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ON THE POETRY OF THE DOG BENEATH THE SKIN

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Abstract

The Dog Beneath the Skin is the first play to be coauthored between Wystan Hugh Auden and Christopher Isherwood. It is a play written in verse, which creates a challenge of success for the dramatists for two reasons, the first is that it deals with verse, the second it is collaborative. The study through the collaborators, trying to show, to what extent, both achieved attainment in dealing with verse drama. This study also endeavors to trace the poetic features in *The Dog Beneath the Skin* and to attempt proving the capability and controllability in writing successful drama in verse through collaboration. This paper is done by using an analytic-critical method. It is an approach to a drama shared by both Auden and Isherwood.

The study tersely traces the growth and elaboration of poetic drama until the twentieth century. It goes through the sort of collaboration between Auden and Isherwood. It is concluded by examining and analyzing, its central part, the poetic features and essentials in the play *The Dog Beneath the Skin*.

Key Words: Auden and Isherwood, collaboration, literature, poetic drama, *The Dog Beneath the Skin*, twentieth century

Introduction

It is believed that poetic dramas possess the facility to break into the sources of sentiment and action of people all over the ages. In Athens, the drama prospered under the shelter of religion with unlimited autonomy, which was well preserved for a period of time from decadence. Some of its primary practitioners, great pioneers and masters such as Homer, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes, Menander, and many others canonized drama. Then some Roman dramatists such as Plautus, Terence, and Seneca took their inspiration from Greek drama. W. H. Auden sees the same differences between Greek tragic drama and Elizabethan and modern tragedy" (Kirsch, 2005, p. 79).

English drama developed throughout the tenth century as the liturgical and conventional process. Liturgical dramas are Latin plays performed by the clergy as a measure of the ritual of the Church throughout the medieval period. Religious stories were represented in church escorted by humming. The drama transformed the common fiestas of the church and outmoded rituals of the song into acting plays. With time, drama owned roots, but some irreligious dramatists tried to amuse the audience by performing plays in the local tongue.

The Shakespearean age or Elizabethan period is regarded as the paramount age of literature in England as such, and drama and poetry principally. Drama grasped its pinnacle all through the Renaissance age. In such eminent period, arose several of its pioneers, for instance, Christopher Marlowe, George Peele, John Lyly, Robert Greene, Thomas Kyd, Thomas Norton, William Shakespeare and others who wrote blank verse as the indispensable metrical pattern of poetry suitable for the time. "In Shakespeare's hands, blank verse gradually became a measure capable of an almost unlimited variety of music and expression" (Seccombe, and Allen. 1903, p. 116). Blank verse was the prevailing usual rhyming sort in such an age that surpassed over the total dramas. Furthermore, Allardyce Nicoll highlights that poet-dramatists in the Elizabethan time "struck a mean, adhering to the new blank verse ... a type of verse rhythmical in utterance" (Allardyce, 1969, p.138). It is a sort of verse created to be as near as the sound of the language of the same life.

The nineteenth century perceived a changing indication drive toward the 'neo-classicism'. The playwrights of this epoch had a solid conviction in the hegemony of thoughts above reason. The works of Shakespeare and his contemporaries influenced the poet-playwrights of this period. The

fanciful poet-dramatists desired to recuperate the glorious past by reinventing the medieval supremacy of poetic diction in drama but failed as a result of sheer imitation. The diction here is tonic and fresh, Shakespeare and his contemporaries influence were noticeably felt that the playwright adhered enormously to blank verse, which was the reason for the failure of nineteenth-century poetic dramas.

Most of the poet-playwrights meandered via the Shakespearean meadows; nonetheless, they could not produce the preferred dramatic weight in their dramas. The poets dedicated themselves to the theatre. They wished to wed poetry with drama and consequently to recuperate the grandeur of the Shakespearean age. They did not have the excellence requirements for getting this worthy determination to satisfaction. The first decades were utterly unproductive. The majority of the foremost poets had endeavored drama, but none achieved notable attainment. Their plays did not meet success on the stage because the forms of drama were melodrama, farces, and sentimental comedies of no literary merits but sensation.

Understanding the age of W. H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood is indispensable for the study of Auden and Isherwood's verse plays. The last years of the nineteenth century are considered as an epoch of swift social and commercial alterations. There was a thorough collapse in all aspects of life. "Industrialisation and urbanisation brought in their wake their own problems. There have risen problems like the problem of overcrowding, housing shortage, a significant increase in vice and crime" (Kharbe, 2009, p. 36). The commencement of the twentieth century was an era of moral and pure mystification, doubt, escalation of the scientific principle, conventions and ethnicities. Such events led critics and dramatists like Bernard Shaw, Wells, and Galsworthy to criticize the precise basis of the present social, moral, and economic coordination. Unseen forces of the unconscious control the compartments, as a result, a new element has been enhanced to the assessment of human comportment and great focus is being rested on the unconscious.

According to the mentioned views, the abnormal is no longer viewed as a mark of decadence. The study of the unconscious came to be a key theme of recent literary studies and works. Intelligence is no longer looked upon as the approaches of accurate comprehending. There was an intense bearing on the relationships of the family. Male was no longer estimated as responsible for his inner actions because of the new philosophy of modern psychology. There is a disintegration of the old authoritarian representation in family connections. The male authority over female gradually faded and woman in the west has had a good deal of autonomy. The

encounter of the generations - old and young - has caused a re-positioning of the connection between parents and children. It is said that:

Isherwood's predicament, as well as that of many other young men who grew up during and after the Great War: The psychological situation was particularly interesting. There were, as they confessed frequently, men like Christopher Isherwood particularly involved in a struggle against 'the Father' as an authority from which an escape must be made, and against 'the Mother' from whose entanglements and clutches it was equally necessary to emerge. The novels of Christopher Isherwood, and Auden ... show this great clarity. (Piazza, 1978, pp.53-54)

Accordingly, the authority of the old over the young is weakened and the man's rootlessness is amplified. The Man of the Victorian age was observed as rational, carrying out in his best benefits, which were indistinguishable with the communal life. It was an era of hopefulness. The interactions between nations progressively transformed to be based on equivalence and reciprocated deference. A good deal of criticism contrasted Imperialism. Perplexity and Bewilderment easily perceived in the arena of politics. "The most obvious social fact of the last forty years is the failure of liberal capitalist democracy, based on the premises that every individual is born free and equal" (North, 2009. p 2). Socialism has substituted the Victorian notion about the hegemony of the white man and Monarchy is regarded as a sense of culpability. In his *Passage to India*, E. M. Forster sustained the indication that the relationships between countries should be as the same as between persons, only such relationships should be established on impartiality. On these bases, English literary works should not be secluded from the overall literature in Europe.

The twentieth century has witnessed a tangible escalation in literateness. During the contemporary period, literature was much better than that of the nineteenth century especially in drama with rapid action and spectacle trying to deal with issues tackling the religious problems, age and youth, labor and capitalism. Drama flourished at the outset of the twentieth century due to dramatic achievements of some genius dramatists such as Ibsen, Shaw, Galsworthy, Granvill and others who helped directly or indirectly in the recovery of poetic drama despite the matter that there was no tradition of poetic drama at the beginning of the century. Poetic drama "has been defined as if it were a joining of two elements, poetry and drama, when actually it is only one: poetic drama" (Downer, 1949). The realistic plays lacked poetry in a true sense. "If people

are excited about a play, they want to talk about it in the interval and cheerful music helps to loosen up the conversation” (Lubbock, 1957).

The new poet-dramatists found that usual direct terminology was not satisfactory to express deep instincts, emotions, and ideas that the psychologists had defined and employed the same methods for clarifying their purposes. “During the thirties the verse play, which had reached a sort of nadir in the Victorian era, was resurrected in new forms and with fresh vitality” (Rodman, 1943). Poetic drama in the twentieth century is a mixed medley within old, new, tradition and individual aptitude. Dramatists like W. H. Auden, W. B. Yeats, Christopher Isherwood, Christopher Fry, John Drinkwater, T.S. Eliot and many others are necessarily conscious of the necessity of poetic drama in their modern age. It is through both, their belief and practice that they achieved much to produce a restoration of verse drama.

Isherwood and Auden

Christopher Isherwood and W. H. Auden have contributed to the revival of poetic drama through their participation and producing poetic drama individually or collaboratively. They worked hard until, to a great extent, they contributed in establishing and strengthening an efflorescence poetic drama to be staged on theatre. “During the pre-war years it introduced to the English stage authors such as W. H. Auden [and] Christopher Isherwood” (White, 1973). Christopher Isherwood is a poet, a playwright and a novelist. In Germany, he acquired great experience and satisfactory and adequate knowledge that supported his enthusiasm for writing plays and novels. Furthermore, it is during his stay in Germany that he first met Auden, which brought about the success of *The Dog Beneath the Skin* in 1935 then both made the second poetic play *The Ascent of F6*. Their successful collaboration ended with *On the Frontier*. “Auden’s three major dramatic collaboration with Isherwood – *The Dog Beneath the Skin* (1935), *The Ascent of F6* (1936), *On the Frontier* (1928) – belong to a post-berlin phase of their relationship” (Page, 1998, p. 181). “The [three] plays were explicitly political, tacitly metaphysical” (Izzo, 2001, p. 120). And “the experience of Berlin he shared with Isherwood...played a part in Auden’s development as a dramatist” (Costello, and Galvin, 2015, p. 74). In their collaboration, Auden has the task of writing poetic and rhythmic songs and dialogues whereas Isherwood is committed to deal with the organization of the story. The dialogue shows talent and natural dramatic wit.

The relationship between Isherwood and Auden can be called alliance. Reading the poetry was the reason to create collaboration between Isherwood and Auden. It is the verse mouth that of the poet who can manage and lead to verse drama; "Through verse's formal organization, the material of the dramatic communication is overtly controlled" (Benston, 1983). Isherwood and Auden were gifted poets that resulted in making collaboration on drama possible.

W. H. Auden grew up under the shadow of T. S. Eliot. He "was certainly most familiar with Auden's work because Auden had a contract with Faber and Eliot was at the editorial desk at the time. It was Eliot who considered Auden's works for publication" (Niloufer, 1988, p. 108). T. S. Eliot tangibly influenced the drama of Auden and Isherwood especially their impact of *Sweeney Agonistes* and *The Rock*. Auden comprehends the splendor and chances of the choric method and then reshapes it with his technique. They saw T. S. Eliot as a pioneer in dealing with poetic drama where they learned from him several fundamentals of the craft and trade of drama in verse. The plays that he wrote in collaboration with Christopher Isherwood illuminate the influence of T. S. Eliot, which leads both of them to have a great passion for a new kind of graceful rhythmical drama. They realized a route to contribute in reviving verse drama on the theatre. Through their admiration of Eliot's poetic drama, both conceived the proper way to use different stratum of speech such as rhythms, cadences, echoes and dance. Auden and Isherwood focused their drama on political and economic complications as contrary to Eliot's style.

W. H. Auden was a great peace pioneer in poetry and drama. He had an acute sagacity and wise knowledge of the need for the new theatre for building up effective plays. Auden's plays show and present a sense of verse of high emotions and great variety. By the appeal of drama and theatre, Isherwood and Auden started their target making the poetry at a wide audience, mostly via poetic dramas since the theatre has a significant fascination to the public. This poetic drama, *The Dog Beneath the Skin*, sought to motivate a massive number of viewers toward the action. Isherwood and Auden continued friends all their life, and during their friendship, they collaborated on writing three plays starting with play understudy, *The Dog Beneath the Skin*. Both Auden and Isherwood succeeded in composing this play in a good collaboration because they are poets more than being dramatists confirming the theory of Karen Laughlin that says "many of the creators of modern British verse drama remain better known as poets than playwrights" (Laughlin, 1992).

On the Play: *The Dog Beneath the Skin*

The Dog Beneath the Skin, “a previous draft of which, called *The Chase*” (Lehmann, 1976), is the second play for Auden but the first in collaboration with Isherwood. It is “a satirical amalgam of comic revue, light verse, popular song and serious political commentary” (Schwerdt, & Taylor, 1989, p. 67). The play that they collaborated in lucidly shows their political disposition and original response to their environment. It is “a parable of current events using humor to satirize the serious issues” (Izzo, 2001, p.120) that reveals the social and political certainties of the early 1930s. “Auden was hailed by critics as the leader of a group of young, left-wing, writers” (Hamilton, & Noel-Tod, 2013, p. 23). Moreover, “Largely descriptive comments on their work accentuate the plays' leftist political message, episodic structure, and innovative staging and suggest a continuing influence of these experiments on more recent developments in poetic drama” (Laughlin, 1992). The two collaborators wrote two copies of the end of the play. On the one hand, Isherwood in his version, the hero Sir Francis criticizes his villagers and runs off to adhere himself to an ambiguous revolutionary movement, on the other hand, Auden's reviewed version, Sir Francis criticizes the villagers and is exterminated.

The play deals with Auden and Isherwood's interpretations and philosophy on political and social exploitation and corruption. *The Dog Beneath the Skin*, “first successful stage collaboration” (Gillies, and Mahood, 2007, p. 143), is a sort of ‘epic drama’ of three acts. It “focuses on contemporary 1930s society” (Warden, 2012, p. 45) and is estimated as a significant contribution to English poetic drama in the third decade of the twentieth century. Furthermore, *The Dog Beneath the Skin* “is a satirical musical comedy interspersed with serious poetic choruses” (Haffenden, 1997, p. 172). In addition, it “is good evidence of the usefulness of expressionist techniques for the poetic dramatist” (Downer, 1949). Many critics looked at the play as "a ‘high-spirited satire’ and applauded its ‘Richness of language, a teeming range of subject-matter and types (if not characters), and eminent diversion’” (Haffenden, 2002, p. 17).

Leader of Semi-Chorus I.

The young men in Pressan to-night

Toss on their beds

Their pillows do not comfort

Their uneasy heads.

The lot that decides their fate

Is cast to-morrow,

One must depart and face

Danger and sorrow.¹

The Dog Beneath the Skin starts “with the drawing of lots in which a third seeker, Alan Norman, is chosen. Accompanied and guided by a large dog that appeared at the selection ceremony, he journeys from Pressan Ambo (in England) through Ostnia and Westland” (Callan, 1978-79). Alan Norman is an authentic and truthful young man. Picked by the lot in a yearly rite, he is assured to be given a portion of the estate and to marry the daughter of the leading Sir Benjamin after his death if Norman can complete the quest and find the absent son-heir, Francis Crewe. Norman’s nourishing dream of marrying the daughter of Sir Benjamin and his simple acceptance of the commission makes him an absolute the man who will be able to travel in Europe and to be a person who learns many aspects of the deceitfulness and fraudulence of most governments. As a hero, he is eminent by his firmness and concentration of achieving his purpose.

The play deals with a clear theme of the quest in a decadent society. *The Dog Beneath the Skin* displays a portrait of an autocratic country that has turned out to be a sanctuary for lunatic. The essential figure of the play is Sir Francis Crewe “who disguise himself as a dog” (Firchow. 2002, p. 39). The heir Francis Crewe vanishes from his home covertly after a fierce squabble with his father, Sir Benjamin Crewe. However, he “never had left the village at all ... he decided to dress up as a dog and live amongst them and observe them” (Berg, 2007, p. 175). The father, for years of searching of his son, fails to discover where he is. Sir Benjamin writes stipulations in his will says that a fellow to be selected for investigating his absent son once a year. Moreover, the upshot of the success in finding the heir shall be rewarded with the marriage to his daughter, Iris and obtaining half of Sir Benjamin’s property.

Sir Bingham died eight years ago,
Francis his heir being missing still,
And left these clauses in his will:
Each year, his villages in turn
Should choose by lottery a man
To find Sir Francis if he can:
Further, he promised half his land,
And Iris his daughter adds her hand
In marriage to the lucky one
Who comes home with his only son (p. 22-23).

Unexpectedly Francis, the mysterious disguised dog, remains in the village watches and lives among his society. He continued doing that for years until the time of the selected Alan Norman

¹ Auden, W. H. and Christopher Isherwood. (1944). *The Dog Beneath the Skin or Where is Francis?* London: Faber and Faber Limited. pp. 13-14. [All references for the play, *The Dog Beneath the Skin* in this research are from this edition of the book and page numbers will be quoted in parenthesis within the text.]

is chosen to go searching for the heir Francis. Alan starts his quest accompanied by a dog and he does not know that Francis is beside him all the time and both go together in all places.

Alan launches the expedition to Ostina and Westland with a hopeful farewell of his compatriots, wishing him to triumph in his quest. He reaches Ostina and Westland accompanied by two reporters. He encounters hilarious and comical adventures on his way, which provide the action with a sufficient opportunity to depict corruption and decay of the period of the society as a reflection of the present society of time in western Europe, "a society with only the gangster virtues" (Sharpe, 2013, p. 17). The people of this imaginative country have abandoned personality because they have been educated to ponder that the individual is chiefly appendage of the state or a diminutive limb which cannot subsist in segregation from it. This situation is generally the Marxist theory of the culture and principles that Auden believes in. So to speak, "It is Auden's special contribution to Marxian poetry to combine Marxian economic criticism of society with a strong tincture of English moralism" (Beach, 1960, p. 47).

The hospital scene has one thousand and six hundred beds, is the foremost scene to unveil the representation of the recent contaminated society. All beds are engaged with a patient gone astray in his loneliness. The patients are sick because of their inside sleaze and their passions have converted into rheumatism.

1600 beds: in each one patient, apparently alone;
One who has forsaken family and friends; to set up
house here with his hostile shadow.
You who are amorous and active, pause here an instant.
See passion transformed into rheumatism; rebellion
into paralysis; power into a tumour (p. 102).

As the play progresses, a mirror image of the overall degeneration of the modern materialistic society is revealed. "The play's rather long analysis of various cultural illnesses ends with Francis and Alan off to join a worker's movement; and there is a new urgency in the emphasis on deeds" (Replegle, 1960). The protagonist of the play finally decides to jettison his disguise and then forms a union representing the fresh young generation through a correlation with Alan and the two reporters and accuses old guards as loutish, despicable, hypocritical and cruel creatures for the reason that they consider their inferiors as careless, reckless and heedless.

You see, I had begun to regard you in a new light. I was fascinated and horrified by you all. I thought such obscene, cruel, hypocritical, mean, vulgar creatures had never existed before in the history of the planet, and that it was my office and doom to record it. As a dog, I learnt with what a mixture of fear, bullying, and condescending kindness you treat those whom you consider your inferiors, but on whom you are dependent for your pleasures. It's an awful shock to start seeing people from underneath (p. 173).

There are many scenes declare negative satire, but there are positive, successful points such as that satire of the hospital in Act II Scene III where a surgery performed by a famous surgeon is exceptionally successful. Satire must investigate and present new and arresting surfaces such as the ludicrous behavior of common people in ordinary life as well as the manners of the age and the voguish vices and diseases of rulers, which can be conceived as skins covering egotism and vanity underneath. A funny picture of satire can be perceived through the following speech by a lunatic saying “I am the President of the newly formed League of the Forefathers of Westland, which the Leader himself has officially approved. After careful historical investigations, I have discovered that this is the exact costume worn by the inhabitants of Westland two thousand years ago” (pp. 67-68).

“Auden's realization-and-mastery-of the latent possibilities in the dog-skin character that he had written in 1935 with Christopher Isherwood, *The Dog Beneath the Skin*, ... reflect his realization ...that what he has is himself, a poet-dramatist” (Cappeluti, 1999, p.109). The dramatic elements of this play are subsidiary to the objective of political and social satire. The play lacks dramatic ingenuity that is shown in the other collaborative later two plays. There are several interruptions concerning the action, and such interruptions are clear and irritating especially when the action reaches its middle. “The alliterative metre makes lines from the poem recognizable in the midst of choruses in *The Dog Beneath the Skin*” (Haffenden, 1997, p. 135). The choruses perform the role of providing a progressive plot that unites the separate scenes. Moreover, “Auden's heroes are never happy except in action; with them, the dog is always just beneath the skin” (Firchow, 1977). The characters of the play are merely mouthpieces of Auden and Isherwood.

“In *The Dog Beneath the Skin*, there is a constant juxtaposition of metres and verse forms” (McDiarmid, 1978). The comic verse and satirical sharpness are significant. However, the play lacks depth and artistic modification and refinement. The play “is perhaps chiefly important as

indicating the possible range of effects that can be attained in the convention of the modern musical comedy” (Morgan, 1949). The relaxed arrangement of *The Dog Beneath the Skin* allows the presence of various choruses and songs. “The choruses in his *The Dog Beneath the Skin* possess a lucidity gained by a long verse line ... which actually dilutes and weakens the power and spring and richness of the images. Dilution and expansiveness are the price of the lucidity, in place of the previous terseness, just as doggerel, musical comedy style, is the price of the cleverness” (Schwartz, 1939). Furthermore, “When, near the end of *The Dog Beneath the Skin*, a chorus insists the inner change is not enough, what it means is that the inner change ought not to be limited to the middle class” (Haffenden, 2002, p. 66).

The Dog Beneath the Skin "contains some very beautiful poetry by Auden" (Berg, 2007, p. 86) and its speed is, at times, excessively quick, also if it is read as an uninterrupted performance, it is distinctly irregular. There is a minor weakening on one side. The use of leaped rhythm is nimbly derived from Hopkins as well as from the poetry of Middle English. Such adaptation may appear to answer a query on renovating of common speech into verse. The play is written in verse for a significant part and another part it is a kind of delicate poetic prose, it has a superb verse, and its poetry is lyrical and descriptive. The verse has the capability to map the whole situation in musical language. The following lines disclose an exceptional dramatic episode and choric melody

O you who prattle about the wonderful Middle Ages:
 You who expect the millennium after a few trifling
 adjustments.
Visit from house to house, from country to country:
 consider the populations
Beneath the communions and the coiffures: discover
 your image.
Man divided always and restless always: afraid and-un-
 able to forgive:
Unable to forgive his parents, or his first voluptuous
 rectal sins,
Afraid of the clock, afraid of catching his neighbour's
 cold, afraid of his own body,
Desperately anxious about his health and his posi-
 tion: calling upon the Universe to justify his exis-
 tence,
Slovenly in posture and thinking: the greater part of the
 will devoted
To warding off pain from the water-logged areas,
An isolated bundle of nerve and desire, suffering alone,

Seeing others only in reference to himself: as a long-lost mother or as his ideal self at sixteen. (pp. 155-6)

"*The Dog Beneath the Skin* takes the first names of its engaged couple from the 1931 epithalamion and uses several of the best stanzas late in the play" (McDiarmid, 1990, p. 58).

The concluding chorus exhilarates with optimistic portions of melodious clear writing.

SEMI-CHORUS I.

Where time flows on as chalk stream clear
And lovers by themselves forgiven
The whole dream genuine, the charm mature
Walk in the great and general light
In their delight a part of heaven
Its furniture and choir.

CHORUS.

To each his need: from each his power [p. 180].

Such symmetry of the chants of the chorus add glory to the poetic lines, its bravery shows glamor. The reader may find a sort of praise as abstract as poetry because the play is a comedy. "And certainly, it is right in the English tradition to mingle magnificent poetry with the most ironical comedy." (Haffenden, 1997, p. 174). The use of the choruses in the play is an important point because the it is poetic. It is full of songs, chants and dances as a modern twentieth-century poetic drama but it is a failure since the use of the chorus is an old-fashioned and a traditional Greek design not suitable for modern everyday language, in any case, the point works both ways. The play "was really written more to be read than to be necessarily acted" (Haffenden, 2002, p. 19).

The Dog Beneath the Skin is a satiric full with wit, light-hearted and humorous. The verse can be estimated as admired music hall entertainment. The play is endowed with remarkable poetry from the beginning with depth in meaning. It is "the poetry of the choruses which raises Alan Norman's personal search to an urgent national level" (Leslie 1968, p. 101). The poetic chants of the choruses are moving and of great eloquence. "*The Dog Beneath the Skin, The Ascent of F6, or Letters from Iceland*. The poetry in these three volumes has none of the obscurity of *Poems or Look, Stranger!* In fact, it has a crystalline clarity. It is incisive, frequently genuinely funny, and often most cuttingly satiric. But in the first two, it is impossible to separate Auden's from Isherwood's contribution" (Southworth, G.1938).

The reader and the listener hear the spoken dialogues in alternative unison verse especially that of the chorus. "The importance of a poem for Auden, like that of the theatre for Brecht, was its capacity to delight and instruct. Thus, the introduction of poetry into drama was a means of converting it into a didactic vehicle. Moreover, poetic drama enabled the coming together of the private world of the poet (poetry) and the public one of the theatre (drama)" (Veronese, 1998). Besides, "*The Dog Beneath the Skin* succeeded, despite its faults, by the persistence of high spirits and great energy" (Haffenden, 1997, p. 202).

Conclusion

In such collaboration, *The Dog Beneath the Skin* remains for a more significant part the work of Auden. Some critics comment on this play that its mix of prose and verse makes it as a broken work and there is no novelty, and there are monotonous passages denote with an impression that it is not revised well. Several other modern critics come to an understanding that *The Dog Beneath the Skin* is visionary and aspiring in its endeavor to organize diverse dramatic and poetic elements. The play, in tone and dramatically, is burlesque. It is far from being an entirely pleasing drama. Besides, the satire, in several points, is ineptly written on the contrary of the views of Derek Verschoyle who confirms that the used satire is mature. Isherwood himself in *Isherwood on Writing* tells about the writing of this play as the best Auden 'ever wrote' and it is of 'incredible beauty'.

The Dog Beneath the Skin has been written, revised and produced with several versions for several times with different changes, in some cases made an extensive modification, especially in the endings in which various critics have used different versions that make it hard to bring into being distinct interpretations on the play. It encloses interspersed verse in songs and choruses. The choruses and their chanting can be expressed as a critical structure of the plot. They retain pathos and the language of the play and preserves vitality. *The Dog Beneath the Skin* retains artistic invention and has the ability to entertain audiences on the stage. It is reasonably an exceptional achievement and of moderate success. The play is an extraordinary piece for its maven skill in utilizing the resources of ballet and the music hall freely. With its many faults, *The Dog Beneath the Skin* remains a successful closet poetic drama that the readers simultaneously enjoy poetry with all its musical and sweet ingredients like rhythm, measure, alliteration,

consonance, metaphor, simile and they enjoy moral lessons, which dominate the play, for example:

With **troups** of **scouts** for village **louts**
And preaching *zest* he does his *best* (p. 17)

To judge *The Dog Beneath the Skin* as poetic, we find it rich with poetic and dramatic elements and techniques. The play has finely harmonized lines of precise thoughtfully modified poetic lines. The listener as well as the reader easily discovers mutability in cadence and indeed opulent and robust verse. The play, *The Dog Beneath the Skin*, is poetic more than dramatic.

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