believers with the greatest concentration in heartlands like the South). As in England singing played a key rôle in non-conformist practice, and since *the years of the American Revolution, the hymns of Isaac Watts and the songs of British Methodism began to compete for the favor of American religious singers* (Ibid.,11). This new 'religion of the heart' encouraged an emotional fervency, and licensed

emotional excess in an otherwise constrained and earnest society. In such a poor Protestant rural society tension between the unremitting constraints of everyday life and the ecstatic release offered in religious song is one of the axes on which Country music is formed and strongly sentimental religious songs are a key component of the simple and literalist 'old-time' religion of the South. Such a religion embraces a particularly direct eschatology: heaven as beatific life eternal, an indubitable fact not to be negotiated away as metaphor (...*Heaven, land eternal /I'm so glad it's real* as a well-known Country song puts it). Of course heaven as our future happy home would have particular resonance for an indigent agrarian society where this life seemed so often a pleasure-less trial. Such an uncomplicated and somewhat archaic religiosity could be maintained because of the geographical isolation of large areas of the South, which of course also favoured cultural isolation. It was to a degree removed from many of the changes (historical, technological, sociological) that might challenge such an unreconstructed religion; where new ways did intrude they were fiercely repulsed (as with Darwinism - where scientific truth seeks to replace scriptural truth [*vide* the Scopes trial in Tennessee in 1925]). This was all reinforced by the new broadcasting and recording technologies (developing alongside Country music itself) which presented that music as parochial and separate from the urban cultural mainstream. This isolationism had practical ramifications: in many senses the South that gave birth to commercial Country music in the 1920's and 1930's displayed the earnest heart-felt culture typical of the mid-nineteenth century bourgeois mainstream. Like that it was predicated on a morally unequivocal, uncomplicated and essentially religious view of the world, that supported the 'soft' emotionality of sentimentality, which typically finds its expression in tears: the difference between Country and Rock 'n' Roll was memorably expressed by Country singer Bobby Bare - *In country music we want wet eyes, not wet crotches...* (Haggard 1981, intro.)

This is borne out by the extent to which the country repertoire, when not actually reprising nineteenth century songs (which it does to considerable degree: *All varieties of nineteenth century pop found their way into the South, but songs of sadness, nostalgia and sentimentality seemed to find the greatest reception there* [Malone 1993, 57]), so often echoes a nineteenth century (sentimental) tone. In many cases the sentimental excesses in both the secular and religious Country songs seem to trump anything produced previously: in them the dogs are more pathetically faithful and the afterlife more strenuously anticipated. In Country music both performer and listener are united by a similar value structure, including what one commentator has called a 'sincerity contract' (Rogers 1989: 17). The moral simplicity

and emotional openness implicit in such a contract can appear as ingenuousness. It is this that appears so baffling (and risible) to cultured urban taste, yet it is just such ingenuousness that supports sentimentality. Put simply, old-fashioned values mean old-fashioned songs: if the repertoire and sensibility of Country music seem archaic it is because they are - in general - reflective of an earlier, more devout, stage in the development of the cultural mainstream. (Religion informs the South's traditional social arrangements and its 'pre-modern', non-ironic view of the world that finds expression in a simple decency: Malone, in all his writing [1968, 1979, 1993] represents Southerners as 'plain folk' - in implicit contrast to the city slicker.) However, rather than seeing the South as being 'backward' in relation to the American mainstream, it is more profitable and less judgemental to see it as still finding earlier cultural matrices - devout, family-orientated decency - still relevant. Maybe it's only late twentieth century cosmopolitans who find sincerity (and sentimentality) *demodé*.

An unadorned and fervent religion therefore 'underwrites' the general inclination of all Country music to sentimentality, as well as firing the strenuous 'Dreams of Heaven' found in its sacred songs. Even allowing for this, the ubiquity of both religious songs and the general incorporation of a simple Christian world-view in Country music is overwhelming. It is everywhere - and even apparently un-religious strands like Honky-Tonk, with its emphasis on 'cheating' and/or drinking, is a record of the tension between the (puritan) standards of the church and the desires of the individual.

I would also argue the self-pity implicit in a simple, fervent Christianity informs the extravagant self-pity in secular Country evident in song titles alone like *Short Life of Trouble*, *All the Good Times Are Over and Gone* and *(I'm Just) Driftwood On The River Of Regret*.

Religion seems to cross all the sub-divisional divides in the music: it is in Bluegrass as in the smooth Nashville mainstream ('down-home' and 'up-town') - the Stanley Brothers to Jim Reeves; it is in the Singing Cowboy repertoire as well as that of the girl singers - Gene Autry to Patsy Cline, and it spans the history of the music from Jimmie Rodgers through Hank Williams to Johnny Cash and Ricky Skaggs. It is also of course extremely well documented, given Country's close relationship with recording and broadcasting. Perhaps this shouldn't be too surprising given, as Malone has pointed out, that most Country singers first come to singing in church. There is no doubt that within the religious domain 'Dreams of Heaven' have a dominance that is remarkable (if eventually a little wearing). To take an example at random, one side of a recent compilation of Country Gospel (Hallmark BNR 300904) starts with

Boxcar Willie in *Hobo Heaven*. The next track is Johnny Cash's version of the gospel standard, *Peace in the Valley*, where after *the Lord comes and carries me away...there'll be no sadness, no sorrow...* The next stop is *The Old Country Church* in the company of The Oak Ridge Mountain Boys, followed by Patsy Cline singing *Life's Railway to Heaven*. In an extract from a live show Jim Reeves then performs *Softly and Tenderly*. This is about our call to heaven by Jesus - *see on the portal He's waiting and watching / Waiting and watching for you and for me - . Come home...Come home / Ye who are weary come home...* It is however the piece performed by Cline that gives the most resonant account of Country eschatology. Using railroad metaphors, life is presented as a precarious journey that has to be navigated steadfastly; its point however is that this tricky traverse leads to heaven. That is, the reward for vigilance on life's journey only occurs when life is over: thus, contrary to the Buddhist notion of the journey being as important as its goal, it is the journey's end that informs Christian lives.

*Life is like - a mountain railroad
With an engineer - that's brave;
We must make - the run successful
From the cradle - to the grave.
Watch the curves - the fills, the tunnels,
Never falter - never fail;
Keep your hand - upon the throttle
And your eye - upon the rail.*

(Chorus)
*Blessed saviour - Thou wilt guide us
Till we reach - that blissful shore.
Where the angels - wait to join us
In that great - Forevermore.*

*As you roll - across the trestle
Spreading Jordans - swelling tide.
You'll behold - a Union depot
Into which - your train will glide.
There you'll meet - the superintendant,
God, the father - God, the son
With a holy - joyous welcome:
"Weary pilgrim - welcome home!"*

(Chorus)

('Life's Railway to Heaven': Tillman/ Abby 1880's)

[Cline actually only sings the first verse in her recording, and there is some ambiguity between versions as to whether the angels wait to join us *in the great Forevermore* - as here - or *in God's grace forevermore* - as in a Bluegrass rendition by The Greenbriar Boys. Textual quibbles aside, the song is a mainstay in the Country repertoire, well known enough to be parodied as the Labour movement favourite, *The Miner's Lifeguard*. (Parody is a reliable marker of real popularity in any song; the inspiration for the original was a Dibdin song, *Life Is Like A Ship In Motion - Sometimes High And Sometimes Low*.)]

Another Country standard that offers a direct exegesis of the Country Hereafter is *Where We'll Never Grow Old*. (That it is a standard is not in doubt: my own record collection - very far from being comprehensive or eclectic enough to satisfy Country aficionados - has versions by Rose Maddox, The Stanley Brothers and Jim Reeves).

*I have heard of a land
On a faraway strand
Is a beautiful home of the soul.
Build by Jesus on high
Where we never shall die
Is a land where we never grow old.*

(Chorus)
*Never grow old - never grow old
In a land where we never grow old;
Never grow old - never grow old
In a land where we never grow old.*

*When our work here is done
And the life crown is won
And our troubles and trials are o'er;
All our sorrow will end
And our voices will blend
With love ones who've gone on before.*

(Chorus)

('Where We'll Never Grow Old': Moore earlier 20thC)

All this is attesting categorically the truth of life eternal in a beautiful place with one's loved ones. These country 'Dreams of Heaven' have the same hard-edged literalness as the first 'Dreams of Heaven' written by Isaac Watts at the beginning of

the eighteenth century. One cannot explain them away as allegory and they will not be diluted by theological casuistry: heaven is real, and as in Watts's work it is tantalizingly close:

*Across the bridge
There's no more sorrow;
Across the bridge
There's no more pain;
The sun will shine
Across the river
And you'll never be
Unhappy again.*
(*'Across The Bridge'*: Scott 1950's)

Also, as in Watts's hymns, there is a distinct Elsyian meteorology:

*Oh! the land of cloudless day,
Oh! the land of an uncloudy sky;
They tell me of a home
Where no storm clouds roam
Oh! they tell me of an uncloudy day.*
(*'The Uncloudy Day'*: J.K. Allwood earlier 20thC)

The sheer volume of songs with 'heaven' in their titles proclaims the ubiquity of these visions. There is *How Beautiful Heaven Must Be* (Mrs. A.S. Bridgewater/A.P. Bland), which tells us *In heaven there's no drooping or pining No wishing for elsewhere to be...* and the reason there are *No Tears In Heaven* (Robert S. Arnold) is because *...no sorrow is given and so all will be glory in that land*. A reminder of the distaff side of all this - that if there's an unequivocal heaven there might similarly be a unequivocal hell - receives little attention. Such disquieting surmises are possibly drowned out in the rapturous optimism of the core evangelical message of salvation for all. In Johnny Bailles's and Al Robinson's *When Heaven Comes Down* however there is a warning of what awaits those who do not repent: *all the world's sinners with mansions so fine/ Will give up their millions, their whiskey and wine. When heaven comes down, Great mansions will burn...* but it is an exception, and one quickly returns to the 'comfy-cosy' reassurance of the more benevolent norm, as for instance in Red Allen's eponymous piece:

*In childhood I heard of a heaven;
I wondered if it could be true,
That there were sweet mansions eternal*

Up there somewhere beyond the blue.

(Chorus)

*Heaven (happy home above)
Heaven (land of peace and love)
Oh how it makes me
Feel like travelling on.
Heaven (peace eternal)
Heaven (land eternal)
I'm so glad its real.*

*I wondered if people really go there,
Then one day my sweet Jesus came in;
And I had a vision of heaven
My soul's life in heaven will spend.*

(Chorus)

*Then I got a vision of heaven
My soul is o'erflowing with love
My heart, like my Savior's, is broken
For friends who will miss that home above.*

(Chorus)

*Then a voice from the hills of Judea
Still ringing sweet words of relief;
Worlds of attraction don't thrill me
My soul has a change of relief.*

(Chorus)

('Heaven': Boyd and Helen McSpadden 1956)

As a paradigm of a popular music promulgating an absolute consensus these Country 'Dreams of Heaven' can have few equals (it was with some relief to find Boxcar Willie's *Heaven is only five foot two*, and that *heaven is the way she loves me in the morning, heaven is in the way she loves me at night*). The consensus, as has been suggested, is fed by the often bleak reality of life in the rural South; it is perhaps not going too far to see it as an essentially oppressed and marginalised culture. (Similar work is found in the Black Southern tradition - see, for instance, Charles Tindley's *What Are They Doing in Heaven Today?* [1905] and *Home Someday* [1916]: *Beams of heaven as I go Through this wilderness below Guide my feet in peaceful ways*

Turn my midnights into days... Russell [1979] and Malone [1979] have shown how interrelated various Black and White rural popular music forms are.)

The tremendous comfort afforded by adopting this strain of religious song can be understood as defence against that reality (thus marking off its appeal from the different attractions similar material had for a nineteenth century affluent bourgeoisie). Nowhere is this seen more clearly than in two final 'Dreams of Heaven' from the Depression, a time when normally hard times got even harder.

*For fear the hearts of men are failing
For these are latter days we know;
The Great Depression now is spreading,
God's word declared it would be so.*

(Chorus)

*I'm going where there's no Depression
To the lovely land that's free from care,
I'll leave this world of toil and trouble
My home's in heaven, I'm going there.
In that bright land, there'll be no hunger,
No orphan children cryin' for bread
No weeping widows, toil or struggle
No shadows, no coffins, and no death.*

(Chorus)

('No Depression There': from versions by Charlie Monroe and The Carter Family in Paley 1964, 227)

A more global response to the Depression was offered in a similar song:

*There'll be no sorrow on the heavenly shore
There'll be no woes at the cabin door;
We'll all be wealthy and the poor will all be there,
We'll all be rich and happy in that land bright and fair,
There'll be no distinction there.*

(Chorus)

*There'll be no distinction there
There'll be no distinction there
For the Lord is just and the Lord is right,
And we'll all be white in that heavenly light
There'll be no distinction there.*

*In the same kind of raiment, in the same kind of shoes
We'll all sit together in the same row of pews
The whites and the colored folks, the Gentiles and the Jews,
We'll praise the Lord together and there'll be no drinking booze.
There'll be no distinction there.*

(Chorus)

*Oh, when we get to Heaven, we will know and understand,
No women will be flirting with another woman's man,
There'll be no trouble in that holy happy land,
We'll play our golden instruments and shout and beat the band
There'll be no distinction there.*

(Chorus)

*We'll never be blue in Heaven, nothing there to wreck the mind
Everybody is our neighbour, all the folks are good and kind,
No aggravating women there to boss the men around,
When we enter Heaven, we will wear the golden crown.
There'll be no distinction there.*

(Chorus)

('There'll Be No Distinction There': from the singing of The Carter Family in
Ibid. 232)

This is, as one commentator noted, a *courageous effort to make Heaven a place where all mankind's troubles and shortcomings can be rectified* (Paley 1964, 232). However, understandable and touchingly optimistic as such visions are, the problem of their coherence, their intelligibility, remains. And yet whatever the genesis of these 'Dreams of Heaven' - earthly hardship, theological orthodoxy, psychological terror - they represent a unique artifact, for if sentimentality is about manipulating plot-lines for effect then the particular Christian belief in a paradisaical after-life offers a *deus ex machina* (literally) that manipulates the plot-line of our own lives by promising to provide them the ultimate Happy Ending.

Chapter 8

The Tradition Considered

Overview: mainly historical

A keynote in this study has been the complex link between general social trends favouring sentimentality, and that sensibility's specific expression in popular song. The particular cast of sentimental popular song - its use of limited yet enduring subjects to promote high emotionality - is to be understood first and foremost historically, as a product of the wider sentimental movement. The pursuit of enjoyable melancholy that characterizes the sentimental popular song repertoire could not have evolved by chance: it is too specific, too idiosyncratic. It has been argued that both secular and sacred sentimental lyrics are informed by the culture of sentimentalism, and that they originate - and are significantly contiguous with - the developing influence of that culture. Such ideas couldn't develop in societies solely concerned with survival; sentimentality is therefore a stance predicated on the luxury of leisure - and initially it was *an expression of a specifically middle-class leisure and literacy* (Bell 1983, 2). The fact that both the first commercial popular song and the first popular congregational hymns flower from cultural soil which has sentimentality as a key constituent is absolutely axiomatic, and it is hardly surprising therefore to find sentimentality as a dominant tone in so many of these pioneering lyrics.

Sentimentality originated as a revolutionary and complex shift in ideas, a 'new way of doing things'. It was a force with philosophical, psychological and theological strands that found expression in diverse ways. This study has suggested popular song might now be considered as another example of that diverse expression (along with the more familiar literary and artistic examples). Indeed I have argued sentimentality's influence as expressed in song has helped determine current religious practice as well as forming a dominant (*the* dominant?) mode in secular popular music (certainly until the end of the last century).

Sentimentality's stress on heeding the 'feeling heart' helped subjectivise experience, substituting benevolent internal individual authentication for harsh external social imperatives and rule-following which meant the good and the beautiful might be found within. Its reign as a serious attempt to link the psychological with the philosophical - a demarcation of the good and beautiful by

bodily response, and a linking of pity and self-pity - was short-lived. Almost from its inception it became detached from those lofty tenets, increasingly becoming a coarsened strategy for the indulgence of immoderate feeling (especially sad feelings, which were at once the most emotionally potent as well as intrinsic to the expression of pity and self-pity). Yet sentimental song will always retain something of the noble notion of the licensing of such immoderate feeling to validate ethical and aesthetic choice: originally sentimental tears were no trivial affectation - weeping at *The Last Rose Of Summer* or *The Auld Hoose* indicated one's essential human qualities, one's ethical and aesthetic rectitude. To see sentimentality therefore as some regrettable taste error on the part of a few eighteenth century *littérateurs* is neither fair nor accurate: the culture of sentimentality was wide-ranging and influential, and as part of it the sentimental songs as much as the novels or paintings have played their rôle in redefining core assumptions as to what it is to be fully human in the modern age.

An account of the tradition cannot be judged complete without considering wider questions it raises; given the ambivalent cast of sentimentality - critically scorned, yet popularly favoured - it seems particularly important to put sentimental song in the broader context. I close therefore with an assessment of some wider ramifications of sentimental popular song: its status as a cultural product, its character as a commercial commodity, and the possibilities it affords those who create popular song. Finally I reflect on the reasons for the tradition's durability, on the practical level of its functions, and through the more abstract appeal of its (implied) ontology.

Worth: value judgements and 'high' and 'low' art

Despite the wide and deep long-term influences of sentimentality on the culture, the ridiculing of its perceived excesses at the end of the eighteenth century put paid to it as a guiding influence in 'serious' artistic endeavour (for the few); yet by that time it was becoming increasingly a feature of less elevated cultural forms (for the many). This recalls the problem raised in the preface of sentimentality's undoubted popular appeal despite its being so emphatically beyond the critical pale. Specific judgements of cultural worth like this are always made with reference to more

general patterns of artistic hierarchy and value - and negative perceptions about sentimentality can be traced not only to its risible late eighteenth century excesses, but also its failure to accord with subsequent notions of the (artistically) worthwhile (especially as construed by Romanticism and Modernism.) These notions inform in a quite profound way what we actually count as 'Art'. 'Art' - the 'worthwhile' - is not some abstruse abstraction, but that which we choose to curate in our galleries, perform in our theatres and teach on our exam syllabii. The near universal acceptance by informed opinion of Romantic and Modernist criteria for determining cultural excellence should not blind us to the fact that these criteria represent only a particular perspective (and a recently evolved one at that). Indeed 'informed opinion' itself derives from small, high status social groups - the culturati and academia - and is far from being the only (or indeed the majority opinion). There is an increasing discrepancy between its rulings about (elevated) art, and the people's choice in (popular) art reflective in part of its - the intelligencia's - need to distance itself from the cultural proclivities of the mass. This has been a depressing constant, detectable from the dawn of Romanticism (see Williams 1961, ch. 2), and subsequently enshrined as an axiom of Modernity (see Carey 1992, ch. 1). Such cultural bifurcation was occurring at the end of the eighteenth century, for whilst 'high art' - itself in many ways an eighteenth century invention - went on to be accorded an almost religious status in Romanticism, an alternative commodicised art dictated by popular taste was beginning to assert itself.

Some definitions are necessary here: one may characterise elevated art - 'high' art - as the unique exposition of the gifted imagination, of 'genius'; popular art - 'low' art - by contrast tends to be about the (familiar) re-statement of appreciated formulae. 'High' art is deep, existing on many layers; it needs commitment and effort to decode, and that commitment as well as the knowledge necessary to successfully decode it presupposes a certain sort of education: *Art Isn't Easy* as a song - appropriately by the formidable Stephen Sondheim - tells us. (It is this presupposition - implying a schooling in subtlety - that explains why 'high' art is seen as élitist.) 'Low' art rarely aspires to depth, being rather concerned with effects - thrills, tears - and relies on its audience having a modicum of education (if at all). 'High' art is often about the 'shock of the new': the duty to challenge. 'Low' art offers the consolation of the familiar.

As a high-minded cultural strand informed by new intellectual currents sentimentality was initially manifestly part of 'high' art, but its subsequent appeal - from the end of the eighteenth century onwards - was increasingly popular. Indeed sentimentality might be thought of as a key ingredient in forming popular taste

precisely because its facile equating of *volume* of emotion with *extent* of aesthetic or ethical worth was accessible: as artistic judgement came to invoke more formal criteria requiring application and education so 'high' art itself appeared increasingly opaque (as classicism had appeared before the sentimental revolution). Therefore sentimentality's very transparency - 'Am I Moved [a Lot]?' its simple tenet - was attractive (especially to the masses). Indeed, what had started in the eighteenth century as an essentially middle-class taste, by the next century expanded to become a much more general preference. In Edward Lee's schema this 'sentimental-popular' taste is presented as a debased cultural 'third way', a shallow, market-led alternative to the sublimity of creative art and the nobility of folk art (The former is protected from censure by appeal to 'genius', the latter by invocation of authenticity.) (Lee 1970, 64). Such a view has become prevalent, and it typically blames capitalism for the bleak urban industrial realities that meant *...people no longer sang folk songs...and were also unlikely to sustain an interest in 'serious' music because...the new industrial town was too busy growing to admit to needs for artistic satisfaction...*(Mellers 1987, 254). Such a perspective sees even a talent like Stephen Foster as producing regrettable, 'lesser', work because it is in direct response to market demand for diverting (but unchallenging) pap, the (Marxist) implication here being an early avowal of the familiar line on popular music as a species of anaesthesia.

Product: the commercial construction of sentimental song

Mention of 'the market' here is germane, because all this has significant ramifications for the manufacture and sale of cultural goods. In production terms 'low' art can be easily constructed (and is capable of mass-production) because it implies shared perceptions, a cultural *gemeinschaft*, an agreement as to 'what's what' based on past experience. Indeed it actually responds to market demand for those (familiar) things. 'High' art can never be commodicised in this way because its concern is with the unknown, the new; indeed the artist is often seen as a bohemian, that is someone who is outside society (Campbell, 195 ff.). 'High' art carries with it anti-market notions like 'artistic integrity', and is 'difficult' or 'subtle' in ways that absolutely resist commodicisation. (Tellingly much such work relies on patronage of some sort or another; there is a widespread critical ('high' art) assumption that no good ever can

come from the market: thus it is claimed of Stephen Foster that *...his degradation started, moreover, when he ceased to be an amateur song-writer and entered the commercial racket...* [Mellers, 250]). By contrast the familiarity of 'low' art broadcasts the familiar pleasures it promises: for instance favoured sentimental motifs are easily incorporated into song titles and the accompanying art-work on the sheet-music cover, where they signal the possibility of a certain sort of enjoyment. This of course is their point: the presentation of something familiar for sentimental enjoyment as opposed to artistic 'uplift' or challenge.

Sentimental popular song is actually the very model of a mass-produced commodity because it is underwritten by a philosophy of pragmatism (get a response) and a culture of convention (use the same tropes to get that response).

In terms of getting a response, tears in sentimentality informed the writing of songs in one elegant and obvious way. Given that one criterion of a song's success was whether it moistened the eye or not, songs could be 'road-tested' in production to see if they generated a sufficient lachrymosity (gauging as-it-were the 'effect of their affect'). And, of course, from the early days of sentimentality lachrymosity sold: *...a crying volune...brings me more money in six months than a heavy merry thing will do in six years* as an observation from 1770 put it (quoted in Todd 1986, 88). In the pursuit of 'crying songs' many writers used their own reactions as a guide: Moore wept at his own compositions, and in the better documented times at the other end of the nineteenth century there are several accounts of sentimental song specialists like Charles K. Harris and Paul Dresser being moved to tears whilst working on new material (see Spaeth 1926, 220; Whitcomb, 13; Gilbert, 44-5). Having drawn authorial tears a sentimental song could then be 'previewed' to double-check its hanky-moistening propensities. A favourite way was to try out new numbers in brothels, the theory being that if a song reduced hard-bitten whores to tears, then it could be guaranteed to have that effect on anybody. (This was how the celebrated Lamb/Von Tilzer number, *A Bird in a Gilded Cage*, was 'tried out': *One of the girls wept, 'And I knew I had a hit,' said Von Tilzer* [Gilbert, 318].) Having thus established lachrymosity potential beyond doubt that fact could then be utilized as a marketing ploy: *In 1864 the publishing house of Root and Cady...offered a free copy of (Henry Clay) Work's 'Come Home, Father!' to people who could read the lyrics and hold back their tears. Thousands read it; ten claimed copies* (Tawa 1990, 48). Indeed the songs were *...test-pieces for tears...* people trying their *...strength with them, as if they were punching machines at a fair which registered muscular force* (E. F. Benson quoted in Pearsall 1979, 89).

The way these tears were solicited were remarkably similar: certainly if the supreme shibboleth of 'high' art is originality then sentimental song will forever remain 'low', for we have repeatedly seen how the songs utilize the same few familiar tropes for generations. Sentimental song is indeed a 'culture of convention' and in an important sense the development of the tradition is about the delineation of these favoured themes and treatments (and it has been a part of this research to show that it is often earlier, less familiar, writers who first introduced key motifs and set styles). We have seen how favoured themes transcend both genre and period. New motifs, however, providing they were apt, could be incorporated with ease: hobos - migratory American tramps who roamed the country by the potentially fatal practice of jumping on and off moving trains - didn't feature in earlier sentimental songs for obvious reasons, but shared the pathos potential of other disadvantaged groups like slaves and children in being rejected, powerless and at risk, and therefore suitable subjects for eliciting a sentimental tear - as for instance in *The Hobo's Last Ride* (1931) or *Hobo Bill's Last Ride* (1929) - and, like those other groups, their suffering in this life would be redeemed in the next: ...*There's a master up yonder in Heaven Got a place that we might call our home...*(*The Hobo's Meditation* 1933). As with other categories of sentimental song the requisite heart-piercing quality could easily be lost by an inappropriate tone seeping in: *The Dying Hobo* (1917) has its (considerable) pathos undercut by a mordant final verse: ...*There he stopped, his head fell back/ He'd said his last refrain;/His old pal swiped his coat and hat/ And hopped an Eastbound train.* Mordancy, like humour and bawdry, are inimical to the creation of full-strength sentimentality.

Essentially the tradition remained conservative - its treatments and themes were limited: hobos, for all their apparent modernity, were pathetic in very time-honoured ways. The tendency in the tradition for repeating successful formulae would suggest a facility in the construction of sentimental song: *In the course of the century...(there) ...developed a highly stylised pattern, devoid of artistic merit, but astonishingly economic and effective in its embodiment of the emotional keys of sentimentality* (Bratton 1975, 90).

These *keys* were often no more than emblematic words, and if we allow 'key' the sense of 'lever' we may employ with Turner (1975, 9) a Pavlovian metaphor. He instituted a word-count on the songs he had anthologised in two collections of (mostly) Parlour songs to *throw light on what the Victorians appreciated in their popular songs. There appears to be a number of key words which served as stimuli to produce mental salivation in nineteenth-century auditors...*

<i>home</i>	107
<i>old</i>	102
<i>heart, etc.</i>	84
<i>mother</i>	77
<i>little</i>	64
<i>song, etc.</i>	63
<i>death, etc.</i>	62
<i>sweet, etc.</i>	62
<i>dear, etc.</i>	46
<i>tear, etc.</i>	33
<i>dream, etc.</i>	31
<i>weep, etc.</i>	24
<i>Heaven</i>	19

Bratton's reference - above - to a *stylised pattern* that is so *economic and effective* in summoning the sentimental involved certain existing words becoming sentimentally 'emblematic', as in Turner's list. (Bar the most frequently used word - 'love' - this is the entire list; what is remarkable is that whilst Turner's anthologies are not specifically sentimental they clearly indicate the dominance of the sentimentalesque.) Readers are referred to the song concordance at the end of this work for clear proof of this tendency: for instance sentimentality could be instantly conferred adjectivally by the incorporation of an *old* and *little* in a song title. It also involved the appropriation and adoption of certain words as sentimental 'catch-alls'. One such was *pal*. Of Romany origin, it enjoyed huge popular currency from the end of the nineteenth century, and could refer to one's horse, mother, spouse, friend or sweet-heart, being sentimentalese for unselfish 'good-heartedness' (from which any troubling undercurrents or ambiguities - especially sexual - had been evacuated). It made its way into literally scores of songs, where it operated as short-hand for signalling an unequivocally sentimental approach.

Such semantic signalling leaves one with the impression that many songs were concocted rather than composed, and the process appeared effortless: the summoning of a few familiar subjects by a few familiar words and locutions (an *old* here, a *pal* there: indeed we saw how being *Old*... something or other was *de rigueur* for sentimental dogs, and such orthodox sentimental prefixing helped produce hits like *The Old Lamplighter* as late as 1946. Similarly it's a safe surmise that any song including the word *twilight* is sentimental.) And if one word could summon the requisite mode, mightn't the sentimental quotient of a song be easily augmented by utilizing several sentimental 'markers'? One might term this the 'incremental school of sentimental songwriting', and it goes back a long way - Mother and Home were conflated in the 1854 piece *What is a Home Without Mother?*- and it never lost its

popularity: over a century later *The Lightning Express* (U.S.A 1958) [popularised by the Everly Brothers] sought to unite Pathetic Child and (failing) Mother, and in *Nobody's Child* (U.S.A. 1949) it will be remembered the protagonist is blind and orphaned. Similarly Red River Dave McEnery, the eccentric cowboy singer whose sentimental aviatrix song commences and concludes this study, successfully linked Pathetic Child and Faithful Dog in his *The Blind Boy's Dog* (U.S.A. 1940's). Certain sentimental 'object' songs could be guaranteed to work incrementally: for instance shawls (a favourite motif) always had sentimental owners - good-hearted mothers (*Little Black Shawl* U.S.A. 1934) or sweet Irish colleens (*A Shawl of Galway Grey* G.B. 1949); shawls were not in the wardrobes of good-time city girls.

Conflation might lead to imaginative results: *In the Hills of Tennessee* (U.S.A. 1932), written for Jimmie Rodgers, is a *tour de force* which effortlessly incorporates Trees, Home and Heaven, (and manages references to Milton and Stephen Foster), but all too often the outcome is dispiritingly formulaic - *My Old Irish Mother* (G.B. 1933) conflates Age, Motherhood and Ireland to be sure, but is otherwise dismal (its authors presumably feeling a multiple-motif title was achievement enough). They were not, unfortunately, alone: over the years there has been *A Real Irish Mother* (G.B. 1919), *That Old Irish Mother Of Mine* (U.S.A. 1925), *An Old Irish Lady (Sweet Mother of Mine)* (G.B. 1935), *Did Your Mother Come From Ireland?* (G.B. 1936) and *Ireland Must Be Heaven (For My Mother Came From There)* (U.S.A. 1916). Writing 'incrementally' therefore could signal laziness as much as an increased 'sentimentality quotient'. We have seen in the section on Irish sentimental song how previous song-titles were reprised singly or in groups to create fresh songs; this could result in interesting work, but again often bespoke laziness as in titles such as *Like The Last Rose of Summer You Just Said 'Good-Bye'* [G.B 1924], *All The Way From Ireland (Came Molly, The Rose of Tralee)* [G.B. 1937] and *The Gang That Sang 'Heart of My Heart'* [U.S.A. earlier 20thC] (all of which quote both lyrics and tune from the original songs) or the Irish 'daughter' songs, *She's the Daughter of Mother Machree*, *The Daughter of Rosie O'Grady*, and *The Daughter of Peggy O'Neil* [U.S.A 1915, 1918, 1930]. (Similarly following his affecting [and profitable] demise in 1908 *Little Joe The Wrangler* proved to be less of a lone orphan than first suspected on the publication of *Little Joe The Wrangler's Sister Nell* in 1934.) Moreover specialist 'portmanteau' songs specifically sought to reprise several previous titles: *The Songs of Olden Days* (U.S.A. 1872) quotes from songs by Burns, Moore and Fitzball before a bravura finish consisting of the complete final seven bars of *Home! Sweet Home!* Then there were the 'answer' songs: Henry Russell's *The Old Arm Chair* (U.S.A. 1840) prompted

The Answer To 'The Old Arm Chair' the following year. And the sequel songs: *The Great Speckled Bird* (U.S.A. 1936), Roy Acuff's bizarre piece of Country eschatology deriving from Jeremiah 17: 9, became a Country anthem - and Acuff obliged a little later with *The Great Speckled Bird No. 2* (U.S.A. 1940's). One is left with the impression that this was expeditious (not-to-say cynical) songwriting; a nadir was reached with titles like the feeble variant of Moore, *The First Rose of Summer* (U.S.A. 1919) or the brazen *It's Time to Sing 'Sweet Adeline' Again* (U.S.A. 1933). The heartfelt response sought by sentimental song could therefore be easily subverted if flagged in too careless a manner - as in these examples - or if realized in too glib a way. It will be remembered Bayly on occasion was thought too smooth a sentimentalist and an ostensibly 'perfect' Civil War song, Foster and Cooper's *For the Dear Old Flag I Die*, (another song that conflates motifs, with Pathetic Child - the dying drummer-boy - and Mother), possibly failed because *It was too perfect, perhaps it was too calculated and did not quite ring with the sincerity sentimentality demands* (Silber 1960, 12-13).

There was therefore some art in the (apparently formulaic) craft of sentimental song. Songs that did succeed - resonant titles like *Home! Sweet Home!* and *The Last Rose of Summer* - entered the culture in a general way as familiar phrases: for instance a coloured print entitled *The Last Rose of Summer* was given away with *The Sunday Companion* on February 16th 1929, and whilst it is not a direct representation of Moore's song, it is sentimental. Similarly the play *Smilin' Through* was produced in 1924 'on the back' of the popularity of the 1918 song success of that name, and was still touring in Rep. in the 1950's. Again both the play and song are sentimental, and whilst not exactly an adaptation of the song, the play adopts the 'love surviving death' theme of its final verse. And could it be that whilst the content of Sterne's *Sentimental Journey* was never well-known, its title had cultural currency sufficient to suggest a name (and subject) for a song to Bud Green and Lew Brown 200 years later?

This cross-media representation of sentimental song wasn't new - the print of *Auld Robin Grey* was almost as celebrated as the song - and each reinforced the celebrity of the other. (An identical process occurred in the next century with the Currier and Ives print *The Old Oaken Bucket* inspired by the popular song of the same name.) We have seen how from the earliest days of the tradition songs might be derived from theatre pieces (as with Dibdin) and novels (as with Dickens) - and vice-versa. This all fortifies the general 'visibility' of sentimental song within the culture, suggested - as we have seen - by the way Dickens and Joyce assumed their readers would be *au courant* with Moore's songs, and novelists similarly assumed a

knowledge of the sentimental hymns (which feature, for instance, in Charlotte Brontë's *Shirley* and George Eliot's *Adam Bede*).

A different re-inforcing process is at work in the way the stereotypical sentimental illustrations decorating the covers of sheet music are a precise analogue for the stereotypical sentimental lyrics contained within. It has been argued that the visions conjured by sentimental lyrics might be likened to garish and sensational stage scenery, a simplified, yet heightened, version of things: it is no accident that sentimental song developed alongside the development of increasingly sensational stage effects, from the ingenious work of Phillip John de Louthembourg for Garrick to the excessive marvels of Drury Lane pantomime. 'The picturesque' - the stagey vista - inspired much writing (Keats remembered Claude Lorraine's painting of *The Enchanted Castle* when writing *Ode to a Nightingale* [Quennell 1970, 97]); and the obvious theatricality of sentimental songs surely encouraged the link. This can be seen vividly in the dramatisations of sentimental song lyrics featured in the celebrated picture post-cards issued by the British firm of Bamforth's. In the days before the ubiquity of the telephone the postcard was for *most people, the quickest way to make contact with a friend, relative or tradesman* (Willoughby 1992, 13), and by the end of the nineteenth century there was tremendous variety and ingenuity in available designs. Using employees and friends as 'actors' Bamforth's staged and photographed graphic *tableaux vivants* to illustrate the printed lyric for a verse or chorus of a song. Some songs had a card for each verse, and like their close cousin, the magic lantern slide, represented the extravagance of the lyrics in an unrepentantly lurid and literal fashion. (Interestingly for this study, the histrionic tableaux Bamforths used to illustrate sacred sentimental pieces like *Abide With Me* were often identical to those used for affecting secular songs, showing that - in the popular imagination at least - sentimentality had a homogeneous universality. It will be remembered how Watts's hymns as much as more obviously 'theatrical' secular sentimental song were similarly informed by the drama.) The visual realisation of sentimental lyrics of course also reinforced their market potential: a striking song cover could sell an indifferent piece, and *illustrated song slides quickly became a valuable tool in the plugging of popular songs* (Jasen, 3; for details see Goldberg 1930, 75-6).

The visual could aid the performance of the songs too: Albert Chevalier lent his already sentimental lyric, *My Old Dutch* (G.B. 1892), more pathos by presenting it 'in character' in front of a backcloth of the workhouse, which, having different doors for men and women, meant separation from his wife of forty years.

(Mackenzie would have admired such an immoderate arrangement of misfortune in the service of a sentimental response.)

It will have become apparent that the sentimental popular song tradition is essentially a practical project: its first concern has always been to teach feeling by the most efficacious (not the most original) means. (Even song titles are reprised if sufficiently resonant: *The Blind Boy* was the title of two celebrated but quite distinct nineteenth century songs, one American, one British; two songs entitled *Beyond The Sunset* [G.B. 1902 and G.B. 1911] predated the celebrated Gospel standard of that name [U.S.A. 1920's] and *In The Land Of Beginning Again* [1913], an American piece popular in the First World War, was followed in the Second World War by the British *There's A Land Of Begin Again* [1940]. Finally more recently there have been two different *No Tears in Heaven* [U.S.A. 1950's and G.B. 1992]). Formulae and repetition are not a problem for such a didactic project, and it is futile therefore to regret sentimental song's failure as creative, mimetic art. For all their lack of originality there is something touching in the way these songs still echo eighteenth century optimism about using human sympathetic response to show truth and beauty, and the very facets that make them distasteful to the critics - their formulaic unsubtleties - make them the ideal mass-produced artifact. And an excellent business proposition: Tin Pan Alley did not reprise sentimental tropes because of their benevolent credentials, but because they sold. (The expeditious [and decidedly unsentimental] flavour of the Alley can be caught by recalling the fact that the same 1915 Mother song was marketed in the U.S.A. as the isolationist *I Didn't Raise My Boy To Be A Soldier* and in this country as the gung-ho *I'm Glad My Boy Grew Up To Be A Soldier*.)

Sentimental song's continuing popularity - despite critical censure - was therefore surely aided by its viability as a cultural product.

Possibilities: sentimentality in relation to subsequent strands in popular song

Mention has been made of the established (hegemonic) status of sentimentality as a cultural matrix by the mid-nineteenth century, and how within popular song it had become the dominant 'tone' (See Bumpass 1990, 262 and Theberge 1997, 127). It infused *the patterns and formulas of popular songwriting that were to remain fairly*

constant right up to modern times (Spaeth 1948, 58), and it was inevitable that such a defining aspect of nineteenth century popular song should continue to inform twentieth century writing.

However, sentimentality's dominance was severely moderated at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of this century by the introduction of Black musical forms. Black 'folk' forms like Blues and Work songs, and 'art' forms like Ragtime (later synthesised into many hybrids - pure like jazz or impure like early Alley pop) were united by a quite different kind of sensibility. This was to have considerable ramifications for the pop of our century, which can be characterized by a meld of two cultural streams, the European and the African. The European sensibility was typified by the sentimental which, as we have seen, is about the stylised manipulation and enjoyment of excessive emotion; the African sensibility by contrast was more spontaneous, stressing rhythm (specifically syncopation) and improvisation. Both of course are concerned with strong emotion, but sentimentality's self-indulgent lachrymosity is usually contrasted unfavourably with the perceived life-affirming vivacity of Black-influenced forms (which, of course, are the derivation of most current pop). Artists who espouse both are judged accordingly (as in the condemnation of the Mario Lanza/ Hank Snow elements of Elvis's work or Jimmie Rodgers' pathetic songs in favour of their Blues inflected work); artists whose work is largely sentimental - Ivor Novello, Kate Smith, Jim Reeves - are not seriously considered. We are of course back again with *Amy* and Robert Johnson: Black 'authenticity' (and its derivations) are valued above any effete (White/European) massaging of the tear-ducts. (For the attraction of Black musical forms like jazz for White *haute bourgeoisie* see Frith 1988, 45ff and Gioio 1988, 19ff.)

Evergreen: future possibilities

Despite the encroachment of alternative Black-derived forms, the widespread popularity of sentimentality's distinct tone, and the familiarity of themes and imagery evolved in sentimental song, favoured its continuing production and consumption; its potential had been proved - and sentimentality had become an eminently feasible component in the palette of popular song construction, and ripe for incorporation in any new developments.

It is sometimes implied a kind of apotheosis in sentimental popular song was reached at the end of the last century in the American Alley work of writers like Charles K. Harris, Paul Dresser, Gussie Davis, and Monroe Rosenfeld (see Spaeth 1926, Goldberg 1930). There is something in this - we have already seen how this time of early American Alley was a golden age for Irish sentimental song - but the work of Harris, Dresser and their colleagues is driven by a particular brand of narrative sentimentality peculiar to its time. The fact that these songs tended to tell often elaborate stories to evoke a sentimental tear is simply reflective of the trend seen throughout late nineteenth century popular art, where a strong narrative strain becomes as ubiquitous in theatre and Vaudeville as it was in literature and painting. The great set-piece songs from this time - Harris's *After the Ball* (1892), Davis's *The Baggage Coach Ahead* (1896), Rosenfeld's *Those Wedding Bells Shall Not Ring Out* (1896) and Dresser's *The Banks Of the Wabash* (1899) constitute a significant contribution to the tradition - a fact attested by the satisfying number of times they have attracted the censure of guardians of good taste - but for all their vociferous and theatrical sentimentality these story-songs still represent a particular local emphasis within the development of the tradition. (Not, as has been suggested, a defining moment.)

In our own century - certainly the first half of it - it is salutary to point out what a dominant position sentimentality has enjoyed within popular song; its specialist practitioners like Al Jolson and Gene Autry are not much considered, but for the people and the industry (if not the critics) they were pop. It was suggested earlier that being parodied was a (back-handed) tribute to the appeal of a song, and it is telling that the bulk of the song types used by a master parodist like Tom Lehrer are sentimental - furnishing further proof of its ubiquity within pop. (And to succeed such musical fun requires considerable knowledge and understanding of what is being sent-up.)

In general the sentimental in popular song will always be more congenial - in harmony with - certain styles, repertoires and individual writers and performers, and it is possible therefore to isolate the whereabouts of the main sentimental 'strain' in pop at any one time. For instance in the 1920's it was evident in the repertoire and performances of Jolson rather than those of Eddie Cantor, in the 1930's and 1940's in the work of Arthur Tracy (a transatlantic sensation, yet now again unregarded) rather than that of Sinatra. This is not to say there wasn't a sentimental component in Cantor and Sinatra's output, but rather that it dominated the Jolson and Tracy *oeuvres* in a particularly unreconstructed way. Many songs clearly advertise their sentimental orientation: as one would expect from their titles *Nobody Knows*,

Nobody Cares (U.S.A. 1901) and *I Wished I Had Died In My Cradle (Before I Grew Up To Love You)* (U.S.A. 1929) are essays in self-pity; similarly from a later, would-be urbane school of song-writing, *Dinner For One Please, James* (G.B. 1935) offers a more *soigné* indulgence of personal misfortune. However the sentimental axis of even well-known popular songs is sometimes hidden. The pathos in pieces like *Diane* (U.S.A. 1927) and *When The Poppies Bloom Again* (G.B. 1937) is only revealed in their (rarely performed) verses: in the first the hero is blind, in the second dead.

By and large certain 'flavours' - for instance the comic or the 'hot' - discouraged the sentimental, although some performers like Gracie Fields and Noël Coward sought to elicit both laughter and tears (though never in the same number). Song-writing and performing partnerships often featured a more sentimental and an anti-sentimental cohort: for instance McCartney (the former) and Lennon (the latter) - *Eleanor Rigby* and *Yesterday* (the most 'covered' song in history) against *Please Please Me* and *When I Get Home* (See Macdonald 1995).

Finally one might generally be less likely to find sentimentality in some areas - Rock as opposed to Musical Theatre - but there are always exceptions: Mark Knopfler's delightful *Why Worry?* (G.B. 1985) could be an Edwardian motto song, and is replete with venerable Parlour imagery like *...sunshine after rain...*, whilst jokey 1960's pastiche Musical Theatre like *The Rocky Horror Show* and *Little Shop of Horrors* mocks sentimentality (albeit in an accomplished and affectionate way, as in *A Little Bit of Green*, from the latter show).

My point is simply about the establishment of sentimentality as a cultural strand, a 'tone', in British-American popular song that can then be adopted and 'worked' within any sub-strata to a greater or lesser extent. It is uncontested that certain forms like Music-Hall and Bluegrass display an obviously high sentimental quotient, but do so for quite different reasons (involving sociological equations of some complexity). Some sociological equations are less puzzling: sentimental song dominates Barbershop music simply because its roots and repertoire are from a time - the later nineteenth century - when it was a defining strand within pop (see Stebbins 1996, 17).

The discrete charm of sentimental song

Being a feasible component within the palette of popular song, a proven market favourite that is readily constructed, tells us something of why sentimental song endures, but does not address why it continues to engage people. The wider question this study throws up is why such an unlikely and critically scorned commodity continued to thrive at such a remove from the local conditions that kindled it. This hints at a 'deep appeal' - *the discrete charm of sentimental song*.

At one level this can be explained sociologically by recognising sentimentality's wider general importance as a defining matrix of modern life: we forget how the manipulation and indulgence of strong emotion has become part of the unconscious patterns we carry around with us - one cultural mode (amongst others) that determines the way we experience things. Its familiarity means it is easy to forget what an original and significant 'paradigm shift' had to occur to accommodate it; all of us carry to some degree the sentimental legacy of trusting our feelings. One may also note how the linking of personal worth to the indulgence of immoderate emotion - that entirely novel stance at the heart of sentimentality - still underwrites (in a ghostly way) all sentimental art (flattering its 'consumers', and thus favouring its perseverance). Viewed this way the critical opprobrium heaped on sentimentality nowadays is neither here nor there - merely a recent (and possibly temporary) judgement on something long established. Indeed *T. S. Buecher even goes as far as to say that sentimentality has become so odious in our time that we are in danger of missing a big chunk of the aesthetic forest, and if history goes on being cyclical sentimental attributes will be in vogue again* (Park 1996, 53).

Contemporary judgement, however, is disabling: by seeing sentimentality as culturally rotten critical opinion never allows itself to get close enough to sentimental art to consider its fascination. There is a smugness and lack of generosity in this approach: is it *really* so self-evident that sentimentality is as irredeemably malodorous as is implied? (The aesthete Robert Solomon has suggested there might be more than a hint of snobbery in all this [Solomon 1991, 3].)

In seeking to avoid such rote rejection and provide a more productive perspective one needs to return to the songs themselves: what is it in their tone and content that continues to have resonance, to give them their 'deep appeal' ?

First, for many people popular songs are ...*neither a livelihood nor a diversion from the serious business of life, but rather a natural accompaniment - almost a necessary part - of work, worship, and social and political intercourse*

(Austin, 27). There has, however, long been a tendency to deny them significance and to see them as trite and ephemeral, a 'leisure choice' that is indulged only when the serious business of life has been dealt with. It is hoped that this work has shown popular song 'texts' carry much information, aesthetic, psychological - and yes, philosophical. Choice in such material defines personal and social preferences: the philosopher Mark Jefferson tells us in his discussion of sentimentality ...*there is a degree of choice in the vision one adopts of things* (Jefferson 1983, 526). The espousal of sentimental art animates our experience of the world, indeed it may determine it: it will be remembered how one nineteenth century auditor dated ...*the birth of his sentimental nature to the fact that an old nurse used to sing 'Woodman, Spare That Tree' at his bedside...* (Turner 1972, 150). Pathos can inform life as much as heroism or irony, and it may be that the sweet sadness of sentimental song remains persistently popular because it accords with both particular and general circumstances in life. That is, the content and experience of the songs chimes with events in the lives of particular societies and individuals at certain times, as well as the experience of life itself.

We may now consider in detail the ways in which this occurs.

Chiming with the febrile moment: pertinence in the social domain

At times of personal or social upheaval sentimental songs seem especially apt. This is because terrible or extreme events in the world effect an emotional febrility that matches sentimentality's own immoderation, and we therefore find the sentimental appropriate when our social or personal world is 'in a state'. To take a recent historical example: the financial and social upheaval of the Depression surely fed the success of Home songs like *My Blue Heaven* and *Sleepy Valley*, whose consoling dreams would have an understandable attraction at such a troubled time, whilst the pathos of the destitute jobless was exploited in pieces like *Shake Hands With a Millionaire*.

However perhaps the most obvious condition where the tone of the songs matches the tone of the moment is the condition of being at war - and a search of the publisher's back-catalogues does indeed confirm the popularity of sentimental song in war-time. War radically transforms societies. The contrast between being at war and being at peace is perhaps greater in modern times where civilization seeks to tame or cloak the barbaric, the primitive. The transformation can be seen in two key areas. Firstly the moral. In wartime the sanctity of life - one of society's strongest

credos - receives a partial inversion: it is now actually desirable to kill certain other humans. (And as a further ghastly twist you can lose your life for failing to do so.) Secondly the psychological. The temperature of life becomes fevered: life's certainties suddenly become precarious. For even civilians death or injury can be everyday possibilities. Human relationships in general, and separations and partings in particular, gain new significance: every parting is potentially final.

The heightened emotionality and simplified world-view of sentimental song come closer to matching the condition of everyday life in wartime: its 'un-natural' excesses suit the 'un-natural' extremes of a world where psychological and ethical dimensions are topsy-turvy. (Viewed another way, a retreat into the cosy imprecision of sentimentality is a sensible response to the craziness of war.)

In a condition of war sentimentality's characteristic stances of looking from a grim present back to past happiness or forward to future deliverance seem less like aesthetic choices than common sense, an entirely suitable option given the altered nature of things. Taking as an example British songs from the Second World War there is an almost palpable yearning for *The Land Of Begin Again* (a Vera Lynn title from that time), and there are a host of songs looking hopefully into the future: *When The Lights Go Up Again All Over The World*, *When They Sound The Last 'All-Clear'*, and of course *We'll Meet Again* (...don't know where, don't know when' But I know we'll meet again some sunny day). Similarly the emotional intensity of war lends an almost hallucinatory character to the familiar sentimental summoning of past happiness as in a piece like *I'll Be Seeing You*, whose verse asks *Who knows, if we shall meet again?* Equally, there is a unmanufactured poignancy in songs sketching fleeting grasped pleasure during wartime like *That Lovely Weekend* or *Room 504*. The link between sentimentality and patriotism is also significant here. It will be remembered from the preface that, according to its critics, sentimentality simplifies and distorts complex realities. However, at a time when we are asked to submerge all our differences in the interests of 'the nation', a simplified version of national realities is exactly what is wanted, and sentimental versions of the homeland such as are promulgated in *There'll Always Be An England* or *Lords Of The Air* provide eminently suitable rallying points. (As the enemy is demonized so the motherland is reified.)

The unifying function of sentimental song is seen in peacetime too, and can be witnessed in locations as disparate as the pews of a church and the terraces of football grounds. In both cases a simplified (manipulative?) emotionality gives a feeling of belonging and increases social cohesion. Similarly comedians have traditionally taken sentimental songs very seriously indeed, using them as a way of

restoring communal cosiness after the exhausting challenge of their routines. The more outlandish the comedy, the more sentimental the song. Thus, after a masterful feast of rudery, Max Miller (that *saloon-bar Priapus* as John Osborne called him) swapped the saucy wink for the moistened eye when he closed with *Be Sincere* (...*Do the same to others, as you would have them do/ And the world will be sincere- with-- you!*). Similarly the manic surreality of Ken Dodd's comedy, capable - when on pitch - of disabling an audience with laughter (as in his celebrated 1965 London Palladium season) is always concluded - 'wound down' - by an entirely straight and affecting performance of *Tears: (Tears have been my only consolation But tears can't mend a broken heart I must confess....)*.

Chiming with the febrile moment: pertinence in the personal domain

Sentimental song can also acquire a contextual appropriateness in individual lives as much as group or national ones, and by way of illustrating this we may take a story from 'The Lives Of The Great Popular Song Composers'. Irving Berlin, a shy and driven man not noted for his charm, was an unlikely candidate for a *grand amour*. Yet when he met Dorothy, the sister of fellow song writer Ray Goetz, he found the love of his life. Within weeks of their honeymoon however she was dead in a typhoid epidemic. Berlin was inconsolable, and wrote nothing for a year. When he eventually recommenced composing this was the result :

*The roses each one
Met with the sun
Sweetheart when I met you.
The sunshine had fled
The roses were dead
Sweetheart when I lost you:*

(Chorus)
*I lost the sunshine and roses
I lost the heaven of blue;
I lost the beautiful rainbow
I lost the morning dew;
I lost the angel who gave me
Summer the whole winter through:
I lost the gladness
That turned into sadness
When I lost you.*

*The birds ceased their song
Right turned to wrong
Sweetheart when I lost you.
A day turned to years;
The world seemed in tears
Sweetheart when I lost you:*

(Chorus)

('When I Lost You': U.S.A. 1912)

The point here is that standard sentimental excesses - dead roses, and a (pathetically fallacious) world in tears - are transformed. These common-place 'tricks', potentially so banal and cheap, acquire a dignity and relevance knowing the situation of the song's composition (the recent success of Eric Clapton's song for his dead son, *Tears In Heaven*, is surely because of this): in grief a sentimental cliché can be wholly apposite. Even the expressional infelicities add to the power of the piece: Berlin is no Keats but the sing-song simplicity of the lyrics bespeaks a depth of emotion that is affecting. (Grief anyhow gets the tongue: to adapt the eighteenth century dramatist Lillo's dictum, [clever] *words are for lighter griefs*.) Similarly Tom Moore, following the tragically early death of his favourite child, Anastasia, understandably found performing a song like *There's a song of the olden time* too painfully apposite: *on a few occasions, (he) broke down at the piano, and had to leave the room in uncontrollable fits of sobbing* (White, 252).

One doesn't, however, need the extreme situations such as death or war to make the sentimental relevant; in the quotidian round many of us seek a sentimental song at emotionally heightened times (whatever the intellectuals may say). This might be benignly ritualistic - *Abide With Me* at football or *Danny Boy* at closing-time - or more painfully personal - *Blue Eyes Cryin' In The Rain* at the end of a love affair. With such sentimental favourites their appropriateness is often less about what their lyrics actually describe than what meaning we project onto them. Thus even the most specific songs are capable of multiple-reading: it is as though the specific story they tell is very much second to the emotionality they invoke: having become moved by the song, people then offer startlingly different accounts of what it is 'about'. The point was well made in Julian Lloyd's film about Weatherly's *Danny Boy*, *'In Sunshine Or In Shadow'* (Lloyd 1996). The fact that such an ostensibly specific piece of versifying as *Danny Boy* can accommodate diverse interpretations therefore hints at a significant factor in its outstanding popularity. The politician John Hulme, for instance, was sure the song is 'about' the pain of separation occasioned by

emigration: *...the words are what it's all about...and it tells you a very moving story...the greatest export of our cities throughout our history has been human beings. The sailing ships carried thousands of people, and when they left in those days because of the lack of communications it was the equivalent of death - and they had, before the departure of the son or daughter to America, what was known as an 'American Wake'. I think what makes people weep is the meaning of the song: think of the mother whose son is leaving her to earn a living, and she knows as he goes, she will never see him again...* Marianne Faithfull was equally sure the song is 'about' the literal (rather than metaphorical) death of a loved one: *To really understand 'Danny Boy' you have to have lost somebody - or more than one person - you really, really, really loved. And then you understand 'Danny Boy'; but until then you don't...* For the boxer Barry McGuigan *Danny Boy* has a purely personal signification, that of a father's love: his father sang it in the ring just before McGuigan's world title fight *...maybe it's the sentimental Irishman in me but...(my father's singing it) told me how much he cared for me... before I went out to risk myself for him...* (All quotes on soundtrack from Lloyd, 1996).

The song therefore is like a sentimental Rorschach test - its tone (an intemperate emotionality) overriding its content (the story told in the lyrics), in a way that invites people to supply their own significance. Similarly, whilst few accept - or are even familiar with - the fervent eschatology espoused in the lyrics of *Abide With Me*, the experience of that hymn necessarily entails some 'reading' of the lyrics: *...the words still matter, and the experience remains vestigially a spiritual one* (Jenkyns 1997, 32).

The persisting popular appeal of sentimental songs therefore relates partly to their appropriateness as an expressive mode in particular social and personal situations: as the poet Gavin Ewart puts it in a sonnet title - *Life Too Is Sentimental*.

Deep appeal and ontological truth

Finally I would like to argue that sentimental songs actually speak to certain defining facets of our condition, that they both acknowledge and help us mediate particular truths about human existence. These truths are of a very different order from those sought in the eighteenth century - yet they similarly speak to what unites us simply by virtue of being human, and the much remarked-on unchanging nature of the song

tradition might be reflective of the unchanging experience of human life. (Tawa speaks of Parlour song setting forth in *...simple and emphatic terms...events, conditions and feelings common to all humanity* [1985, 147].) I'm aware that claiming profundity for the tradition might seem extravagant, not least because of sentimentality's rejection as being in any way 'serious': it is however a philosophical error to assume a lightweight form (as sentimentality is represented - if at all) must necessarily carry a lightweight message; there may be as much wisdom in a cracker-motto as in the *Tractatus*. Viewed philosophically (rather than literarily or sociologically) the thematic and semantic repetition in the song lyrics might now be given an alternative reading: far from being indices of artistic paucity, they might rather show an unchanging consensus about what - for good or ill - engages people.

Beyond motifs: a predominant concern ?

*Never thought my heart could be so 'yearny'
Why did I decide to roam?
Gonna take a sentimental journey
Sentimental journey home.*

('Sentimental Journey': Green, Brown and Homer U.S.A. 1944)

Is there a predominant motif in the lyrics of the tradition, and what would its prevalence tell us? Indeed might there be a common concern that lies behind much of the subject matter, a motif of motifs? A benefit of having considered sentimental lyrics from very different sorts of 'popular music' across a span of over two hundred years is that we now have enough evidence to consider realistically such questions, and suggest credible, persuasive answers.

From one of the first songs we consider, Ramsay's *Farewell To Lochaber*, through Burns's and Moore's *faux*-Celtic idylls to Foster's halcyon plantation and down through to any number of 20th century Alley standards, the hymning of Home as a place of delight seems to be an ascendant theme. And our two 'repertorial reveries', *Ireland of Dreams* and *Dreams of Heaven* are, in their different ways, dreams of Home. (Quite different repertoires have a similar focus. For instance the school song recreates the Alma Mater as dream Home, as in lines like *Echoes of dreamland shall bear them along...* from the Harrow school song, *40 Years On* [G.B. 1872].)

The stance of these songs is at one level a restatement of the archetypal myths of the Golden Age (the time when everything was in harmony) and Paradise (the place where one experienced that harmony). It is also no accident that *Roget's*

Thesaurus lists words connoting the condition of youthful delight, like *prime* and *heyday*, as synonymous with locations like *Arcadia*, *Utopia* and *Eden*, and our present situation is inevitably one of 'lack' for those states, times or places. A different sort of loss is present in the nostalgia for the recent pre-industrial, pre-urban past (another neoteric paradise). The pace of change in the last two or three hundred years has engendered a nostalgia for the passing of the old ways, and this is of course the time of the growth of the sentimental song tradition, and we have noted how often it takes as its subject charming rural *gemeinschafts*.

This ubiquity of these visions was noted briefly in the discussion following exegesis of the archetypal *Home! Sweet Home!* in chapter 5. It was suggested such a particular and vociferous preference might tell us about a deep need. I now want to amplify the suggestion made then that the desire to return to the place where we belong is inextricably linked to a desire to exist again in a state of total belonging. Both share the sense of 'having arrived', of contented stasis. The geographical and metaphorical/psychological senses of 'home' are further conflated in that the place we come from - 'home' as location - is usually exactly where we experienced that early state of accord ('home' as a condition: *...the peace of mind dearer than all...* to quote from the archetype song). Historical considerations favour such an attitude: urbanization and industrialization have delivered an uncertain present fraught with anxieties as well as benefits, and yearning for a pictureseque pastoral past is also a yearning for the psychological ease believed to have characterised that time. Following the American philosopher Susanne Langer, who has argued that all art is about the representation of emotional states, it might even be that Home songs are primarily - essentially - a symbolic manifestation of a psychic need (rather than a locational craving that also includes a psychological component). It is significant that the Foster scholar William Austin interprets Tom Moore's influential *Irish Melodies* psychologically: *Moore's most frequent subject was a 'dream' of sweet security, of a 'home' not too precisely defined, now lost forever...* (Austin, 132); like Kathleen in *I'll Take You Home Again, Kathleen* we long to be taken *...home...to where (our) heart will feel no pain...* It is notable that many of the most eloquent and resonant popular songs deals with this theme (even if the word 'home' is absent from the title): one such is the soldiers's favourite from the First World War, *There's a Long, Long Trail A-Winding (Into The Land of My Dreams)*; the contrast between that Land of Dreams where *...the nightingale is singing/ And the white moon beams...* and the horror of the trenches is almost unbearable. The style and context of the 1930's standard *Georgia On My Mind* couldn't be more different, but the yearning for 'closure', for lost content, is similarly palpable:

*Other arms reach out to me
Other eyes smile tenderly;
Yet in peaceful dreams I see -
The road leads back to you...*

The reason? Because *...that's where I belong...* .The *Georgia* of the title is a place, not a person, but it wouldn't matter if Georgia was a girl because the psychological tone - yearning for closure, the memory of contentment - are the same: one is similarly sentimental about Georgia the home-place or Georgia the remembered love. Our meta-motif might therefore be one of Home, but 'Home' generously interpreted to include any heart-warming state of closure; Home can be a time, a place or a person - the remembered shack, the steadfast mother, the faithful pal, the long ago *amour*... all furnish dreams of well-being, are nostalgic. The 1944 hit got it righter than it knew, for all *...sentimental journeys...* are *...journeys home*.

The link between nostalgia and Home is crucial: the former is the lens through which the latter is viewed. Nostalgia derives from the Greek *nostros*, the return home and *algos*, pain. It *...means something very akin to the English 'homesickness', equivalent to the German 'heimweh'...*In addition to homesickness in the narrower sense, nostalgia has come to mean a longing for what is past, a painful yearning for time gone by (Jacoby 1985, 5). It is telling that an ubiquitous piece of Alley imagery, *memory lane*, actually bestows a locality (a home ?) on nostalgia. *...nostalgia originates in frustration or lack of a certain satisfaction. The person becomes aware that his actual situation is very unsatisfactory, and this feeling of frustration produces **the strong desire for an old situation in which all our wants and needs are gratified.*** [My emphasis] (Reik 1947,115). *The ultimate goal of nostalgia is a condition.* (Jacoby , 4), and that condition is 'closure', and as we have seen *A great deal of sentimentality...is on the theme of nostalgia...*(Smith 1975, 19).

I would also argue we may be nostalgic not only for the past time when we were 'at home' in both the literal and metaphorical sense, but also for a future time when we might re-gain a locational and psychological home. This is the essence of Christian eschatology, the 'Dreams of Heaven' we saw in chapter 7. The symmetry here is surely persuasive: heaven is a location of boundless content as infancy was - and we regain there a state of unitary bliss courtesy of our ultimate (meta-)'parent', God. (The psycho-analyst Nandor Foder is not alone in tracing all nostalgia back to longing for the happy state of prenatal existence.) If one allows then that the lost content that is the focus of nostalgia, of yearning for home, may extend forward in our hopes as well as back in our memories, then it might surely be thought to

constitute a defining aspect of sentimental song repertoire as presented in this study: *...men and women were perpetually returning home after years of sadness, whether back to a previous home or to heaven as home...* (Tawa 1990, 102). The longing to go back to the old home, to old times, represented in so much secular sentimental song, is the mirror-image of the yearning for heaven - our new home - found in so much Christian sentimental song: contentment, 'closure', is offered in both locations. The point is nicely illustrated in the output of the American Southern songwriter Albert Brumley, who had hits with sentimental songs nostalgic for both past and future - earthly and heavenly - homes. In songs like *Dreaming of a Little Cabin*, *Cabin in the Valley of the Pines* and *River of Memory* we return again to the 'regulation' happy childhood home, that picturesque arcadia with the old ways (simplicity, sincerity), the old folk (Mother) and the old songs:

*There's an old ramshackled shack
Where in dreams I wandered back
And we listened to those southern melodies.
'Twas the place where I was born
On a bright October morn
And it's nestled - at the end of
My River of Memory.*

(Chorus)

*Did you ever - go sailing
Down the River of Memory?
To a little log cabin
That's nestled among the sycamore trees.
Where the sunshine - is cheery
And nothing in the world grows weary
That's my cabin at the end of
My River of Memory.*

*There's a mother old and grey
At the end of mem'ries way
And I'll meet her there tonight among the trees.
And with her welcome she
So sweetly beckons me
In my cabin at the end of
My River of Memory.*

(Chorus)

*When twilight shadows fall
Many childhood voices call*

*Calling back to the good old days that used to be.
And in answer to their prayers
I'll soon be sailing there
To my cabin at the end of
My River of Memory.*

(Chorus)

('My River of Memory': U.S.A. 1930's)

It is a nice touch that Brumley represents this (earthly) homecoming as a voyage (on the river of memory): so often in the religious songs this life is seen as a journey to an infinitely superior home in the next, (and once again in *The River Of Years* [G. B. 1880's] the song is seen to have a precursor from the nineteenth century Parlour repertoire). A travelling motif defines Brumley's best known song, *I'll Fly Away*, and in this and other work like *I'll Meet You in the Morning*, *This World is Not My Home*, *I'll Spend My Vacation In Heaven* and *If We Never Meet Again (This Side of Heaven)* he looks forward to redemption and reunion in a heavenly home after our earthly trek:

(Verse)

*Soon we'll come to the end of life's journey
And perhaps never meet anymore -
'Till we gather in heaven's bright city
Far away on that beautiful shore.*

(Chorus)

*If we never meet again this side of heaven
As we struggle through this world and all its trials
There's another meeting place somewhere in heaven
By the side of that beautiful shore.
Where the charming roses bloom forever
And where separations come no more;
If we never meet again this side of heaven
We will meet on that beautiful shore.*

('If We Never Meet Again': U.S.A. 1930's)

As Bill C. Malone notes, *Brumley's nostalgic songs...breathed with a consciousness of life's evanescence...In his religious songs, the unfulfilled wishes of this world are projected as being realized in the heavenly world to come* (Malone 1979, 78).

And both types of song similarly represent an idyllic locale of serene content and equanimous fellowship. (It is interesting how many of the earthly homes are referred to - metaphorically - as 'heaven'; it is given as the destination of the 1944 *Sentimental Journey*, and is made a feature in several titles. In *'Halfway to Heaven' ...You'll find a cottage small...*; in *'Just Across the Street From Heaven' ...there's a rose covered shack* and *'My Heaven in the Pines' ...may not be a mansion Still it's a palace to me*, [again reprising Payne's original lyric]. And down in the nostalgic area of town *'Forget-me-not Lane'* - a thoroughfare surely adjacent to Memory Lane - is also described as *...heaven.*)

Whether their perspective is forward or backward these sentimental reveries are characterized by an intense, almost palpable, yearning. When I first started this work I was intrigued to know how people defined sentimental song: one friend was sure - *They're all to do with yearning*, she said. Yearning is what energises much of the sentimental repertoire.

I wish to suggest now why...

Yearning becomes us:

'Yearning and Blue' (words and music J. C. Cobb: U.S.A. 1920's)

The yearning in the songs is fed - made so understandable so-to-speak - by two things:

- (i) Our situation: the character of existence itself - its undeniable evanescence and contingency.
- (ii) The lack of comfort afforded that situation by much contemporary science and art.

Our situation: on the nature of things:

'(Life Is A) Bitter-Sweet Waltz' (words and music C. Sefan and M. Mueller: U.S.A. 1992)

Our first experience is one of oceanic content. How much we subsequently recall of it is open to debate, but life in the womb has a *unitary reality* - to use the psycho-jargon - that is never again achieved. The destructive dichotomies of external/ internal, subject/ object, ego/ self don't yet exist: we are our world. This proceeds after birth to a similar situation where, whilst we begin to first apprehend the

differences between 'in-here' and 'out-there', we are nevertheless accepted and sustained unconditionally as a function of our frailty and helplessness. We still inhabit a seemingly limitless universe of which we are the centre. As infancy cedes to childhood we become increasingly aware of the world 'out-there' as a separate place inhabited by other people. Both places and people prove problematic, and in need of negotiation. However, whilst our initial unitary dream of egocentric content dies, childhood for most nonetheless has elements of magic and timelessness. In adolescence this too changes. We begin to see our contract with the world is going to be one of obligation as well as entitlement, of dues as well as rights. At this time we also first 'philosophise' about our situation. Objectively we realize we are, eventually, going to die, and that the gig is a short one; subjectively we behave as if we are immortal. The physical vivacity and psychological buoyancy of youth is however gradually mediated by the gross facts that experience delivers: what happens to people - our family and friends particularly - makes it rudely plain that life is often a random, capricious affair devoid of obvious meaning. And it is brief. As time robs us of the resilience of youth - as reality falls short of aspirations - hope becomes leavened with weary resignation. We taste the wormwood of loss (of dreams as much as muscle-tone), of decay and of finitude. If we succeed in dodging the increasingly dangerous blows of fate we may find we finally over-stay our welcome in the grim halls of senility.

Humankind's 'Fall' therefore is the unbearably swift one from being the bright creature at the centre of its universe, indulged and full of promise, to the deteriorating liability soon to be obliterated. We have everything; and suddenly we have nothing. Our condition is therefore the cruel one of gradual abandonment: we once 'had it all', and are haunted by that memory (Tom Moore's *idée fixe*). Crawford (1977: ix) speaks of the *connoisseurship of grief and pain* in sentimental song: I would suggest that this is not unreasonable given the poignancy of our situation.

Our situation: little comfort from the lab. or garret:

'Baby, Its Cold Outside' (words and music F. Loesser: U.S.A. 1948)

There is an uncomfortable hardness, an unforgiving rigour, about much contemporary learning and contemporary art. Our cultural representations aspire to square-up to Life in an unblinking fashion, to 'stare it out' in 20/20 vision. And deliver some new 'take' on things however jarring. We find no respite in the Modern which seeks to confront us with 'The Shock of the New', to expose the (unsentimental) truth behind

appearances. We find no recess in the Post-Modern with its disengaged, ironic scavenging of what has gone before. We find no relief in Science, which reduces the soul to electro-chemical neuronal events, and our very existence to a chain of meaningless accidents and our place in the cosmos one of unimaginable insignificance. All threaten our already tattered self-esteem; our buttresses disappear - Darwinism destroys faith, psychoanalysis denies innocence. It is the essentially reductive, ignoble nature of so much modern science and art - the neurophysiologists and Beckett alike - that so diminishes us; by contrast *sentimentality...with its explosion of emotion might actually be a matter of gently soothing our worn-out selfhood which has been exposed to every kind of humiliation, contempt and violence with none of the warm care we were used to in infancy.* (Park, 128) The harshness of many modern modes of (artistic and scientific) exegesis is related to their commitment to substantiating the way things are 'out there'. This contributes to an objective understanding of 'our' condition, but can neglect the subjective reality of 'my' experience; indeed it might be thought there is something of a 'subjectivity deficit'. Sentimentality with its key notion of personal response - wisdom from within - does something to redress this imbalance (despite its indulgence and imprecision).

The objective/ hard, subjective/ soft division is found too in popular song. Taking as an example songs about old people, one may usefully contrast a piece like Jacques Brel's celebrated *Les Vieux*, which seeks to tell us the stark objective 'truth' about old age, with the heart-warming representations of the elderly in the lyrics (and art-work) of sentimental song. Brel's song is particularly anti-sentimental in its attachment to the harrowing detail of decrepitude, of finitude; by contrast sentimental texts like *Silver Threads Among the Gold* present age as a charming, picturesque state (typically represented in the constancy and fidelity of a Darby and Joan scenario).

Our situation is that whilst we might recognise the grim veracity of Brel's account (through application of stern modern objectivity), we yearn for an alternative, 'happy ending'; to luxuriate in the delicious imprecision of sentimentality. Perhaps the ultimate piquancy of this yearning arises because even as we seek and indulge heart-warming sentimental visions, we know things are not like that: youth and hope (and everything and everybody) dies; we have a brief 'now' book-ended by eternal oblivion, and even that is characterized by ever-encroaching loss. Sentimentality's domain is pathos, and if anything deserves the epithet 'pathetic' then this does - and it is our awareness of the gap between such meaningless contingency and the wish-fulfilment of sentimental dreams that fuels the engines of self-pity.

Sadness, as long as it is voluntarily sought, can of course be an exquisite emotion, more thrilling than happiness as Adam Smith pointed out. Moore had invoked *the luxury of woe*, and one of his fans, the poet Shelley, had written in *To a Skylark: Our sweetest songs are those that tell the saddest thoughts*. A later poet, Emily Dickinson, observed *Sorrow is unsafe when it is real sorrow. I am glad (there are) so many counterfeits...* (Tawa 1990, 93-4). Sentimental song allows us to savour the pity of things safely in 'controlled conditions': if it is sad it is 'lite' sadness allowing *A controlled luxuriance in grief amounting to...'therapeutic self-indulgence'* (Anne Douglas quoted in Lott, 188). This was the attraction of Polly's song *Oh Ponder Well* for the first audiences of *The Beggar's Opera*: *...the song opens to its audience an exquisite moment of disinterested self pity, an ecstasy above the self to savour its lovely sadness from not too close* (Booth 1981, 124) and Pearsall speaks of the *comfortable melancholy ...divorced from everyday life...* enjoyed by the Victorians in their song (1979, 90).

A pleasing mendacity? 'Amy' again: the alternative view of sentimental song

*There's a beautiful, beautiful field
Far away in a Land that is fair;
Happy Landings to you, Amy Johnson -
Farewell! First Lady of the Air.*

('Amy Johnson's Last Flight': G.B. 1964 adapted from McEnery U.S.A. 1937)

I have suggested sentimental song's savouring of sweet sadness is entirely apposite for the human condition. Its characteristic indulgence of a heart-warming past or future reflects the fact that we have once known and again yearn for the perfect content of Home (whether construed as a place, person or situation). The songs are about avoidance and solace, and it is ironic that what started as a movement informed by an eighteenth century belief in the perfectibility of man has become a consolation for the imperfectibility of life. To fulfill this function the key accoutrement is a pair of rose-tinted 'specs' to simplify and sweeten things. Sentimental lyrics' 'economy with the truth' has long been recognised: a nineteenth century critic commented on Burns's *The Cotter's Saturday Night* that it was *...of its essence sentimental and therefore pleasingly untrue...* (quoted in McIntyre 1996, 90) and the philosopher Mary Midgely defines being sentimental as: *misrepresenting the world in order to indulge feelings...* (Midgely 1979, 345).

Sentimental songs are a theatre of indulgence, a chance to 'over-spend' emotionally, and celebrate a pleasing mendacity. They present an intensified version of things that is strictly speaking false - mothers aren't like that; Ireland isn't like that, and the 'Dreams of Heaven' gainsay any objective truth - yet they are attractive in their selective theatricality, and the way their indulgence of a happy/sadness reflects exactly the essential character of life itself. It would however be a mistake to see them as deficient and second-rate: there is no superior, all-inclusive account of the world (a standard against which other views are ranked), merely a selection of accounts - religious, scientific, artistic - from which we each construct our own ontologies. The sentimental is merely one approach to things; it might be seen as mendacious, but is no more or less a construct than other, ostensibly more objective or authentic accounts. Today there might be something to be said for adopting the heart-warming world of the songs if only as a leavening of the severity of other world views, an indulgent sound track to accompany our lives that is an antidote both to the harsh demystification of much modern science and art, and the shipwreck that is life itself. The pathetic has its place as response to life alongside the heroic or ironic.

Finally let us return to where we started and Amy Johnson. 'Head-on', tough-minded, modern thinking tells us about Amy Johnson's Last Flight. Our contemporary sages - aeronautical engineers, psychologists, meteorologists, historians - consider the evidence and tell us it is most likely ('stastically probable' they would doubtless say) she crashed - possibly whilst on some government mission. And that she probably suffered a horrible death by fire or water.

The sentimental song however has her making a Happy Landing, touching down on some Elysian run-way. Is this a tempting parable of childhood security (when we 'had it all' and there were happy endings) that offers resolution - closure - via some agreeable emotional indulgence, or a deplorable and evasive piece of wish-fulfillment? Perhaps we should be generous to ourselves: if life is indeed a mixed affair - the 'bitter-sweet waltz' of the song-title - we need the warm luxury of indulgence as well as the cool satisfaction of control, knowledge.

We may enjoy Amy's Happy Landing, whilst knowing it never happened.

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Chapter 10

Song Concordance

- Ae Fond Kiss* (G.B. 1792), w R. Burns, m anon.
Acushla Mine (G.B. early 20thC), w T. Sullivan, m anon.
Aberdeen For Me (G.B. 1963), w & m J. Wright
Abide With Me (G.B. 1847), w H. Lyte, m W. Monk
Across the Bridge (U.S.A. 1950's), w & m W. Scott
After The Ball (U.S.A. 1892), w & m C. K. Harris
Ah! May the Red Rose Live Alway (U.S.A. 1850), w & m S. Foster
Airy Batchelor, The (G.B. 1915), w & m anon.
Alas, Poor Polly! (When My Hero in Court Appears) (G.B. 1728), w J. Gay, m anon.
Alas! Those Chimes So Sweetly Stealing (G.B. earlier 18thC), w E. Fitzball m
W. Vincent Wallace
All the Good Times Are Over and Gone (U.S.A. 20thC), no attrib. (in Wernick 1976,
24)
All The Way From Ireland (Came Molly, The Rose of Tralee) (G.B. 1937), w & m
H. Saville, A. Noel and J. Martin
Alone at a Table for Two (U.S.A. 1936), w & m W. J. Hill and T. Fiorto
Always in the Way (U.S.A. 1890's), w & m C. K. Harris
Amazing Grace (G.B. 1779), w J. Newton, m U.S.A. anon. (orig. Scottish?)
Amy Johnson's Last Flight (G.B. 1964, adapt. from U.S.A. 1937), w & m
D. McEnery
Anacreontic (G.B. early 19thC), w T. Moore, m ? (possibly not formally set)
Answer To 'The Old Arm Chair', The (U.S.A. 1841), w J. H. Warland, m
S. C. Massett
Any Place That I Make Money (Is 'Home, Sweet Home' to Me) (U.S.A. 1928), w
W. Tracy, m D. Dougherty
Art Isn't Easy (U.S.A. 1960's), w & m S. Sondheim
As Chimes That Float O'er Shining Seas (G.B. early 20thC), w Dr. G. Sigerson, m
anon.
Ashby De La Zouch (U.S.A. 1945), w & m A. Hoffman, M. Drake and J. Livingstone
At the Mid Hour of Night (G.B. earlier 19thC), w T. Moore, m anon.
Auld Hoose, The (G.B. 1820's), w Lady C. Nairne, m anon.
Auld Lang Syne (G.B. 1796), w R. Burns (after Ramsay), m adapt. from W. Sheild ?
Auld Robin Gray (G.B. 1771), w Lady A. Lindsay, m various
Author of Life Divine (G.B. 1745), w J. Wesley, m S. S. Wesley or S. Stainer
Away With Our Fears (G.B. 18thC), w C. Wesley, m T. Butts
- Banks Of the Wabash, The* (U.S.A. 1899), w & m P. Dresser
Baby, Its Cold Outside (U.S.A. 1948), w & m F. Loesser
Be a Butterfly Then! (G.B. c.1830), w (& m?) T. H. Bayly
Be Sincere! (G.B. 1930's), w M. Miller, m Merrin
Bear It Gently to My Mother (U.S.A. 1864), w & m F. Davis
Beautiful Dreamer (U.S.A. 1864), w & m S. Foster

Beautiful Island of Somewhere (U.S.A. 1897), w & m Pounds and Fearis
Before The Almighty's Throne (G.B. 18thC), w I. Watts and J. Wesley, m L. Bourgeois
Bedelia (U.S.A. 1903), w W. Jerome, m J. Schwartz
Believe Me If All Those Endearing Young Charms (G.B. 1809), w T. Moore, m anon.
Ben Bolt (U.S.A. 1848), w T. E. English, m N. Kneass
Beneath the Lights of Home (U.S.A. 1941), w B. Grossman, m W. Jurmann,
Better Land, The (G.B. 1844), w F. Hemans, m Z. Purday (also F Cowen 1880)
Better Times Are Coming (U.S.A. 1862), w & m S. Foster
Beyond (G.B. 1903), w C. Bingham, m E. St. Quentin
Beyond the Sunset (G.B. 1902), w C. Bingham, m V. Hemery
Beyond the Sunset (G. B. 1911), w H. Quinn, m F. E. Tours
Beyond the Sunset (U.S.A. 1920's), w & m B. Brock and V. Brock
Blind Boy, The (U.S.A. 1842), w H. F. Gordon, m W. R. Dempster
Blind Boy, The (G.B. 1890's; 1900, *pirated version*), w R. Lee, m G. W. Moore
Blind Boy's Dog, The (U.S.A. 1940's), w & m D. McEnery
Blind Sailor, The (G.B. later 18thC), w & m C. Dibdin
Bloom Is On The Rye, The (G.B. 1833), w E. Fitzball, m H. Bishop
Blow Ye the Trumpet, Blow (G.B. 1750), w C. Wesley, m ?
Blue Eyes Crying in the Rain (U.S.A. late 1940's), w & m F. Rose
Bonny Betsy (G.B. 172?), w A. Ramsay, m anon.
Bonnie Jean (G.B. 1787), w R. Burns, m anon.
Boy's Best Friend Is His Mother, A (U.S.A. 1885), w H. Miller, m J. Skelly
Break It Gently to My Mother (U.S.A. 1863), w & m F Buckley
Break The News To Mother (U.S.A. 1897), w & m C. K. Harris
Bring Me A Shawl From Galway (G.B. 1951), w & m Neil and Crofts
Bringing Mary Home (U.S.A. 1974), w & m J. Duffey, C. Mank and J. Kingston
Bury Me in the Morning, Mother (U.S.A. 1862), w & m S. Foster

Cabin in the Valley of the Pines (U.S.A. 1930's), w & m A. Brumley
Call Of The Canyon, The (U.S.A. 1940), w & m W. J. Hill
Carlo, The Newfoundland Dog (U.S.A. 1844), w F. Bayley, m H. Russell
Carry Me Back To Old Virginny (U.S.A. 1878), w & m J. Bland
Children of the Battle Field, The (U.S.A. 1864), w & m J. G. Clark
Children's Home, The (G.B. 1881), w F. Weatherly, m F. Cowen
Christ Hath A Garden Walled Around (G.B. 18thC), w I. Watts, m Wm. Leighton
Come Back To Erin (G.B. 1866), w & m 'Claribel'
Come Chace [sic] that Starting Tear Away (G.B. 1822), w T. Moore, m anon.
'Come Home, Father!' (*Father, Dear Father, Come Home With Me Now*) (U.S.A. 1864), w & m H. C. Work
Come, Let Us Join In Cheerful Songs (G.B. 1707), w I. Watts, m H. Lahee or B. Milgrove
Come, O Thou Traveller Unknown (G.B. 1742), w C. Wesley, m C.V. Taylor or S. Wesley
Come Take Thy Harp (G.B. earlier 19thC), w T. Moore, m anon.
Cottage For Sale, A (U.S.A. 1930), w L. Conley, m W. Robison
Craigieburn Wood (G.B. 1792), w R. Burns, m anon.

Daddy (G.B. 1883), w M. M. Lemon, m J. Behrend
Daddy And Home (U.S.A. 1929), w E. McWilliams, m J. Rodgers
Daddy's Sweetheart (G.B. 1911), w C. Hardin-Burnley, m L. Lehmann
Daddy Won't You Please Come Home (U.S.A. 1929), w & m S. Coslow
Danny Boy (G.B. 1913), w F. Weatherley, m anon.(collected 1855: composed 1830's?)
Daughter of Mother Machree, She's The (U.S.A. 1915), w & m Nenarb and Ball
Daughter of Peggy O'Neil, The (U.S.A. 1930), w H. Pease and H. Tobias, m C. Kisco
Daughter of Rosie O'Grady, The (U.S.A. 1918), w M. Brice, m W. Donaldson
'Dear John' Letter, A (U.S.A. 1953), w & m B. Barton, L. Talley and F. Owen
Dear Old Home Songs, The (G.B. 1870's), w & m L. Lennox
Derry Vale, The (G.B. early 20thC), w W. C. Rothery, m anon.
Diane (U.S.A. 1927), w & m E. Rapee and L. Pollack
Did Your Mother Come From Ireland? (G.B. 1936), w & m M. Carr and J. Kennedy
Dinner For One Please, James (G.B. 1935), w & m M. Carr
Dirty Hands, Dirty Face (U.S.A. 1923), w W. Clarke and E. Leslie, m J. Monaco.
Do They Miss Me at Home? (U.S.A. 1854), w & m S. Foster
Do They Think of Me at Home? (U.S.A. 1854), w & m S. Foster
Don't Go Down in the Mine, Dad (G.B. 1910), w R. Donnelly, m W. Geddes
Don't Step on Mother's Roses (U.S.A. 1959), w & m J. Cash
Don't Take Your Guns To Town (U.S.A. 1958), w & m J. Cash
Down Forget-me-not Lane (G.B. 1941), w & m Morgan, Chester and Nicholls
Down in the Canebreak (U.S.A. 1860), w & m S. Foster
Down the Road to Home, Sweet Home (G.B. 1930's [unpublished]), w & m Green
Dream House For Sale (U.S.A. 1962), w & m W. Walker
Dream of My Mother and My Home, A (U.S.A. 1860's), w & m S. Foster
Dreaming of a Little Cabin (U.S.A. 1930's), w & m A. Brumley
Driftwood On The River Of Regret (I'm Just) (U.S.A. 1959), w & m Miller & Kenner
Drummer Boy of Shiloh, The (U.S.A. 1863), w & m W. Shakespeare Hays
Dust On The Bible (U.S.A. 1947), w & m W. and J. Bailles
Dying Hobo, The (U.S.A. 1917), w & m anon.

Empty Cot In The Bunk House Tonight, There's An (U.S.A. 1933), w & m G. Autry
Empty Chair, The (G.B. 1895), w J. F. Harrington, m F. Eplett
Empty Cradle, The (U.S.A. 1881), w & m H. Kennedy and R. Sestini
Empty Saddles (U.S.A. 1936), w & m W. J. Hill (after a poem by J. Keirn Brennan)
Empty Sleeve, The (U.S.A. 1860's), w & m H. Badger

Fair Jenny (G.B. later 18thC), w R. Burns, m trad.
Farewell! But Wherever You Welcome The Hour (G.B. earlier 19thC), w T. Moore, m anon.
Farewell, Eliza Dear (G.B. later 18thC), w R. Burns, m trad.
Farewell, Mother Dear (U.S.A. mid 19thC), w & m S. Foster
Farewell, My Lilly Dear (U.S.A. 1851), w & m S. Foster
Farewell, Old Cottage (U.S.A. mid 19thC), w (?) & m S. Foster
Farewell, Sweet Mother (U.S.A. mid 19thC), w & m S. Foster
Farewell to Lochaber (G.B. 1720's), w & m A. Ramsay

Farewell, Thou Fair Day (G.B. 1792), w R. Burns, m anon.
Farewell Thou Stream (G.B. later 18thC), w R. Burns, m anon.
Father's A Drunkard And Mother's Dead (G.B. 1868), w 'Stella', m Mrs E. Parkhurst
Fill The Bumper Fair (G.B. early 19thC), w T. Moore, m ?
First Rose of Summer, The (U.S.A. 1919), w A. Caldwell, m J. Kern
Five to Eleven Waltz, The (G.B. 1969), w & m J. Junkin and D. King
Flow Gently Sweet Afton (G.B. later 18thC), w R. Burns, m anon.
Flower From My Angel Mother's Grave, A (U.S.A. 1878), w & m H. Kennedy
Footprints In The Snow (U.S.A. 1947), w & m B. Lane
For Sale - a Baby (U.S.A. 1903), w & m C. K. Harris
For the Dear Old Flag I Die (U.S.A. 1863), w G. Cooper, m S. Foster
Forth in Thy Name, O Lord, I Go (G. B. 1749), w C. Wesley, m O. Gibbons
Forty Shades of Green (U.S.A. 1961), w & m J. Cash
Four-Legged Friend, A (U.S.A. 1952), w & m Brooks

Gallant Weaver, The (G.B. 1792), w R. Burns, m anon.
Galway Bay (G.B. 1948), w & m Dr. Colahan
Gambler's Wife, The (G.B. 1846), w (?) & m H. Russell
Grandfather's Clock (U.S.A. 1876), w & m H. C. Work
Grandmother's Chair (G.B. 1879), w & m J. Read
Gather 'Round Children (U.S.A. 1970's), w & m L. G. Lewis and C. Harrelson
Gentle Annie (U.S.A. 1856), w & m S. Foster
Georgia On My Mind (U.S.A. 1933), w S. Gorrell, m H. Carmichael
Give Me A Ticket To Heaven (G.B. 1903), w R. Elton, m J. Hatton
Give Me the Wings of Faith to Rise (G.B. earlier 18thC), w I. Watts, m O. Gibbons
Give This to Mother (U.S.A. 1864), w & m S. Foster (published posthumously)
Gloomy Night, The (G.B. later 18thC), w R. Burns, m anon.
Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken (G.B. later 18thC), w J. Newton, m C. V. Taylor
Go Where Glory Wants Thee (G.B. earlier 19thC), w T. Moore, m anon.
God Bless America (U.S.A. 1939 orig. 1918), w & m I. Berlin
God Moves in a Mysterious Way (G.B. 1773), w Wm. Cowper, m anon.
Goodbye Dolly Gray! (U.S.A. 1898), w W. Cobb, m P. Barnes
Goodnight Children, Ev'rywhere (G.B. 1939), w & m G. Rodgers and H. Phillips
Got Sweet Heaven in my View (U.S.A. 1930's), w and m The Carter Family
Green Ivy, The (G.B. mid 19thC), w C. Dickens, m H. Russell
Great Speckled Bird, The (U.S.A. 1936), w & m R. Acuff. Also *attrib.* to R. Carter
Great Speckled Bird No. 2, The (U.S.A. 1940's), w & m R. Acuff

Halfway to Heaven (U.S.A. 1928), w A. Dubin, m J. Russel Robinson
Happy Hours at Home (U.S.A. mid 19thC), w & m S. Foster
Harbour Lights (G.B. 1937), w & m J. Kennedy and H. Williams
Hard Times Come Again No More (U.S.A. 1860), w & m S. Foster
Hark How the Adoring Hosts Above (G. B. earlier 18thC), w I. Watts, m J. Clarke
Heart of My Heart (U.S.A. 1907), w & m A. Lamb and A. Von Tilzer
'Heart of My Heart', The Gang That Sang (U.S.A. earlier 20thC), w & m B. Ryan
Heaven (U.S.A. 1956), w & m B. and H. McSpadden
Help Us To Help Each Other, Lord (G.B. 18thC), w C. Wesley, m anon. 17thC

Highland Mary (G.B. 1792), w R. Burns, m anon.
Hello Central, Give Me Heaven (U.S.A. 1901), w & m C. K. Harris
Hello Central, Give Me No Man's Land! (U.S.A. 1918), w S. Lewis and J. Young, m J. Schwartz
Highland Lad My Love Was Born, A (G.B. later 18thC), w R. Burns, m anon.
Hobo Bill's Last Ride (U.S.A. 1929), w & m W. O'Neal
Hobo Heaven (U.S.A. 1986), w & m L. Martin, V. Stovall and B. Palmer
Hobo's Last Ride, The (U.S.A. 1931), w & m Irwin
Hobo's Meditation, The (U.S.A. 1933), w & m J. Rodgers
Holy City, The (G.B. 1892), w F. Weatherley, m S. Adams
Home (U.S.A. 1931), w & m P. Van Steeden and H. and J. Clarkson
Hometown (G.B. 1936), w & m J. Kennedy and M. Carr
Home Again (U.S.A. 1850), w & m M. S. Pike
Home Beyond the Sky (U.S.A. 1950's), perf. The Stanley Brothers (radio transcription)
Home Call (U.S.A. 1932), w & m E. McWilliams and J. Rodgers
Home in Pasadena (U.S.A. 1923), w Clarke and Leslie, m H. Warren
Home On The Range (U.S.A. 1873), w B. Higley, m arr. J. Lomax (1910)
Home Once More (U.S.A. 1860's) perf. The Christy Minstrels
Home Someday (U.S.A. 1916), w & m C. Tindley
Home! Sweet Home! (G.B. 1823), w J. Payne, m H. Bishop
Home, Sweet Home (G.B. 1938), w & m R. Callender
Home, Sweet Home Again (G.B. 1941), w A. Mills, m F. Frisker
Home, Sweet Home on the Prairie (U.S.A. 1930's), w & m C. Robison
Homeland, The (G.B. later 19thC), w H. R. Haweis, m A. Sullivan
Home's Home (G.B. 1794), w & m C. Dibdin
House of Too Much Trouble, The (U.S.A. 1890's), no attrib.(in Spaeth 1927, 26)
How Beautiful Heaven Must Be (U.S.A. early 20thC), w & m A. S. Bridgewater and A. P. Bland
How Bright These Glorious Spirits Shine! (G.B. earlier 18thC), w I. Watts and Wm. Cameron, m C. H. Stewart
How Can You Buy Killarney? (G.B. 1948), w & m F. Grant, G. Morrison and H. Kennedy
How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds (G.B. 1779), w J. Newton, m A. R. Reinagle

I Cannot Sing Tonight (U.S.A. 1853), w & m S. Foster
I Can't Feel At Home in This World Anymore (U.S.A. 1930's), w & m adapt.
The Carter family from A. Brumley's *This World is Not My Home* (U.S.A. 1930's)
I Didn't Raise My Boy To Be A Soldier (U.S.A. 1915), w A. Bryan, m A. Piantadosi
I May Be Gone for a Long, Long Time (U.S.A. 1917), w & m ?
I Miss You Most of All (U.S.A. 1913), w & m J. Macarthy and J. Monaco
I Saw From the Beach (G.B. earlier 19thC), w T. Moore, m anon.
I See Her Still In My Dreams (U.S.A. 1857), w & m S. Foster
I Want A Girl (Just Like The Girl That Married Dear Old Dad) (U.S.A. 1911), w & m Wm. Dillon and H. Von Tilzer
I Want to Go Back to My Little Grass Shack in Kealakua, Hawaii (G.B. 1930's), w & m J. Noble , T Cogswell and E. Harrison

I Want to See the Old Home Again (G.B. 1880's), w & m H. Dacre
I Wished I Had Died In My Cradle (U.S.A. 1929), w L. Brown, m M. Friedman
I Would Not Die In Spring Time (U.S.A. 1850), w & m S. Foster
I Would Not Die In Summer Time (U.S.A. 1851), w & m 'J. H. Milton' (S. Foster)
I Would Not Die At All (U.S.A. 1852), w & m J. H. Hewitt
I'd Be A Butterfly! (G.B. 1827), w & m T. H. Bayly
If We Never Meet Again (This Side of Heaven) (U.S.A. 1930's), w & m A. Brumley
If We Only Had Old Ireland Over Here (Australia mid 20thC), w & m Fallon
I'll Be Home Tomorrow Night (U.S.A. 1896), w & m J. Howard
I'll Be Seeing You (U.S.A. 1939), w I. Kahl, m S. Fain
I'll Fly Away (U.S.A. 1930's), w & m A. Brumley
I'll Meet You in the Morning (U.S.A. 1930's), w & m A. Brumley
I'll See You In My Dreams (U.S.A. 1924), w G. Kahn, m I. Jones
I'll Spend My Vacation In Heaven (U.S.A. 1930's), w & m A. Brumley
I'll Take You Home Again, Kathleen (U.S.A. 1875), w & m T. Westendorf
I'll Walk Beside You (G.B. 1936), w E. Lockton, m A. Murray
I'm Glad My Boy Grew Up To Be A Soldier (G.B. 1915), w J. E. Mc Manus, m A. Piantadosi
I'm Going Back To Himazas (Him 'As 'As The Pub Next Door) (G.B. 1927)
w & m A. Frederick
I'm Lonely Since My Mother Died (G.B. 1863), w & m H. Thompson
I'm Longing For Home (U.S.A., ?), w & m O. S. Davis and Rev. R. Cravens
I'm Not Ashamed To Own My Lord (G.B. 1709), w I. Watts, m T. Jackson
I'm Saddest When I Sing (G.B. earlier 19thC), w T. H. Bayly, m ?
I'm Tying the Leaves So They Won't Come Down (U.S.A. 1907), w & m E. S. S. Huntington and J. F. Helf
I'm Writing a Letter to Heaven (U.S.A. 1932), w & m V. Dalhart, A. Hood and B. Tucker
In The Chase (G.B. mid 19thC), w C. Dickens, m H. Russell
In The Chimney Corner (G.B. 1886), w F. Weatherly, m F. Cowen
In The Harbour of Home, Sweet Home (U.S.A. 1920's), w C. Dennison, m A. J. Holmes
In The Hills of Tennessee (U.S.A. 1932), w S. Lewis, m I. Schuster
In The House of Too Much Trouble (U.S.A. 1900), w & m W. Heelan and J. F. Helf
In The Land of Beginning Again (U.S.A. 1913), w G. Clarke, m G. Meyer
In The Morning of Life (G.B. earlier 19thC), w T. Moore, m anon.
In The Old Chair (G.B. 1848), w E. Fitzball, m M. Balfe
In The Valley of Sweet Aherlow (U.S.A. mid 20thC), w & m P. J. Coughlan
Ireland Is Ireland To Me (U.S.A. 1915), w J. Keirn Brennan and F. O'Hara, m E. Ball
Ireland Must Be Heaven (For My Mother Came From There), (U.S.A. 1916), w & m J. McCarthy, H. Johnson and F. Fisher
Irish Emigrant, The (G.B. c.1845), w H. Blackwood, m G. Barker
Irish Home Sweet Home (U.S.A. 1920's), w & m L. Hanley and H. Swain
Isle O' Dreams (U.S.A. 1912), w G. Graff Jnr. and C. Olcott, m E. R. Ball
It Is Not The Tear (G.B. earlier 19thC), w T. Moore, m anon.
It Takes a Great Big Irish Heart To Sing an Irish Song (U.S.A. 1915), w & m Herman and Glogau

It's Aberdeen For Me (G.B. 1963), w & m J. Wright
It's Growing Very Dark, Mother (U.S.A. 1860's), w & m ?
It's Time to Sing 'Sweet Adeline' Again (U.S.A. 1933), w B. Davis and A. Boasberg,
m S. Fain
I've Just Told Momma 'Goodbye' (U.S.A. 1940's), w & m Sweet and Kinsey
I've Lost The Best Pal That I Ever Had (G.B. 1922), w & m J. G. Gilbert
I've Written a Letter to Daddy (Address Heaven Above) (U.S.A. 1962), w & m
F. DeVol

Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair (U.S.A. 1854), w & m S. Foster
Jesus, Lord, We Look To Thee (G.B. 1749), w C. Wesley, m J. H. Knecht
Jesus, Lover of My Soul (G.B. 18thC), w C. Wesley, m J. Parry
'Jeeerusalem's' Dead (G.B. 1895), w B. Daly, m J. Crook
Jimmy Brown (Les Trois Cloches) (French 1945), w & m Gilles trans. B. Reisenfeld
Jimmy Brown the Newsboy (U.S.A. 1931), w & m A. P. Carter
Jimmy, The Pride of Newsboy Row (U.S.A. 1900), w & m A. Baldwin Stone
Just a Baby's Prayer At Twilight (U.S.A. 1918), w Lewis and Young, m M. Jerome
Just A Closer Walk With Thee (U.S.A. later 19thC), w & m ? (often given as 'trad.')
Just A Flower From My Angel Mother's Grave (U.S.A. 1878), w & m H. Kennedy
Just Across the Street From Heaven (U.S.A. 1928), w C. Newman and H. Harris, m
L. Shay
Just Like The Last Rose of Summer (You Just Said 'Good-Bye') (G.B. 1924), w & m
J. G. Gilbert & E. Lynton

Kathleen Mavourneen (G.B. c.1838), w Mrs Crawford (?), m F. Crouch
Kerry Dance, The (G.B. 1879), w & m J. Molloy
Kickaraboo (G.B. 1795), w & m C. Dibdin
Killarney (G.B. 1861), w E. Falconer, m M. Balfe
Kiss Me Before I Die, Mother (U.S.A. 1860's), w & m ?

Labourer's Welcome Home, The (G.B. 1796), w & m C. Dibdin
Larry's Goodbye (U.S.A. 1863), w & m S. Foster
Lass of Patie's Mill, The (G.B. earlier 18thC), w A. Ramsay, m anon.
Last Rose of Summer, The (G.B. 1813), w T. Moore, m anon.
Lead Kindly Light (G.B. 1861), w J. H. Newman, m W. H. Harris or J. B. Dykes
Let Me Kiss Him for His Mother (U.S.A. 1860's), w & m ?
Let Saints On Earth In Concert Sing (G.B. 1759), w C. Wesley, m Wm. Croft
Letter Edged in Black, The (U.S.A. 1890's), w & m H. Nevada
Letter From Home Sweet Home (G.B. 1939), w & m A. Noel and D. Pelosi
Letter That Never Came, The (U.S.A. 19thC), no attrib. (in Spaeth 1927, 36)
(Life Is) A Bitter-sweet Waltz (U.S.A. 1992), w & m C. Sefan and M. Mueller
Life Is Like A Ship In Motion - Sometimes High And Sometimes Low (G.B. later
18thC) w & m C. Dibdin
Life's Railway to Heaven (U.S.A. 1880's) w & m M. E. Abbey and C. D. Tillman
Lightning Express, The (U.S.A. 1959), w & m adapt. D. and P. Everley
Like The Last Rose of Summer (You Just Said "Good Bye") (G.B. 1924),
w & m J. G. Gilbert and E. Lynton

Little Annie Rooney (G.B. 1889), w & m M. Nolan
Little Barefoot (U.S.A. later 19thC), no attrib. (in Spaeth 1927, 167)
Little Belle Blair (U.S.A. 1861), w & m S. Foster
Little Ben (G.B. 1790), w & m C. Dibdin
Little Bit Of Green (U.S.A. 1969), w & m C. Arnold, D. Martin and G. Morrow
Little Bit Of Heaven, A (Shure They Called It Ireland) (U.S.A. 1914), w J. Keirn Brennan, m E. R. Ball
Little Black Me (U.S.A. 1890's), w & m T. Chattaway
Little Black Shawl (U.S.A. 1934), w & m W. J. Hill
Little Boy Blue (U.S.A. 1891), w E. Field, m E. Nevin (also A. H. Behrend 1908)
Little Boy Called Taps (U.S.A. 1900), w E. Madden, m T. Morse
Little Ella (U.S.A. 1853), w & m S. Foster
Little Ella's an Angel (U.S.A. 1863), w & m S. Foster
Little Empty Stockings (U.S.A. 1883), w & m H. Kennedy
Little Eva's Parting Words (G.B. mid 19thC), w Jeffreys, m S. Glover
Little Fella (U.S.A. 1928), w & m I. Berlin
Little Footsteps (U.S.A. 1868), w & m J. A. Barney
Little Harry The Drummer Boy (U.S.A. 1860's), w & m S. Wesley Martin
Little Jenny Dow (U.S.A. 1862), w & m S. Foster
Little Joe The Wrangler (U.S.A. 1908), w N. Thorp, m after a tune by W.S. Hays
Little Joe The Wrangler's Sister Nell (U.S.A. 1934), w N. Thorp?, m ?
Little Lost Child, The (U.S.A. 1890's), w & m E. Marks and J. Stern
Little Major (U.S.A. 1862), w & m H. C. Work
Little Nell (G.B. 19thC), w Miss Young, m G. Linley
Little Newsboy's Death, The (U.S.A. 1893), w C. Benjamin, m G. B. Brigham
Little Old Lady (U.S.A. 1936), w & m H. Carmichael and S. Adams
Little Orphan Girl, The (U.S.A. 1860's), no attrib. (in Silverman 1994, 108)
Little Pal (U.S.A. 1929), w & m B. DeSylva, L. Brown, R. Henderson and A. Jolson
Little Rosewood Casket, The (U.S.A. 19thC), no attrib. (in Spaeth 1927, 36)
Little Town in the Ould County Down (U.S.A. 1920), w & m Pascoe, Carlo and Sanders
Lizzie Dies Tonight (U.S.A. 1861), w & m S. Foster
Lo, God is Here! (G.B. 1739), w tr. J. Wesley, m J. Parry or E. Champneys
Long Black Veil, The (U.S.A. 1959), w & m M. Wilkins and D. Dill
Long, Long Ago (G.B. c.1835), w & m T. H. Bayly
Lorena (U.S.A. 1857), w H. Webster, m J. Webster
Lords Of The Air (G.B. 1939), w & m M. North and D. Burnaby
Love Divine, All Love's Excelling (G.B. 1747), w C. Wesley, m J. Stainer or C. Stanford
Love's Old Sweet Song (Just a Song at Twilight) (G.B. 1884), w G. C. Bingham, m J. Molloy
Lucy, or Selim's Complaint (G.B. late 18thC), w & m J. Hook

Macushla (G.B. 1910), w J. V. Rowe, m T. MacMurrough
Maid with the Bonny Brown Hair, The (G.B. 1915), w & m anon.
Mammy O' Mine (U.S.A. 1920's), w & m Wm. Tracey
Mamma Tried (U.S.A. 1960's), w & m M. Haggard

Manes of the Brave, The (G.B. 1801), w & m C. Dibdin
Maniac, The (G.B. 1846), w & m H. Russell
Me And My Shadow (U.S.A. 1927), w W. Rose and A. Jolson, m D. Dreyer
Mention My Name In Sheboygan (U.S.A. 1947), w & m B. Hilliard, D. Sandford and S. Mysels
Meeting of the Waters, The (G.B. 1807), w T. Moore, m anon.
Mighty Lak' a Rose (U.S.A. 1901), w H. Stanton, m E. Nevin
Mistletoe Bow, The (G.B. c.1835), w T. H. Bayly, m H. Bishop
Morality in the Foretop (G. B. 1790), w & m C. Dibdin
Molly Bawn (G.B. 1841), w & m S. Lover
M-O-T-H-E-R (U.S.A. 1915), w & m H. Johnson
Mother Kissed Me in My Dreams (U.S.A. 186?), w G. Cooper, m J. R. Thomas
Mother Machree (U.S.A. 1910), w R. Johnson Young, m C. Olcott and E. R. Ball
Mother O' Mine (G.B. 1908), w R. Kipling, m S. Liddell
Mother Says I Mustn't (G.B. 1869), w & m G. W. Hunt
Mother the Queen of My Heart (U.S.A. 1933), w & m J. Rodgers and H. Bryant
Mother's Body's Lying in the Baggage Coach Ahead (U.S.A. 1896), w & m G. Davies
Mother's Love, A (G.B 1964), w & m I. Fail
Mother's Not Dead (She's Only Sleeping) (U.S.A. 1940's), w & m R. and C. Stanley
Mother's Prayer At Twilight, A (G.B. 1940's), w & m A. Noel and D. Pelosi
Mountains O' Mourne, The (G.B. 1937), w and m P. French and H. Collisson
Mr. Radio Man (U.S.A. 1924), w I. Schuster and J. White, m C. Friend
Mr. Trouble (U.S.A. 1930's), w & m L. Johnson
My Ain Folk (G. B. 1904), w W. Mills, m L. Lemon
My Beautiful Irish Maid (U.S.A. 1894), w & m C. Olcott
My Blue Heaven (U.S.A. 1927), w G. Whiting, m W. Donaldson
My Chestnut 'Orse (G.B. later 19thC), w & m E. Mosedale
My Heart's in the Highlands (G.B. 1790), w R. Burns, m anon.
My Heaven in the Pines (U.S.A. 1938), w J. Campbell and A. Sigler, m C. Conrad
My Home In Wyomin' (U.S.A. 1933), w & m W. J. Hill and P. De Rose
My Irish Song Of Songs (U.S.A. 1920's), w & m Dubin and Sullivan
My Lodging's in the Cold, Cold Ground (G.B. later 18thC), w R. Sheridan, m anon.
My Mammy (U.S.A. 1921), w & m J. Young, S. Lewis and W. Donaldson
My Mother's Bible (U.S.A. 1840's), w (?) & m H. Russell
My Mother's Eyes (U.S.A. 1932), w & m Gilbert and Baer
My Mother's Old Red Shawl (U.S.A. later 19thC), no attrib. (in Silverman 1994)
My Nannies Awa' (G.B. later 18thC), w R. Burns, m anon.
My Old Dutch (G.B. 1892), w A. Chevalier, m C. Ingle
My Old Irish Mother (G.B. 1933), w & m B. Charles-Dean
My Old Kentucky Home, Goodnight! (U.S.A. 1853), w & m S. Foster
My Old Man (U.S.A. 1958), w & m Harighen and Mercer
My Old Man (G.B. 1979), w & m P. Coulter (also perf. as *The Old Man*)
My Old Mum (G.B. 1954), w & m C. Harrington and J. Turner
My Poll and My Partner Joe, (G.B. 1786), w & m C. Dibdin
My Yiddishe Momme (U.S.A. 1923), w & m J. Yellen

Negra and His Banjer, The (G.B. 1788), w & m C. Dibdin
Negro Philosophy (G.B. 1796), w & m C. Dibdin
Nelly Was A Lady (U.S.A. 1849), w & m S. Foster
No Depression There (U.S.A. 1930's), w & m The Carter Family
No Tears In Heaven (U.S.A. 1950's), w & m R. S. Arnold
No Tears In Heaven (G.B. 1992), w & m E. Clapton
Nobody Knows, Nobody Cares (U.S.A. 1901), w Hilton, m C. K. Harris
Nobody's Child (U.S.A. 1949), w & m C. Coben and M. Foree
Northern Lights of Old Aberdeen, The (G.B. 1951), w & m M. Webb
Now I've Got No Daddy (G.B. 1907), w & m T. W. Connor
Now Ponder Well! (G.B. 1728), w J. Gay, m anon.

O, For a Closer Walk With God (G.B. 1772), w Wm. Cowper, m anon. 17thC
O, For a Thousand Tongues To Sing (G.B. 18thC), w C. Wesley, m G. Thalben Ball
O God, Our Help In Years To Come (G.B. 1719), w I. Watts, m Wm Croft
O, Wha is She That Lo'es Me? (G.B. later 18thC), w R. Burns, m anon.
O Ye Tears ! (G.B. mid 19thC), w C. Mackay, m F. Abt
Of All the Belles that Tread the Stage (G.B. late 1720's), w & m anon.
Oft in the Stilly Night (G.B. 1818), w T. Moore, m anon.
Oh! Boys, Carry Me 'Long (U.S.A. 1851), w & m S. Foster
Oh! Steer My Bark to Erin's Isle (G.B. c.1830), w T. H. Bayly, m S. Nelson
Oh! Tell Me of My Mother (U.S.A. 1861), w & m S. Foster
Oh! The Days Are Gone When Beauty Bright (G.B. earlier 19thC), w T. Moore, m anon.
Oh! Will My Mother Never Come? (U.S.A. 1860's), w & m ?
Oklahoma! (U.S.A. 1943), w O. Hammerstein, m R. Rodgers
Ol' Shorty (U.S.A. 1940's), w & m Lewis and Rice
Old Arm Chair, The (U.S.A. 1840), w E. Cook, m H. Russell
Old Black Joe (U.S.A. 1860), w & m S. Foster
Old Blue (U.S.A. 19thC), w & m anon.
Old Bog Road, The (G.B. 20thC), w & m O'Farrelly and Brayton
Old Clock, The (U.S.A. c.1837), w E. Cook, m H. Russell
Old Clock on the Stairs, The (U.S.A. 1846), w H. W. Longfellow, m T. Bricher
Old Covered Bridge, The (U.S.A. 1934), w & m W. J. Hill
Old Cottage Clock, The (G.B. c.1868), w C. Swain, m J. Molloy
Old Country Church, The (U.S.A. earlier 20thC), perf. Oak Ridge Mountain Boys on HMK 300904
Old Cuckoo Clock that Hangs on the Wall, The (U.S.A. 1870's), w & m J.W. Wheeler
Old Dog Tray (U.S.A. 1853), w & m S. Foster
Old Faithful (G.B. 1934), w & m J. Kennedy and M. Carr
Old Folks at Home, The (U.S.A. 1851), w & m S. Foster
Old Home, The (G.B. 1964), perf. K. McKellar
Old Home Place, The (U.S.A. 1964), w & m D. Reno and R. Smiley
Old House, The (G.B. 1940), w & m O'Connor
Old House, This (U.S.A. late 1930's), w & m S. Hamblen
Old House At Home, The (G.B. early 19thC), w T. H. Bayly, m ?
Old, Old House, The (U.S.A. 1963), w & m G. Jones & H. Bynum

Old Lamplighter, The (U.S.A. 1946), w & m C. Tobias and N. Simon
Old Love Letters (U.S.A. 1934), w & m L. Hirsher, D. Butcher and J. Rodgers
Old Irish Lady (Sweet Mother of Mine), An (G.B. 1935), w & m J. and M. Watson
Old Mammy Mine (G.B. 1935), w & m J. Kennedy
Old Memories (U.S.A. 1853), w & m S. Foster
Old Oaken Bucket, The (U.S.A. 1834), w S. Woodworth, m trad. or G. Kiallmark
Old Rover (U.S.A. 20thC), w & m anon. (perf. H. Snow on R.C.A. Victor DPS 2023)
Old Rugged Cross, The (U.S.A. 1913), w & m Rev. G. Bennard
Old Sexton, The (G.B. earlier 19thC), w (?) & m H. Russell
Old Shep (U.S.A. 1940) w & m C. Foley
Old Tige (U.S.A. 1961), w & m M. Burke, R. Burke and J. Reeves
Old Towler (G.B. 1795), w J. O'Keefe, m W. Shield
Old Uncle Ned (U.S.A. 1848), w & m S. Foster
Old Wooden Rocker, The (U.S.A. 1930's) no attrib. (perf. Jack Savage and his Cowboys on Hallmark BNR 305124)
Old Yeller (U.S.A. 1957), w G. George, m O. Wallace
Omaha, Nebraska (U.S.A. 1930's), w & m B. Kalmar and H. Ruby
On The Beach At Bali-Bali (U.S.A. 1936), w & m A. Sherman, J. Meskill and A. Silver
One Rose, The (U.S.A. 1936), w & m D. Lyon and L. McIntire
One Touch of Nature Makes the World Whole Kin (G.B. 1890's), w & m F. McGlennon
Only a Rose (U.S.A. 1925), w B. Hooker, m R. Friml
Only Me (U.S.A. late 19thC) w & m Ford and Bratton
Orphan Boys, The (U.S.A. 1840), no attrib. (in Chappel 1909, 36)
Our Old Clock (U.S.A. 1872), w & m Major J. Barton
Our Willie Dear Is Dying (U.S.A. 1861), w & m S. Foster

Pal of My Cradle Days (U.S.A. 1925), w M. Montgomery, m A. Piantadosi
Pardon That Came Too Late, The (U.S.A. 1891), w & m P. Dresser
Peace in the Valley (U.S.A. 1930's), w & m T. A. Dorsey
Peggy O'Neil (U.S.A. 1921), w & m H. Pease, G. Dodge and E. Nelson
Place in Thy Memory, A (G.B. c.1830), w G. Griffin, m anon.
Please Paint a Rose on the Garden Wall (U.S.A. early 20thC), perf. H. Locklin
Pilot, The (G.B. earlier 19thC), w T. H. Bayly, m S. Nelson
Poor Black Boy, The (G.B. 1794), w & m S. Storace
Poor Jack (G.B. 1788), w & m C. Dibdin
Poor Peggy (G.B. 1794), w & m C. Dibdin
Poor Tom (Tom Bowling) (G.B. 1789), w & m C. Dibdin
Powder Monkey, The (G. B. 1860's), w & m M. Watson
Prairie Lullaby (U.S.A 1930's), w & m W. J. Hill
Primrose Girl, The (U.S.A. 1794), w Mrs. Pownall, m J. Hewitt Snr.
Put My Little Shoes Away (U.S.A. 1873), w S. Mitchell, m C. Pratt

Real Irish Mother, A (G.B. 1919), w & m T. McGhee, L. Silberman and J. Walsh
Ring Down The Curtain, I Can't Sing Tonight (G.B. 1902), w & m R. Brennen and P. Story

River of Memory, My (U.S.A. 1930's), w & m A. Brumley
River of Years, The (G. B. 1880's), w M. Beverly, m T. Marzials
Rocking Alone in Old Rocking Chair (U.S.A. 1932), w & m R. Miller
Rock of Ages (G.B. 1776), w A. Toplady, m R. Redhead (1853)
Room 504 (G.B. 1941), w & m G. Posford
Rory O' Moore (G.B. 1826), w & m S. Lover
Rose in a Garden of Weeds, A (G.B. 1925), w & m R. B. Saxe and R. Stampa
Rose of Tralee, The (G.B. 1847), w E. Mordaunt Spencer, m C. Glover
Roses of Picardy (G.B. 1916), w F. Weatherly, m H. Wood
Rule Britannia! (G.B. 1740), w J. Thomson and/or D. Mallet, m T. Arne

Sae Far Awa' (G.B. late 18thC), w R. Burns, m anon.
San Antonio Rose (U.S.A. 1940), w & m B. Wills
Scenes That Are Brightest (G.B. 1845), w E. Fitzball, m W. Vincent Wallace
Sensibility, how charming (G.B. 1792), w R. Burns, m anon.
Sentimental Journey (U.S.A. 1944), w & m B. Green, L. Brown and B. Homer
She Is Far From the Land (G.B. 1811), w T. Moore, m anon.
She Wore a Wreath of Roses (G.B. c.1840), w T. H. Bayly, m J. Knight
Shake Hands With a Millionaire (U.S.A. 1933), w & m J. Scholl, I. Bibbo and M. Rich
Shake Hands With Mother Again (U.S.A. 1940's), perf. The Stanley Brothers
Shall I Be an Angel, Daddy? (G.B. 1897), w C. Collins and F. Barnes, m C. Collins
Shawl Of Galway Grey, A (G.B. 1949), w & m H. Kennedy
Short Life of Trouble (U.S.A. 20thC), no attrib. (in Wernick 1976, 81)
Show Me a Rose (U.S.A. 1940's), w & m B. Kalmar and H. Ruby
Sierra Sue (U.S.A. 1940), w & m J. B. Carey
Silver Threads Among the Gold (U.S.A. 1873), w E. E. Rexford, m H. P. Danks
Singer Was Irish, The (G.B. 1904), w & m C. W. Murphy and H. Castling
Sitting In The Old Arm Chair (G.B. 1940's), w & m M. Miller
Six Feet Of Earth Make Us All Of One Size (U.S.A. 1930's), w & m The McGarveys
Shule, Agra (G.B. earlier 19thC), w T. Moore, m anon
Skylark ! Skylark ! or The Boys Message (G. B. 1870's), w & m E. W. Rodgers
Slave Sale, The (U.S.A. 1835), w A. Reach, m H. Russell
Slave Ship, The (U.S.A., earlier 19thC), w (?) & m H. Russell
Sleepy Valley (U.S.A. 1928), w & m E. Dowling and J. F. Hanley
Smile Of Benevolence, The (G.B. 1794), w & m C. Dibdin
Smilin' Through (U.S.A. 1918), w & m A. Penn
Softly and Tenderly (U.S.A. early 20thC), perf. J. Reeves on Hallmark BNR 300904
Soldier's Adieu, The (G.B. 1790), w & m C. Dibdin
Soldier's Grave, The (G.B. 1788), w & m C. Dibdin
Soldier's Return, The (G.B. late 18thC), w R. Burns, m anon.
Soldier's Tear, The (G.B. c.1830), w T. H. Bayly, m A. Lee
Somewhere In France (G.B. c.1915), no attrib. (in Walsh 1975, 46)
Song That Reached My Heart, The (G.B. 1888), w & m J. Jordan
Songs My Mother Sang, The (G.B. 1897), w & m A. Grimshaw
Songs of Olden Days, The (U.S.A. 1872), w & m G. F. Root
Sonny Boy (U.S.A. 1928), w & m B. DeSylva, L. Brown, R. Henderson and A. Jolson
Such Tears Are Bliss (G.B. 1825), w & m T. H. Bayly

Summer Longings (U.S.A. 1830's), w D. MacCarthy, m S. Foster
Sweet By and By, The (U.S.A. 1868), w S. Bennett, m J. Webster
Sweet Echo is No More (G.B. late 18thC), w R. Burns, m ?
Sweet Innisfallen (G.B. earlier 19thC), w T. Moore, m anon.
Sweet Rosie O'Grady (U.S.A. 1896), w & m M. Nugent (*attrib.*)
Swing Low, Sweet Chariot (U.S.A. later 19thC), w & m *unattrib.*

Take This Message to my Mother (U.S.A. 1860's), w & m S. Foster
Tatters (G.B. 1880's), w & m G. Lane
Tango Funèbre, Le (French 1964), w J. Brel, m G. Jouannest
Tear of Sensibility, The (G.B. 1793), w & m C. Dibdin
Tear That Bedews Sensibilities Shrine, The (G.B. 1785) w & m Wm. Shield
Tears (U.S.A. 1930), w F. Campano, m Wm. Uhr
Tell Mother I Die Happy (U.S.A. 1860's), w & m ?
That Little Boy of Mine (U.S.A. 1940's), w & m C. Foley
That Little Kid Sister of Mine (U.S.A. 193?), w & m G. Autry and F. Rose
That Lovely Weekend (G.B. 1941), w & m M. and E. Heath
That Old Fashioned Sweetheart of Mine (U.S.A. 1930's), *perf.* C. Robison
That Old Irish Mother Of Mine (U.S.A. 1925), w J. Kiern Brennan, m H. Von Tilzer
That Silver-Haired Daddy of Mine, (U.S.A. 1931), w & m G. Autry and J. Long
That Wonderful Mother of Mine (U.S.A. 1918), w & m C. Hager and W. Goodwin
That's How I Spell I-R-E-L-A-N-D (U.S.A. 1931), w & m G. B. McConnell, M. Downey and D. Sandford)
That's What God Made Mothers For (G. B. 1890's), w & m L. Wood
That's What Puts the 'Sweet' in Home Sweet Home (U.S.A. 1928), w & m E. Lowry, M. Gordon and C. Newman
There Ain't Another Daddy In The World Like Mine (G.B. 1900's), w & m A. Mills and B. Scott
There Are Voices, Spirit Voices (U.S.A. 1864), w & m S. Parkhurst and F. Crosby
There is a Flower That Bloometh (G.B. 1845), w E. Fitzball, m W. Vincent Wallace
There is Beyond the Sky (G.B. early 18thC), w I. Watts, m ?
There is a Land of Pure Delight (G.B. 1707), w I. Watts, m G. F. Handel
There'll Always Be an England (G.B. 1939), w & m R. Parker and H. Charles
There'll Be No Distinction There (U.S.A. 1930's), w & m The Carter Family
There's a Bridle Hangin' on the Wall (U.S.A. 1936), w & m C. Robison
There's A Land Of Begin Again (G.B. 1940), w & m H. Charles and R. Parker
There's A Little Box Of Pine On the 7.29. (U.S.A. earlier 20thC) w & m Ettlinger, Brown and Lee
There's Another Picture In My Mamma's Frame (U.S.A. 1907), w & m C. K. Harris
There's No Song Like An Irish Song (G.B. 1952), w & m D. Reid and T. Connor
There's Nothing True But Heaven (U.S.A. 1816), w T. Moore, m O. Shaw
There's a Long, Long Trail A-Winding (U.S.A. 1913), w S. King, m Z. Elliott
There's Only Five Bullets in My Old Six-Shooter (G.B. 1934), w & m Box, Cox and Roberts
They Cut Down The Old Pine Tree (U.S.A. 1930's), w & m W. Raskin, W. J. Hill and E. Eliscu
This Wedding Ring of Mine (U.S.A. late 19thC), *no attrib.* (in Spaeth 1927, 34)

Those Evening Bells (G.B. 1841), w T. Moore, m Mélésville
Those Wedding Bells Shall Not Ring Out (U.S.A. 1896), w & m M. Rosenfeld
Thou Hast Left Me Ever Jamie (G.B. later 18thC), w R. Burns, m anon.
Tie Me To Your Apron Strings Again (U.S.A. 1926), w & m J. Goodwin and L. Shay
'Tis Gone and For Ever (G.B. earlier 19thC), w T. Moore, m anon
Tired Hands (U.S.A. 1926), w & m A. Piantadosi
Tom Tough (G.B. 1798), w & m C. Dibdin
Tray (G.B. 1801), w & m C. Dibdin
True Courage (G.B. 1798), w & m C. Dibdin
True English Sailor, The (G.B. 1798), w & m C. Dibdin
True Glory (G.B. 1796), w & m C. Dibdin
True-Love's Knell (G.B. late18thC), w & m C. Dibdin
Twelve O'Clock At Night (U.S.A. 1923), w & m W. Rose, H. Ruby and L. Handman
Twenty Years Ago (U.S.A. 1856), w & m Wm. Willing
'Twas One of Those Dreams (G.B. earlier 19thC), w T. Moore, m anon.
'Twas Only an Irishman's Dream (U.S.A. 1916), w O'Brien and Dubin, m Cormack

Uncloudy Day, The (U.S.A. earlier 20thC), w & m J. K. Allwood
Under The Willow She's Sleeping (U.S.A. 1860), w & m S. Foster
Unfinished Rug, The (U.S.A. 1940's), w & m K. Davis

Vacant Chair, The (U.S.A. 1861), w H. S. Washburn, m G. Root
Valley Lay Smiling before Me, The (G.B. 1813), w T. Moore, m anon
Vieux, Les (French 1963), w J. Brel, m J. Brel, G. Jouannest and J. Corti; (U.S.A. trans.1968 M. Shuman & E. Blau)
Village Maiden, The (U.S.A. 1855), w & m S. Foster
Voices That Are Gone, The (U.S.A. 1850), w & m S. Foster

Wae Is My Heart (G.B. 1796), w R. Burns, m anon.
Wall Around Heaven (U.S.A. 1950's), w & m C. Harrelson
We Are Coming, Father Abra'am (U.S.A. 1862), w & m S. Foster
We Just Couldn't Say 'Good-bye' (U.S.A. 1932), w & m H. Woods
We'll Meet Again (G.B. 1939), w & m R. Parker & H. Charles
West, A Nest And You, The (U.S.A. 193?), w Yoell, m W. J. Hill
Welcome, Mother! (U.S.A. 1834), w & m J. Hewitt
What are the Wild Waves Saying? (G.B. 1849), w J. Carpenter (after Dickens), m S. Glover
What Are They Doing in Heaven Today? (U.S.A. 1905), w & m C. Tindley
Whene'er I See Thy Smiling Eyes (G.B. earlier 19thC), w T. Moore, m anon.
When Heaven Comes Down (U.S.A. 1940's), w & m J. Bailles and A. Robinson.
When I Can Read My Title Clear (G.B. 1707), w I. Watts, m ?
When I Lost You (U.S.A. 1912), w & m I. Berlin
When I Survey the Wonderous Cross (G.B. 1707), w I. Watts, m adapt. E. Miller
When Irish Eyes Are Smiling (U.S.A. 1912), w C. Ollcott and G. Graff jnr., m E. R. Ball
When The Lights Go On Again All Over The World (G.B. 1942), w & m E. Seiler, S. Marcus and B. Benjamin

When The Poppies Bloom Again (G.B. 1937), w & m A. Pelosi and A. Noel
When The Rest Of The World Goes Home (I Always Go Home Alone) (U.S.A. 1931),
w & m A. Dubin and J. Burke.
When They Sound The Last 'All-Clear' (G.B. 1941), w & m H. Charles and L. Elton
When Through Life We Rove (G.B. earlier 19thC), w T. Moore, m anon.
When You and I Were Young, Maggie (U.S.A. 1866), w G. Johnson, m J. Butterfield
When You Are Old And Grey (U.S.A. 1962), w & m T. Lehrer
Where The River Shannon Flows (U.S.A. 1905), w & m J. Russell
Where We'll Never Grow Old (U.S.A. earlier 20thC), w & m Moore
Whistle o'er the Lave O't (G.B. late 18thC), w R. Burns, m trad.
Why Don't They Play With Me? (U.S.A. 1904), w & m C. K. Harris
Why Have My Loved Ones Gone? (U.S.A. 1860's), w & m S. Foster
Why Worry? (G.B. 1985), w & m M. Knopfler
Wien, du Stadt meiner Träume (Austria 1914), w & m R. Sieczyński
Wild Irish Rose, My (U.S.A. 1899), w & m C. Ollcott
Willie's Gone To Heaven (U.S.A. 1863), w & m S. Foster
Winter of Life, The (G.B. 1796), w R. Burns, m anon.
Will Ye No Come Back Again? (G.B. c.1822), w Lady C. Nairne, m anon.
Wishing (Will Make It So) (U.S.A. 1928), w & m B. DeSylva
With Joy We Mediate the Grace (G.B. earlier 18thC), w I. Watts and others, m
J. C. Clifton
Won't You Buy My Pretty Flowers? (U.S.A. 1860's), w A.W. French, m G. W. Persley
Woodman, Spare That Tree! (U.S.A. 1837), w G. Morris, m H. Russell
Worksong, The (U.S.A. 1982), w & m K. McGarrigle
Would God I Were The Tender Apple Blossom (G. B. 1916), w K. Hinkson, m anon.
Write a Letter to My Mother (U.S.A. mid 19thC), w & m ?

Ye Banks and Braes (G.B. later 18thC), w R. Burns, m anon.
Yearning and Blue (U.S.A. 1920's), w & m J. C. Cobb
Yellow-Haired Laddie, The (G.B.1720's), w A. Ramsay, m anon.
Yesterday (G.B. 1965), w & m McCartney and Lennon
Yesterday's Roses (U.S.A. 1942), w & m G. Autry and F. Rose
You Never Even Called Me By My Name (U.S.A. 1970's), w & m D. A. Coe
You'll Never Walk Alone (U.S.A. 1945), w O. Hammerstein, w R. Rodgers
Young Peggie Blooms Our Bonniest Lass (G.B. 1787), w R. Burns, m anon.
Yours (U.S.A. 1932), w J. Sherr, m G. Roig
Youth's The Season Made For Joys (G.B. 1728), w J. Gay, m anon.