

speaks with reverence of Bach; with sensitive respect of Mozart and Brahms; with qualified appreciation of Schubert; with reserve of Bruckner and Mahler. He refers to Wagner with a critical questioning that ultimately rejects him. But the greatest of all, for him, is Beethoven. The only modern composer to whom he refers is the Bohemian Labor, a friend of the family.

- 17 He does not identify Shakespeare as part of this epic of Western culture. He finds in him a diffuse and incoherent variety of experience which baffles him and which he does not find true to life. Shakespeare is, for him, a kind of phenomenon whom he can only view with astonishment; he cannot get to grips with him apparently because Shakespeare does not point towards any kind of truth (CV 36, 49, 84—5). He had more natural sympathy, it seems, with those who were committed to the search for meaning, though he did not himself claim to discern or to express such a meaning.
- 18 The dislike of what he regarded as superficial cleverness was expressed in his withdrawal from the Apostles, the exclusive Cambridge society in which Russell, Keynes and Moore had induced him to accept membership (See McGuinness, p. 146ff.)
- 19 He himself often doubted what influence he might have. In one particular entry in CV (61) he doubts that he will have any but the most indirect of effects on other people's thought. But this is not an inclination to decline the challenge.

The Terror of History : a ballad

Sebastian Moore

Some find unbearable the flux,
The never stepping twice
In the same river, only books
To put the world on ice.

For them, philosophy will search
For stable essences
While history is doomed to lurch
Blindly from guess to guess.

Ever since Plato turned the tide
And had to understand,
The wakened soul would not abide
Mortality's demand.

Such was our hero, and he found
One school of thought congenial
For which mind sees things in the round
And is not change's menial.

All that is variant in a thing
You put into a bracket
And then the light of mind can bring
Out from the confused racket

The essence! How it shines before
The inward seeing mind,
The thing itself, revealed the core,
Appearance but the rind.

This is phenomenology
After the Polish school
Though it was destined soon to fly
Higher, the Church to rule.

Of all the ancient monarchies
The papacy was first:
For memories it took the prize,
Having the best and worst.

When revolution swallowed all,
Alone it stayed the course
By altering its temporal
To spiritual force.

The change, however, left untouched
Absolute sovereignty,
By each succeeding pontiff clutched
As of divinity.

This was the toughest nut of all.
The Church in council met
To crack it, match Peter with Paul,
Power with intellect.

The will was there but not the deed,
They didn't touch the law,
And healing time the monarch freed
To rule much as before.

And yet it was not quite the same:
They'd run into a hex
That ever haunts the Church. Its name
(Are you surprised?) was sex.

Contraception! The fell debate
Had left the council floor
Seized by the Pope and made to wait
Outside, where he would pore

Over the matter with the aid
Of a select committee.
After three years, the latter said:
Please lift the ban, have pity.

The Pope held out. All hell broke loose,
For all the faithful knew
Just what had happened, and the noose
Grew tight on but a few.

Authority was silent then.
The Church made up its mind,
Would listen less intently when
Authority defined.

And here our story climaxes
Quite unexpectedly:
Remember him whose thinking sees
Essence, of flesh made free?

Through suffering, his inner eye
Had opened to the light
Of that which is, though the world cry
That now is only night.

He next was Pope, and thus there took
Effect a fateful tie.
Absolute vision found its nook:
Absolute monarchy.

In his deep mind the marriage act
Joined love and procreation
In an eternal essence, fact
Paled before revelation.

The No to contraception still
Sounds forth, he said, from God.
To be obeyed in mind and will,
It is his final word.

Then wilting opposition to
The use of birth control
Stiffened and Rome's Old Guard came through
And took the Capitol.

And no one dared among the flock
Of shepherds to protest.
What centuries had failed to block,
How could one tongue arrest?

Worse would befall the shepherds when
They failed the tide to stem.
First they abandoned reason, then
Reason abandoned them.

The contraceptive instrument,
The condom, soon became
Evil apart from the intent,
Unspeakable the name.

So when the deadliest ever plague
Attacked through fragile sex,
Condoms could not be mentioned, vague
Injunctions must perplex.

That men would count against the waste
Of flesh a rubber fetish
Could only happen through a vast
Distortion, faith grown skittish.

How shall this pass? As all things do,
Eventually? — or shall
One child pipe up and, speaking true,
Break silence, end its thrall?