

A STUDY OF THE POETRY  
OF GIACOMO ZANELLA

by

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ABSTRACT

It is intended that this work should contribute to the study of the original Italian poetry of Giacomo Zanella, through an overall view of it, in its historical context, with due regard to the findings of previous criticism.

After a résumé of Zanella's life (Chapter 1) and a thorough examination of his Poetica (Chapter 2), his theoretical concept of poetry, there are four detailed, critical surveys of his verses in Chapters 3-6, followed by the final chapter in which a synthetic diachronic evaluation of all the material considered in the foregoing chapters is undertaken.

Zanella's theoretical espousal of the fundamental spirit of Chénier's "formula" resulted in his virtually constant adherence to a Classical, stylistic framework within which he dealt with essentially "Romantic" themes. While his Classicism was influenced by Parini and, among others, to a lesser extent, Foscolo, it anticipated, at the time of the post-Romantic crisis of form, Carducci's return to Classicism and offered a possible alternative solution to its coexistence with Realism. From a thematic point of view, Zanella's poetry both reflected and anticipated so many aspects of the two main currents of Italian Romanticism, la linea del realismo, from Manzoni to Verga, and la linea del pathos, from Leopardi to Pascoli. He also foreshadowed the ultimate respective destinations, Verismo and Decadentismo, of these two currents.

The conclusions of this thesis draw attention to the inherent worth of Zanella's verses, as well as to his position in the mainstream of nineteenth-century Italian poetry.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations are used for reference to sources and works cited:

- Baldacci: Baldacci, L., Poeti minori dell'Ottocento, Tomo I, Milano-Napoli, 1958.
- Cattaneo: Cattaneo, G., "Prosatori e critici dalla Scapigliatura al verismo", in Vol. VIII, Dall'Ottocento al Novecento, Storia della Letteratura Italiana, Milano, Garzanti, 1968.
- Cusatelli: Cusatelli, G., "La poesia dagli Scapigliati ai decadenti", in Vol. VIII, Dall'Ottocento al Novecento, Storia della Letteratura Italiana, Milano, Garzanti, 1968.
- Della lett.italiana: Zanella, G., Della letteratura italiana nell'ultimo secolo, Città di Castello, 1887.
- Elwert: Elwert, W.T., "Longfellow, Mascheroni, Monti und die 'Conchiglia fossile'. Zur geistes- und stilgeschichtlichen Stellung Giacomo Zanellas", Romanische Forschungen, Frankfurt am Main, 1971, pp. 480-516.
- Fogazzaro (Discorsi): Fogazzaro, A., Discorsi, in Tutte le opere di Antonio Fogazzaro a cura di Piero Nardi, XIV, Milano, 1942.
- Fogazzaro (Poesie): Fogazzaro, A., Poesie, in Tutte le opere di Antonio Fogazzaro a cura di Piero Nardi, XI, Milano, 1935.
- Greenwood: Greenwood, E., Giacomo Zanella: A Contribution to the Study of his Life and Ideas, University of Reading, 1967.
- Janni: Janni, E., I poeti minori dell'Ottocento, 3 vols., Milano, 1955.
- Lampertico (Ricordi): Lampertico, F., Giacomo Zanella: Ricordi, Vicenza, 1895.
- Mazzoni: Mazzoni, G., L'Ottocento, (Vol. II), in Storia letteraria d'Italia, Milano, 1953.
- Momigliano: Momigliano, A., Storia della letteratura italiana dalle origini ai nostri giorni, ottava edizione interamente riveduta, Milano-Messina, 1968.
- Monastra: Monastra, R.M., "Il tramonto del classicismo", in Vol. VIII, Il secondo Ottocento, (tomo secondo), La letteratura italiana, Storia e testi, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 1975.
- Muscetta and Sormani: Muscetta, C. and E. Sormani, Poesia dell'Ottocento, 2 vols., Torino, 1969.

- Paralleli letterari: Zanella, G., Paralleli letterari, Verona, 1885.
- Pasquazi (1953): Pasquazi, S., Cultura e poesia nell' "Astichello" zanolliano, Roma, 1953.
- Pasquazi (1961): Pasquazi, S., "Giacomo Zanella", in Letteratura italiana: I minori, Vol. IV, Milano, Marzorati, 1961, pp. 2765-2806.
- Pasquazi (1967): Pasquazi, S., La poesia di G. Zanella, Firenze, 1967.
- Petronio: Petronio, G., Poeti minori dell' Ottocento, Torino, 1959.
- Poesie (1894): Zanella, G., Poesie di Giacomo Zanella: nuova edizione, introd. by F. Lampertico, 2 vols., Firenze, 1894.
- Poesie (1928): Zanella, G., Poesie di Giacomo Zanella: prima edizione completa con un saggio sul poeta di Arturo Graf, Firenze, 1928.
- Poesie scelte (1957): Zanella, G., Poesie scelte: con introduzione e note di Carlo Calcaterra, Torino, 1957.
- Romagnoli: Romagnoli, S., "Narratori e prosatori del Romanticismo", in Vol. VIII, Dall' Ottocento al Novecento, Storia della Letteratura Italiana, Milano, Garzanti, 1968.
- Rumor (B.z.): Rumor, S., "Bibliografia zanelliana", Poesie di Giacomo Zanella (1894), II, pp. 289-393.
- Rumor (1928): Rumor, S., Giacomo Zanella nel pensiero dei critici contemporanei, Vicenza, 1928.
- Salinari: Salinari, G., "Giosuè Carducci", in Vol. VIII, Dall' Ottocento al Novecento, Storia della Letteratura Italiana, Milano, Garzanti, 1968.
- Scritti vari: Zanella G., Scritti vari, Firenze, 1877.
- Sticco: Sticco, M., La poesia religiosa del Risorgimento, terza edizione riveduta, Milano, 1961.
- Wilkins: Wilkins, E.H., A History of Italian Literature, Harvard University Press, 1968.
- Zardo: Zardo, A., Giacomo Zanella nella vita e nelle opere, Firenze, 1905.



PREFACE

Before explaining the critical methodology and the layout of this thesis, it is essential to define its aim and limits, as well as giving the reasons for having undertaken it.

This work is concerned with a critical examination of Zanella's original Italian poetry,<sup>1</sup> in its historical context.

Sebastiano Rumor<sup>2</sup> gives a virtually complete list of Zanella's poems. The present writer was able to obtain copies of all but three,<sup>3</sup> which the Biblioteca Civica Bertoliana of Vicenza was unable to trace.

Elizabeth Greenwood<sup>4</sup> refers to seventeen other original compositions not mentioned by Rumor. — six were unpublished and not seen by her; the present writer was able to obtain copies of five<sup>5</sup> of the others.

It was decided to study the texts of Zanella's Italian poems in their latest or final form. The most important single "source" was, therefore, the latest "complete" edition of his verses, Poesie di Giacomo Zanella: prima edizione completa con un saggio sul poeta di Arturo Graf, Firenze, Le Monnier, 1928, which, as is explained in the "Avvertenza" (pp.V-VII), includes all the poems "che nell'85 lo Zanella ... comprese nell'ultima edizione da lui curata ...", as well as the following: Il Piccolo Calabrese 1871; Astichello 1880-1887; the odes, L'evoluzione 1886 and A Leone XIII 1887; Carmen alcaicum 1884; and most of the "poesie ... delle edizioni precedenti non comprese nella quarta" — namely, the 1885 edition referred to above.

The works contained in this 1928 edition were found to constitute, in effect, the best of Zanella's poems and they are examined in detail in Chapters 3-6 of this thesis.<sup>6</sup>

1. His many translations and his Latin compositions were considered beyond the scope of this present study. The exceptions to this rule include the Latin poem, Carmen alcaicum (1884), because of its intimate connection with the sonnets of Astichello; the following poems of 1863: Amore immortale (Imitato dallo spagnuolo di A. Trueba), L'adolescente (Imitato dallo stesso), and La suocera al genero (Imitato dall'inglese); and Psiche (1847), originally a free translation of a Latin elegy by Carlo Bologna. These last four compositions were all free translations which Zanella then modified so much that he included them amongst his original poetry.
2. Cfr. Rumor (B.g.), pp. 316-370.
3. Ibid., pp. 338, 341, 357 — 220 (94) Poesia di ringraziamento. Canto; 231 (105) La vigilia delle nozze. Sonetti tre; 303 (177) Felicissime nozze Bevilacqua Mastini-Dalla Vecchia. Pensiero, (as numbered and listed by Rumor).
4. Greenwood. p. 342, note (3).
5. Cfr. Bibliography, p. 335, Section (1), (B).
6. Unless otherwise stated, all quotations from Zanella's poetry will be taken from this 1928 edition — Poesie (1928).

The remainder of his poetic production was found to consist predominantly of inferior, occasional poems — such as, for the ordination of a priest, for a wedding, or the building of a bridge — most of which he never included in the main editions of his verses.<sup>7</sup>

There are three main reasons for undertaking this research. The first and most important being that the writer hopes it will fill a lacuna in studies on Zanella. Although there have been several detailed accounts of Zanella's life, the many studies of his works have tended to be limited in scope and to concentrate on a particular, specialised aspect. Despite the excellence of many of these previous criticisms, they have, by their very nature, been more-or-less one-sided and unbalanced. Secondly, it is hoped that this thesis will make a useful contribution to the study of Giacomo Zanella's poetry, by providing an overall, comprehensive view of it, through a resolution of the strikingly contradictory views of previous critical studies. Lastly, the writer feels that it is very important to evaluate Zanella's poetry in its historical context.

Pasquazi has very aptly summarised the basic outlines of previous criticism, as follows:

Volendo fare ... la storia delle opinioni critiche sullo Zanella dal 1868 (nacque allora, con una presentazione d'Isidoro Del Lungo sulla Nuova Antologia, la bibliografia zanelliana), sarebbe agevole rilevare come la critica si sia venuta polarizzando verso due principali tendenze, — l'una positiva, per così dire, cioè di consenso pieno o con tenui riserve, e l'altra negativa, talora con valore persino di stroncatura —, che si riconducono rispettivamente alle posizioni iniziali del Lampertico e dell'Imbriani, assumendo rispetto a queste una funzione apodittica più che esegetica.<sup>8</sup>

One is almost tempted to suggest that so many critics have tended to judge Zanella's poetry in terms of what he had to say, rather than how effectively he was able to convey it. Thus, for example, we find that " ... il Manzoni a chi gli ebbe a dire d'aver letto de' versi 'assai belli' dello Zanella, rispondesse che 'i versi dello Zanella son belli tutti'",<sup>9</sup> while, as will emerge in the course of the thesis, Petronio's strictures are couched in unduly emotive terms.

Ferdinando Neri suggests that Zanella seemed to draw upon himself hostile attacks because he was a priest. However he goes on to add, "Però, non credo che tutto si spieghi per questa via; anche il Parini era stato un abate, e ciò non ebbe peso nei giudizi sulla sua poesia:

7. Cfr. Rumor (B.z.), pp. 316-370, and Greenwood, pp. 307-353, for full information on the dating and publication of Zanella's poetry.

8. Pasquazi (1953), p. 3.

9. Poesie (1928), p. v.

e lo Zanella non è meno italiano, nè meno 'umano' del Parini".<sup>10</sup>

On the other hand one could almost say that Parini was "less" of a priest than Zanella:

Il Parini (qui si fa questione di spiritualità, non d'arte) era sacerdote per le circostanze e poeta per vocazione; lo Zanella è sacerdote e poeta per vocazione; ma il sacerdote non abbandona mai il poeta a se stesso, quindi tutta la sua poesia s'ispira alla fede ... 11

Apart from the "positive" and "negative" trends in previous criticism, one could also identify an intermediate, balanced and objective current, including, for example, Momigliano, Pasquazi, Baldacci and Cusatelli.

While Baldacci<sup>12</sup> has emphasized the absence of a balanced, overall assessment of Zanella's poetry, Pasquazi has shown the persistence of certain "formule generiche"—" ... parnassianesimo zanelliano ... didascalismo e ... freddezza riflessiva ... pessimismo e ... frammentarietà ..."<sup>13</sup> which, he considers, are worthy of a re-evaluation. Although Cusatelli does state that "La posizione assunta da Giacomo Zanella nell'evoluzione della poesia ottocentesca è tutt'altro che marginale ..."<sup>14</sup>, he does not develop this point sufficiently. As far as the present writer is concerned, this is the most glaring omission of previous criticism. In other words, not only Zanella's position in his historical and literary context, but also his consequent importance in the mainstream of nineteenth-century Italian poetry, would seem to merit a reappraisal.

The critical methodology adopted was primarily inspired by that suggested by W. Binni in Poetica, critica e storia letteraria, Bari, Laterza, 1963. His utilises the concept of poetica as an instrument to probe the poet's inner world whilst keeping a balanced perspective with regard to the historical background, the artist's works and stylistic features and the contributions of previous critical studies.

Although an examination of Zanella's poetica is an important aspect of this thesis, there is an essential difference in approach from that advocated by Binni. Here, poetica—"la concezione della poesia propria di un poeta"—is considered in terms of a narrower and, therefore, more easily-definable concept than Binni's particular view of it. This enabled the writer to examine Zanella's poetica, as an easily-definable entity,

10. Neri, p. 129.

11. Sticco, p. 307.

12. Baldacci, p. 692.

13. Pasquazi (1961), p. 2805.

14. Cusatelli, p. 559.

in all its ramifications and evolution. Having done so, it was then possible to analyse critically Zanella's own poetry against the backcloth of his poetica.

Since Zanella's life has already been exhaustively dealt with on several occasions,<sup>15</sup> Chapter 1 provides a brief summary of the most important features of his biography. After a detailed examination of Zanella's Poetica in Chapter 2, the heart of the thesis, Chapters 3-6, provides a critical study of his Italian poetry, within the confines of four broad themes—for example, Chapter 3 "The Individual" examines those poems dealing with the life of the individual from childhood to death. These four chapters, 3-6,<sup>16</sup> are subdivided thematically and within each subheading the poems are analysed critically in chronological order. This approach affords ample opportunity to determine the degree of development in Zanella's poetic output, whilst showing the wide range of themes in his poetry, as well as viewing it in terms of his poetica. The final chapter draws together the various "strands" and evaluates Zanella's position as a poet within his historical context.

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15. E.g. Greenwood and Lampertico (Ricordi).

16. While each of these four chapters is preceded by a schematic summary (giving the page numbers of the subheadings and their relevant compositions), individual poems can be found directly from the Index.



CHAPTER (1) BIOGRAPHY

The following is a brief summary of some of the most important events and dates in Zanella's life. It will serve not merely as a useful background, but also to highlight those aspects of Zanella's biography which have a particular bearing on his poetry.

Giacomo Zanella, poet, priest, university professor, patriot and socialist, was born in Chiampo, Vicenza, in the Veneto in 1820.

He spent a very happy childhood, as recounted in the poem Domenico o le memorie della fanciullezza 1871, particularly up to the age of nine when his father took him to Vicenza, where he studied in the Ginnasio comunale—two years later "... era entrato come alunno convittore"<sup>1</sup>— and subsequently in the Seminario vescovile. Its liberal climate had an important influence on his literary and patriotic views.<sup>2</sup> He remained in the seminary as a teacher until 1853. At the age of twenty-three, he was ordained as a priest and four years later obtained a degree in philosophy from the University of Padova.

In 1850, when he thought his mother was going to die, Zanella went through a "three-months" crisis.<sup>3</sup> Two years later his father died. Because of his patriotic views, Zanella was suspect to the Austrian authorities—" ... fu costretto a distruggere alcune poesie d'ispirazione patriottica, nel corso di una perquisizione che la polizia austriaca eseguì nella sua stanza in seminario"<sup>4</sup> (cf. Voci secrete)— and to avoid causing trouble for others, he left his teaching post in 1853. During the following years he was even prohibited from giving private lessons. He was later able to resume teaching in Venice, Vicenza and Padova, where, in 1863, he was made "... preside del liceo".<sup>5</sup> In 1864 he wrote his best poem, Sopra una conchiglia fossile nel mio studio, as well as La Veglia, considered to be amongst his best works. The following year, when his mother almost died, Zanella expressed his great love for her in the poem A mia madre. When Venice and the "Provincie Venete" were annexed to the Kingdom of Italy in 1866, Zanella was called to the Chair of Italian at Padova University. Two years later he published the first edition of his poems and translations (Versi: prima edizione, Firenze, Barbera), to be followed by a second edition in the same year.

1. Pasquazi (1961), p. 2765.

2. Cf. Ch. 2, pp. 12-13, regarding the important influence of the seminary.

3. Cf. Poesie (1894), Vol. 1, p. XIV.

4. Pasquazi (1961), p. 2767.

5. Ibid., p. 2769.

After his mother's death in 1872, Zanella went through a terrible "three-winters'" crisis<sup>6</sup> during which he wrote no poetry. In 1875, after he had begun to recover from this long ordeal, he asked to leave his post and retire.

At last in 1878 he built himself a small villa by the river Astichello and lived the quiet, peaceful existence he had always dreamed of and had foreshadowed in the youthful sonnets of Passeggio solitario. For the remainder of his life, he was closely involved with the direction of the Collegio delle Dame Inglesi and continued to do translations and publish his work.<sup>7</sup>

But this last period of his life was dominated by the 91 sonnets of the Astichello collection, composed between 1880-1887 and ranking amongst his best works. They are like a microcosm of his poetic output and recapitulate most of its themes and stages of stylistic evolution. He died at Cavazale, Vicenza, in 1888.

There are several interesting conclusions about Zanella's life which emerge. Undoubtedly, and of course not surprisingly, his poetry was influenced by his life. Thus childhood memories, his love for his parents, friends, pupils and students, recur throughout his poems. His love for his mother and his faith were closely bound up. In fact, from his religious values and his close-knit family life sprang his appreciation of love, marriage, the family unit and friendship, as well as the recurring themes of death, the immortality of the soul and reunion with his loved ones in the afterlife.

It is noteworthy, however, that he dealt with his own state of mind to a relatively limited extent—in comparison with an "introspective" poet such as Leopardi—devoting a great deal of attention to a very wide range of "external", contemporary subjects not directly connected with, or traceable to, his life, which was relatively uneventful, despite the personal tragedies and misfortunes which punctuated it. This is all the more surprising when one bears in mind that his life—translator,<sup>8</sup> critic, poet, university professor, and of course, priest—was essentially restricted to two main spheres, the clerical and the academic.

6. Poesie (1894), Vol. 1, p. XIV—Lampertico has shown the link between the "three-months'" crisis of 1850 and the "three-winters'" depression of 1872-1875.

7. 1877: Poesie (3<sup>a</sup>. ed. rifatta ed accresciuta), Firenze; 1878: Nuove Poesie, Venezia; 1884: Astichello ed altre poesie, Milano; 1885: Poesie (4<sup>a</sup>. ed.), Firenze; as well as his most important prose works (cf. Bibliography, p. 335, Section (1), (D)).

8. The extent of Zanella's impressive culture may be gauged from his many translations (e.g. from Latin, Greek, English, French and German) and his interest in foreign literature, particularly English.

CHAPTER (2): POETICA

The most important contribution to date to an understanding of Zanella's poetica is the excellent study by Silvio Pasquazi.<sup>1</sup> There are, however, several features which he mentions but does not fully develop, while the present writer reached very different findings from some of Pasquazi's fundamental conclusions. The evidence for the writer's standpoint, gleaned from Zanella's three main prose works<sup>2</sup> and his poetry,<sup>3</sup> will be considered in detail after a brief review of the main points of Pasquazi's study.

There are four main conclusions put forward by Pasquazi. Firstly, he shows how Zanella, starting from a position which was rigidly Classical or "classicistica", moved towards an ever-greater appreciation of Pre-Romanticism.<sup>4</sup> He adds that this development was substantially unaffected by the "oscillazioni" and "incertezze" which characterised it. Although he highlights the fundamental importance of Chénier's "formula" for Zanella, he also maintains "... mai lo Zanella intese scindere il contenuto dal 'contenente'".<sup>5</sup>

Whilst agreeing with the first three conclusions, although feeling that they had not been sufficiently developed, the writer found himself at complete variance with the fourth, the relationship between style and content, which is of central importance to Zanella's poetica.

Thus, in considering the first of the above conclusions, one finds that Pasquazi very lucidly demonstrates that Zanella's poetica evolved from Classicism towards Pre-Romanticism.

He stresses the important influence on Zanella of his grounding in the Ancient Classics and his introduction to Italian writers—Mamiani, Leopardi, Alfieri, Parini, Monti, Foscolo and Manzoni—through his education

1. Pasquazi (1961), particularly pp. 2771-2779.

2. Scritti vari, Paralleli letterari, and Della Lett. italiana— (cf. List of Abbreviations).

3. Zanella's poetry (as a source of information for an understanding of Zanella's poetica) was considered primarily from the point of view of Zanella's "explicit" statements about poetry (as enunciated, for example, in Ad Elena e Vittoria Aganoor, 1876), rather than with regard to his "implicit" views as put into practice in his own verses.

4. The term, "Pre-Romanticism", as applied in this thesis and particularly in this chapter, will be taken to refer to a standard definition: "... corrente di gusto e di cultura che, alla fine del secolo XVIII, preannunciò alcuni caratteri costitutivi del romanticismo, come la rivolta contro il classicismo e il razionalismo illuministico, il culto del sentimento, l'esaltazione della natura ... " ("Preromanticismo", Enciclopedia Garzanti della Letteratura, 1972, p.603).

5. Pasquazi (1961), p. 2777.



at Vicenza, first in the "ginnasio comunale" and then in the "seminario vescovile".<sup>6</sup> In other words, it was within the Classical base and framework of Zanella's education, that his introduction to Italian writers laid the seeds for his subsequent appreciation of Pre-Romanticism. Pasquazi goes on to emphasize the importance of the change in Zanella's attitude to Pindemonte's poetry after a ten-year interval, 1840-1850: "Questa scoperta del Pindemonte da parte dello Zanella trentenne segna un punto di arrivo nella storia della sua formazione".<sup>7</sup> He adds that Zanella's views on the importance of a Classical style seem to have remained unaltered, whilst, "nel giudizio critico acquista ora maggior rilievo il sentimento, il cuore," and,

nel modo di sentire la poesia, avvertendo in essa la presenza vivamente umana dell'autore, lo Zanella rivelava sempre più chiaramente un'adesione alle tendenze romantiche.<sup>8</sup>

Pasquazi himself has here touched upon the very important distinction between style and content—Zanella's continued advocacy of a Classical style coupled with an ever-greater appreciation of Romanticism, at a thematic level—which is at the heart of Zanella's poetica. Strangely enough, he not only does not pursue this vital point but actually takes an opposite view (cf. pp.19, 20 ).

Whilst finding the evolution of Zanella's poetica towards Pre-Romanticism perfectly valid, the present writer saw it as only half the true picture. In other words, Zanella's poetica developed well beyond Pre-Romanticism, penetrating deeply into the heartlands of Romanticism itself. Before providing the evidence to support this view, it would be appropriate at this juncture to define the way in which the term, "Romanticism", is being used here.

For the purposes of this thesis, "Romanticism", in an Italian context, is taken to mean the Catholic, Liberal current,<sup>9</sup> or mainstream, of nineteenth-century Italian Romanticism, as exemplified by the consensus of views held by Manzoni and the contributors to Il Conciliatore, including Pellico, Di Breme, Borsieri and Berchet.

Several of its most distinctive features are due to its link with the past. De Sanctis, in stressing the restrained, moderate, "Classical" nature of Italian Romanticism, when compared with the excesses of its

6. Ibid., p. 2765.

7. Ibid., p. 2768.

8. Ibid., p. 2768.

9. Binni, W. and R. Scrivano, Introduzione ai problemi critici della letteratura italiana, Firenze, 1967, p. 266—the identification of a "scuola cattolico-liberale", headed by Manzoni, which had already been put forward by Mazzini, was taken up by De Sanctis.

French and German counterparts, pointed to the fact that it was the continuation and development of the "nuova letteratura sorta col Parini".<sup>10</sup>

More recent critics have similarly indicated that one of the most original characteristics of Italian Romanticism was its attempt to reconcile the new system with Classical forms:

... "un mondo nuovo che continua la tradizione classica", scrisse il Petrini suggestionato dal De Lollis (e la formula verrà ripresa e sviluppata ai nostri giorni dal Bosco)...<sup>11</sup>

In fact, the mainstream of Italian Romanticism was, in many ways, derived from the eighteenth-century Lombard Enlightenment, as exemplified by Parini. For example, in taking up the concept of literature as a reflection of society, the Italian Romantics aimed at poetry which would be interesting, practical, concrete and inspired by contemporary reality. Thus they admired Parini as a "poeta civile" for having dealt with contemporary events and characters, as well as the customs and prejudices of the society in which he lived.

Similarly, the contributors to Il Conciliatore explicitly declared that they wished to continue the work of Il Caffè, the mouth-piece of the Lombard Enlightenment. Other features of the latter, taken up and developed by the Romantics, included: the polemic against the abuse of mythological allusions and the tyranny of the three Unities, as well as the need for a writer to free himself from the shackles of imitating traditional models by adopting a simpler and more comprehensible language, not that imposed by accademici and puristi. Pietro Verri, the editor of Il Caffè, had proclaimed "Cose, non parole".<sup>12</sup>

As well as the "passive" concept of literature as a reflection of society, the Romantics adopted and developed the more "active" view of literature as a means of educating and civilising society and influencing events (patriotism, socialism).

The "Romantic" nature of Zanella's poetica and poetry, within the context of the above terms of reference, will, of course, be illustrated in detail. At this stage it is sufficient to point out that Zanella's socialism, for example, was in the Christian, moralising tradition of Parini and Manzoni.

The second of Pasquazi's conclusions concerned the "oscillazioni" and "incertezze", which characterised the development of Zanella's poetica without substantially affecting it. Pasquazi had not explicitly

10. Ibid., p. 266.

11. G. Orioli, "Teorici e critici romantici" in Vol. VII, L'Ottocento, Storia della Letteratura Italiana, Milano, Garzanti, 1969, p. 465.

12. Ibid., p. 464, note (2).

identified these uncertainties and waverings, which the present writer found to include — the dialectic concerning a dichotomy between style and content, and an appreciation of the organic unity of a literary composition; objections to "Realism" and "realistic" literature on moral and artistic grounds; artistic inspiration and its relationship with religion (morality) and aesthetic theories; mythological allusions and the ancient rhetoric; the importance and imitation of the Classics; and Nature and Art.

From a detailed consideration of the above, the following points will emerge more clearly: Zanella's ever-greater adhesion to Romanticism, at least as far as "content" was concerned; his virtually constant advocacy of a Classical style; and what exactly he meant by this, as well as the vital rôle in Zanella's poetica of Chénier's "formula" and its very important implicit distinction between style and content.

The latter is probably the most fundamental of the "oscillazioni" and "incertezze", as can be gauged from the fact that the corner-stone of Zanella's poetica is to be found in his appreciation of Chénier's famous dictum:

Chénier era adoratore dei Greci, ed è suo il verso famoso, che dovrebbe essere il canone de' giovani poeti; Sur des penses nouveaux faisons des vers antiques.<sup>13</sup>

Chénier's viewpoint has been summarised as follows: "Retour aux modèles grecs.—Mise en oeuvre de sujets nouveaux (découvertes scientifiques)".<sup>14</sup> In essence this means a combination of "Classical" style and "Modern" content. The impact of Chénier's "formula" constantly recurs in Zanella's writings. Thus he insists upon the need for originality in content, but not in style:

Credo...che, come sono nuovi i tempi, così nuova deve essere la poesia; ma come nuova? Nuova non già nella forma, ma nuova nella sostanza...nuova nel "contenuto", non nel "contenente".<sup>15</sup>

He goes on to explain: "Il fonditore...Fatta la forma, vi getta il metallo, e l'opera riesce quale egli la volle".<sup>16</sup>

Zanella then illustrates this by citing Horace and Parini as poets who have done this in practice:

Esaminate ... un'ode di Orazio e del Parini: osservate quanta copia e varietà di pensieri sieno chiusi in quelle brevissime strofe; formatevi in mente quel tipo, quel vaso; attingete quindi dal vostro cuore o dalla natura che vi circonda, la materia, e gettatela; riuscirà cosa nuova per l'idea, antica per la veste; sarà licor nuovo, squisito, propinato in una tazza di Benvenuto Cellini.<sup>17</sup>

13. Della lett. italiana, p. 14.

14. G. De Plinval, Histoire de la littérature française, Paris, 1969, p.311.

15. Scritti vari, pp. 358, 359.

16. Ibid., p.359.

17. Ibid., p.359.



This same combination re-emerges in the form of the following statements:

Se v'ha cosa libera al mondo è l'arte ... quanto più nuova, tanto più bella, con semplice decorazione nelle parti e con perfetta armonia nell'intero ... 18

Io la mia estetica l'ho trovata da un pezzonel vecchio Omero ... Il cantore sia libero; la materia che prende a trattare sia possibilmente nuova e resa amabile dalla bellezza del verso. Ecco il canone supremo, immortale, dell'arte.<sup>19</sup>

Since, as will be shown later, beauty, simplicity and harmony were, as far as Zanella was concerned, paramount in the Ancient Classics, these two quotations constitute, in effect, a restatement of Chénier's "formula": a "Classical" style (beauty, simplicity and harmony) and a "new" content.

It is also interesting to note how often Zanella assessed other writers in terms of Chénier's dictum, as can be seen from his comments on Vincenzo Monti,

la sua guardaroba poetica era in Omero, Virgilio, Ovidio e ne' classici italiani, da' quali toglieva la splendida veste che gettava sopra pensieri né grandi né nuovi,<sup>20</sup>

or on Goethe,

... scrisse ... il Torquato Tasso, l'Egmont, l'Ifigenia, in cui al sentimento moderno ha dato la forma serena dell'arte antica,<sup>21</sup>

while the following statement gives an important insight into Zanella's view of Parini's renewal of literature,

... sopra questo fondo antico spiccano immagini di luoghi e di costumi moderni: artificio poetico, di cui il Savioli porse l'esempio al Parini ed al Foscolo, che il vecchio tronco latino rinverdirono con pensieri moderni.<sup>22</sup>

It is in fact surprising how often Zanella's critical judgement of literary figures finds expression in terms of style and content. In the following instances, he praises the former and disapproves of the latter. A typical example would be his comment on Delille, "... levigava e torniva i suoi versi con arte finissima, nascondeva la pochezza o la falsità del pensiero" ,<sup>23</sup> while his condemnation of Voltaire is wholly predictable,

... propostosi ad unico fine il plauso della moltitudine, gli convenne velare il difetto di dottrina e la malignità della intenzione con arte finissima, cioè con la grazia di uno stile rapido, festivo, scintillante d'arguzie e d'inesauribil lepore,<sup>24</sup>

as are his views on Heine,

18. Ibid., pp. 2, 3.

19. Ibid., pp. 3, 4.

20. Della lett. italiana, p. 131.

21. Ibid., p. 43.

22. Ibid., p. 119.

23. Ibid., p. 15.

24. Ibid., p. 7.

Il veleno, ch'è negli scritti di Heine, è di tanto più pernicioso quanto è più artisticamente bella la coppa in cui si propina.<sup>25</sup>

Conversely, there are many examples of Zanella's assessments of writers in whom he praises the content, but not the style. Thus he finds that the poetry of Thomson (1700-1748) would be very tiring and boring if it were not enlivened by its religious and patriotic content.<sup>26</sup> The same fundamental distinction can be seen in Zanella's comment on Tommaseo's poetry:

I suoi versi mancano di spontaneità; ma per robustezza e novità di pensiero meritano di essere conosciuti,<sup>27</sup>

and in his assessment of Pindemonte's poetry, where his admiration for the content—so much "delicatezza di sentimento" and "soave mestizia", as well as Pindemonte's "grande conoscenza del cuore umano e del costume corrente"—is coupled with criticism of the defects in Pindemonte's style.<sup>28</sup>

Yet another significant example of the way in which the dichotomy between style and content coloured Zanella's view of literature is to be found in his appreciation of the positive influence of the Canti di Ossian and foreign literature, in terms of a "new" content,

...dai poeti stranieri noi possiamo apprendere assai; una più esatta osservazione della natura, una maggiore semplicità di espressione, una pittura più sincera della vita moderna... ,

but always within the framework of the Italian Classical tradition (a "Classical" style),

...ma ci stia sempre innanzi che siamo Italiani, che abbiamo in casa bastante ricchezza di vesti poetiche da non discendere vergognosamente a mendicare le altrui.<sup>29</sup>

But perhaps Zanella's incredibly facile and simplistic comment on the Divine Comedy, in terms of style and content,

Che se nelle leggende dei tempi e nella Bibbia non gli fu difficile di trovare la materia e l'orditura della Divina Commedia; agli Autori latini egli è tenuto del pregio principalissimo del Poema suo ... lo stile,<sup>30</sup>

is one of the clearest demonstrations of how deeply ingrained this dichotomy was in the poetica of this poet, critic, literary historian and university professor.

It must be admitted, however, that Zanella did on occasion display an appreciation of the organic unity of a literary composition.

Thus he attacks the assessment of Leopardi by the German critic, Brandes, as being too superficial: "si arresta sulla parte esterna, sul

25. Ibid., p. 49.

26. Ibid., pp. 27, 28.

27. Ibid., p. 185.

28. Pasquazi (1961), p. 2768.

29. Scritti varii, p. 356.

30. Ibid., p. 234.



metro, sulle rime e sale di rado a contemplare quella forma organica ch'è l'estrema perfezione dell'arte ...".<sup>31</sup>

Elsewhere he criticises German writers for not fully realizing the organic unity of style and content: "In niun tempo il dissidio fra il pensiero e la forma fu tanto grave, quanto nel nostro; nella Germania specialmente ...".<sup>32</sup> In their eagerness to present "il nudo vero" they do not realize that without giving due consideration to style, their ideas lose their clarity and force:

La Staël nell'Allemagna accusa la prosa tedesca di negligenza ... Che stile e pensiero siano una cosa è dottrina poco accetta fra loro: vogliono il nudo vero, ma non considerano che senza lo stile il vero stesso perde della sua chiarezza e della sua forza.<sup>33</sup>

In fact, even the German philosophers, Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel and Schopenhauer, write in such a way that "qualche idea luminosa è avvolta d'impenetrabili tenebre".<sup>34</sup>

By contrast, Voltaire, Buffon, Montesquieu and Rousseau realized that without "la bellezza della forma" their ideas would not have had the desired effect.<sup>35</sup>

For Zanella, an appreciation of the organic unity of a literary composition, namely, the unity and interdependence of content and style, meant that, of necessity, the style should be appropriate to the content in question.

Thus, Zanella criticises Il Caffè: "... professa di cercar cose e non parole, come se la parola non fosse l'essenza della cosa...",<sup>36</sup> as well as Cesarotti,

Al Cesarotti ... mancava quella finezza di gusto, che tra le mille forme, di cui può vestirsi un pensiero, sceglie la più acconcia al caso.<sup>37</sup>

Similarly, Zanella finds that in Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire the latter does not alter his style to suit the content he is dealing with, in contrast to Livy.<sup>38</sup>

However, Zanella does praise Adam Smith, Ferdinando Galiani (1728-1787), Fontenelle and Cesare Balbo for having adopted an appropriate style for the subjects they were dealing with.<sup>39</sup>

Possibly the strongest evidence of Zanella's appreciation of the unity of style and content is to be found in La poetica nella "Divina Commedia",<sup>40</sup> where he quotes from the Inferno:

31. Della lett. italiana, p.194.

32. Scritti vari, p.11.

33. Della lett. italiana, p.51.

34. Ibid., p.51.

35. Ibid., p.6.

36. Ibid., p.72.

37. Ibid., p.96.

38. Ibid., p.30.

39. Ibid., pp.31,32;p.77;p.6;p.177.

40. Scritti vari, p.21.

Ma quelle Donne ajutino il mio verso,  
 Ch'ajutâro Anfione a chiuder Tebe,  
 Sì che dal fatto il dir non sia diverso, (*Inf.*,XXXII),

in which Dante "domanda alle Muse che il suo dire non sia diverso dal fatto". In fact, according to Zanella: "Ogni vero poeta ha mantenuta questa conformità fra la cosa e la parola"; and he also refers to: "[a] l'armonia che dee correre fra il pensiero e il vocabolo", as well as the fact that: "... lo scrittore deve variare la struttura de' periodi secondo le materie che tratta, ed il fine che si propone".<sup>41</sup>

This dialectic in Zanella's *poetica*, concerning the distinction between style and content, reflects the widespread interest which this subject aroused in the nineteenth century.

As Croce has pointed out, "... content and form must be clearly distinguished in art, but must not be separately qualified as artistic ... that is, their unity, understood not as an abstract, dead unity, but as concrete and living, which is that of the synthesis a priori ...".<sup>42</sup>

It is, therefore, understandable that Zanella, as a literary critic and historian, when assessing other writers and poets, should, for the sake of convenience, utilise the distinction between style and content, whilst, at the same time, as has been shown, being aware of the organic unity of a literary composition. This is further emphasized in the following quotation:

Colla educazione del cuore avremo la forza dell'espressione ed il tono del colorito: avremo la stessa unità di composizione; poichè il cuore non esita, ma crea d'un getto il pensiero e la veste, cioè toglie dalla natura nè più nè meno di quanto basti a significare il pensiero ...<sup>43</sup>

Pasquazi, in fact, has gone so far as to state categorically:

... mai lo Zanella intese scindere il contenuto dal "contenente". Quella "suprema bellezza, ch'è termine supremo dell'arte, — scrisse il poeta —, deriva dalla concordia del possesso dell'idea e dallo studio della natura, ossia del mezzo artistico".<sup>44</sup>

However, taking into account all the available evidence, one must conclude that Zanella did in fact view poetry in terms of the dichotomy between style and content.

Pasquazi himself has referred to Zanella's virtually constant advocacy of a Classical style coupled with an ever-greater appreciation of Pre-Romantic themes.<sup>45</sup> This combination, as will be shown, is an almost constant feature of Zanella's *poetica* and is very closely linked with his great

41. *Ibid.*, pp.22-24.

42. B. Croce, *The Essence of Aesthetic*, translated by Douglas Ainslie, London, 1921, p.39.

43. *Scritti vari*, pp.252,253.

44. *Pasquazi (1961)*, p.2777.

45. Cf. pp. 12,13.

adherence to Chénier's "formula", in which the distinction between style and content is implicit, and which Pasquazi has stressed as being very important to the poet:

Direi che programma preciso dello Zanella fu rinverdire quell'ideale che il Pindemonte aveva espresso nei noti versi al Foscolo, ripetendo la formula dello Chénier ...<sup>46</sup>

In view of this, it is all the more surprising that Pasquazi should claim that Zanella never intended to "split" style and content. Apart from the foregoing, the sheer weight of evidence, a selection of which was given earlier, shows that Zanella saw poetry precisely in terms of the distinction between style and content. (The importance of this distinction in Zanella's own poetry itself will be considered in the following chapters).

Of the other "oscillazioni" and "incertezze" in the development of Zanella's poetica, there are two—his objections to "realistic" literature on moral and artistic grounds, and his view of the relationship between artistic inspiration and religion (morality)—which are closely related. At the simplest level, they could be summarised and restated in terms of Zanella's attitude to Art and Religion. Here in fact is the key to the whole question. It is as if one were confronted by the views of two separate figures, "Zanella the poet" (literary critic and historian) and "Zanella the priest" (and sincere, committed Christian). Thus one finds that the "former" views artistic inspiration in terms of "l'arte per l'arte" and expresses his objections to "realistic" literature on artistic grounds, while the "latter" considers them in terms of religious and moral values.

Considering, first of all, artistic inspiration in terms of "l'arte per l'arte" one finds that Zanella defends this formula and explains his own view of it,

Quando io dico "l'arte per l'arte", non intendo di dire la forma per la forma, il mezzo pel mezzo come intendono che si dica i nemici di questa formola; io intendo di dire, che l'arte deve unicamente mirare all'arte, cioè alla espressione del bello; se poi da questa espressione del bello nasce il conseguimento di qualche nobile fine, tanto meglio; sarà doppia la gloria e doppio il trionfo dell'arte.<sup>47</sup>

Zanella goes on to define the limits of the artist's world,

"L'arte per l'arte", vuol dire che l'artista non esca dal suo mondo: vuol dire che non s'impacci di filosofia, di politica, di storia, se non quanto è richiesto dalla ragione dell'arte; e così facendo, farà talvolta opera migliore, che non fanno i filosofi, i politici, gli storici nelle loro attribuzioni.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>46</sup>. Pasquazi (1961), pp. 2778, 2779.

<sup>47</sup>. Scritti vari, p. 43.

<sup>48</sup>. Ibid., p. 43.



Zanella then re-emphasizes that the artist, although he must obviously be affected by the age in which he lives, must always view art as an end, not as a means:

Non è per questo ch'io voglia staccare l'artista dalla società e dal suo tempo. L'artista è uomo: e come uomo deve sentire ed esternare ne' suoi lavori le costumanze e le opinioni del suo secolo, sia che le accolga, sia che le respinga; ma l'arte deve essere sempre fine, non mezzo.<sup>49</sup>

Once again, he states what this end should be: "... [dal] la semplice manifestazione del bello, ch'è fine dell'arte".<sup>50</sup> But, for Zanella, beauty, spirituality and goodness are all intertwined:

La bella forma poi è sempre qualche cosa di puro, di armonico, di spirituale che partorisce per sè stessa i buoni pensieri; è come un vaso del Cellini, che, ancorchè vuoto, è sempre prezioso. Dico vuoto per la similitudine perchè, propriamente parlando, la parola non è mai vuota.<sup>51</sup>

It is understandable, therefore, that Zanella should object, on artistic grounds, to didactic poems. This can be seen from his appreciation of Mascheroni's Invito a Lesbia Cidonia,

Il poema didascalico è senza movimento, "motu cavet"; manca così del primo elemento della vera poesia. Non è così nell'Invito ... non assisto ad una lezione, come avviene ne' poemi didascalici; ma passeggio, contemplo e ragiono colla gentile visitatrice, dalla quale con dispiacere mi stacco sulla soglia.<sup>52</sup>

Inevitably, however, Zanella's strong, moralising standpoint could not for long remain extraneous to any subject. Thus, in his assessment of Byron and Shelley there is an interesting clash between his obvious appreciation of the English poets' undoubted artistic and stylistic excellence, and his moral objections to the content of some of their poetry.<sup>53</sup>

Before examining the way in which artistic and moral considerations affected Zanella's objections to "realistic" literature, it should be borne in mind that Zanella was not implacably opposed to realism in literature, per se, and, in fact, he appreciated, for example, the historical realism of Walter Scott and Manzoni. Moreover, he agreed with Chateaubriand that Manzoni surpassed Scott, because of the Italian's closer link with reality:

Lo Scozzese sorprende i lettori colle splendide fantasie di strani avvenimenti, l'Italiano cerca la bellezza nelle scene della vita comune: alla storia di due contadini intreccia la storia di tutto quel secolo con naturalezza e semplicità di racconto inarrivabili.<sup>54</sup>

Zanella also showed regard for Dickens,

49. Ibid., p.44.

50. Ibid., p.44.

51. Ibid., p.44.

52. Della lett. Italiana, p.120.

53. Ibid., pp.35,36.

54. Ibid., p.167.

Il più grande romanziere moderno è ... Dickens ... Bulwer, Thackeray, Trollope, Elliot, Kingsley superano Dickens nell'intreccio de' fatti e nella pittura del vivere signorile; Dickens si compiace di descrivere schiettamente e nudamente la vita giornaliera de' bassi quartieri di Londra ... ma sotto le strane sembianze Dickens non manca di rivelare la bellezza morale più frequente nel popolo che altrove.<sup>55</sup>

In particular, Zanella admired the balance in Dickens: "... ma tratti di umanità, di gentilezza e di eroismo abbondano in ogni libro che scrisse."<sup>56</sup>

Just as Zanella's regard for Dickens hinged upon the fact that in the latter's presentation of the material squalor and deprivation of the poor, he had also shown their humanity, goodness and generosity—in other words, the irrepressible human spirit emerging in the midst of all the ugliness and brutality of the social evils of the age—Zanella's main objection to "realistic" literature, on artistic grounds, in particular that of French Naturalism and its antecedents, was its lack of balance, its complete and utter one-sidedness in presenting only the ugly and squalid aspects of life.

This will emerge more clearly from an examination of Zanella's attitude to French Naturalism and its antecedents. He begins by considering the dispute between Classicism and Realism:

La scuola classica che, confessiamolo, nella sua cieca ostinazione si privava di molte bellezze, che i tempi nuovi e le scoperte della scienza le offrivano: la scuola classica fedele alle tradizioni greche e latine sosteneva che il "bello" è l'unico oggetto e l'unico fine dell'arte; che il "brutto" non è che la limitazione del bello; e che non può entrare nei domini dell'arte, che come ombra che mette in maggior rilievo la luce. <sup>57</sup>

But, in 1827, the Preface to Victor Hugo's Cromwell appeared:

Victor Hugo trasportato dal calore della disputa, ed irritato dall'acrimonia degli avversarii, esagerò l'importanza di questo negativo elemento: proclamò la necessità del grottesco: mise il brutto a fronte del bello: fuse insieme i due opposti principii ... <sup>58</sup>

Zanella goes on to add:

Era naturale che gli artisti seguaci di questa dottrina, visto come il bello ed il brutto avessero lo stesso valore, si volgessero ad abbracciare il reale che ambedue li contiene. Ma per essere una novità, il brutto fu cercato con più amore ... tutto ciò che la vita reale ha di più turpe e di più doloroso, venne studiato e raccolto, come preziosa materia per i lavori dell'arte.<sup>59</sup>

Zanella points out that Victor Hugo himself did not always put his own

55. Ibid., p.39.

56. Ibid., p.39.

57. Scritti varii, p.31.

58. Ibid., p.31.

59. Ibid., pp.31,32.

theories into practice, because he was guided by his "senso finissimo artistico".

In fact, as far as Pasquazi is concerned, Zanella's condemnation of "realistic" literature was more on artistic than moral grounds. He goes on to quote from Zanella's Per l'apertura di un corso di lezioni sulla letteratura nell'Università di Padova:

... ha credito oggi in Europa una scuola letteraria detta realista, perchè non altro si propone che di rendere il reale, qual ci viene offerto dal senso, e si crede di aver toccata la cima del bello, quando abbia figurato col poco che v'ha di bellezza, quanto di più sconcio e di più brutto presenti la vita ... Ma stando ai canoni più semplici e più chiari dell'arte, dov'è con questa scuola l'invenzione,<sup>60</sup> elemento primo e presso che unico in ogni opera d'arte?

However important Zanella's artistic objections to "realistic" literature may have been, his moral objections nevertheless constitute a recurring theme in his writings. Thus, despite all the efforts of "la moderna scuola de' realisti", Zanella feels confident that:

... il senso pubblico rigetterà con ribrezzo una dottrina, che degrada la natura umana, e porta la sfrontatezza e la brutalità del cinico nelle famiglie.<sup>61</sup>

The two strands, artistic and moral objections, merge in his condemnation of French Naturalism. Not only are the bounds of decency exceeded, but it is only the ugly side of life which is presented:

Proudhon nella glorificazione di Satana fece l'apoteosi della carne, e l'arte cadde in quel basso realismo di cui Zola è l'ultima e più compiuta manifestazione.<sup>62</sup>

Zanella also attacks what he sees as the same pernicious tendency in the French theatre:

... Ponsard, Ottavio Feuillet ed Emilio Augier cercano di far guerra sulla scena alla Santa Boemia, che colla Dama delle Camelie, colla Baronessa d'Ange e col Demi-monde di Dumas figlio invadeva e bruttava di fango il santuario dell'arte.<sup>63</sup>

In the last words of the above quotation ("... il santuario dell'arte") there is an indication of the quasi-religious definition and rôle which he ascribed to literature and the importance he attached to the link between artistic inspiration and religion. Thus, after having praised Chateaubriand and Madame de Staël for having regenerated European literature, Zanella strongly approves of the latter's defence of spiritual values as opposed to sensism :

Nel suo primo lavoro Della letteratura considerata ne' suoi rapporti colle istituzioni sociali combatte il gretto sensismo di Cabanis, Garat e Tracy; difende l'immortalità dell'anima, e nella legge del progresso vede la continuata manifestazione del Verbo di Dio, di cui la letteratura non è che l'espressione.<sup>64</sup>

60. Ibid., pp.198,199.

61. Ibid., p.43.

62. Della lett. italiana, p.24

63. Ibid., p.24.

64. Ibid., p.17.



Zanella himself describes literature as "l'espressione della vita di un popolo ...", having an "alto suo ufficio di educazione civile e morale della nazione".<sup>65</sup> (This is an illustration of the way in which Zanella's view of literature coincides with that of the Catholic, Liberal current of Italian Romanticism, as described earlier, in terms of the two-fold rôle of literature—"passively" reflecting the state of society, and "actively" attempting to reform and influence it).

It is therefore understandable that Zanella should lament the fact that Science holds sway and Literature seems reduced to a secondary rôle.<sup>66</sup> But, as far as he is concerned, "le lettere" were "maestre prime di civiltà nei secoli più gloriosi"; and he goes on to point out "Le scienze perfezionano soltanto alcune facoltà dell'uomo, ma le lettere abbracciano l'uomo intero ..."<sup>67</sup>

And so Zanella exalts the spiritual rôle of literature, especially in contrast with the degrading view of life presented by "realistic" literature:

Ma perchè le lettere rispondano a questo loro alto ufficio, è d'uopo rivolgerle a scopi elevati. Convieni che il popolo trovi in esse qualche cosa che lo scuota, che lo infiammi all'amore del buono e del grande, non che lo degradi col porgli innanzi i trionfi del vizio, o lo scandalo della irreligione e della bestemmia.<sup>68</sup>

Reference has already been made to Zanella's regard for Madame de Staël. In fact, he quotes the advice she gave to poets:

In tutti i libri della Staël il bello si accorda al buono: non predica la virtù, ma l'ispira. Parlando di letteratura si volge a' poeti, come ad eroi e grida loro: "siate virtuosi, siate credenti, siate liberi: rispettate ciò che v'è caro: cercate l'immortalità nell'amore e la divinità nella natura: santificate l'anima vostra come un tempio e l'angelo de' nobili pensieri non isdegherà di discendervi".<sup>69</sup>

Thus, for Zanella, there would seem to be a strong link between spirituality, religiosity, Christianity and artistic inspiration. Similarly, Zanella comments on Giuseppe de Maistre's Serate di Pietroburgo (although disapproving of many of the latter's more extreme views):

Quanta facondia, dove parla della preghiera, dei dolori del giusto, delle arti, della poesia, di tutto ciò insomma che tocca più dappresso lo spirito umano!<sup>70</sup>

In his great admiration for Manzoni—his links with Virgil, his patriotism, his great contribution to Italian literature, his seeming to epitomise Italian Romanticism at its best—Zanella sees him as a priestly figure, for whom art is like a religious vocation:

65. Ibid., p.73.

66. Scritti vari, p.344.

67. Ibid., p.345.

68. Ibid., p.345.

69. Della lett. italiana, p.18.

70. Ibid., p.19.

La parola del Manzoni sempre serena, dignitosa, benevola è  
la parola d'un antico sacerdote che compiangere e perdona, e  
sulle nostre piaghe intellettuali e morali versa il balsamo  
di sovrumane consolazioni,

and again,

Per lui l'arte fu un sacerdozio; pochi sono gli scrittori  
d'ogni nazione che abbiano egualmente giovato alla religione  
e alla patria.<sup>71</sup>

The theme of Art as a vocation is very important for Zanella:

Ha certamente l'artista le speciali sue leggi; ma se non le  
desume dal suo cuore e dalla conoscenza piena, che deve avere  
dell'umana natura; se l'ingegno divinante non gliela rive-  
la, lasci l'arte che non è umana professione, ma vocazione  
divina.<sup>72</sup>

Having considered the wide range of seemingly contradictory views expressed by Zanella with regard to artistic inspiration, in terms of "l'arte per l'arte" and religion, and his objections to "realistic" literature on artistic and moral grounds, one finds oneself forced back upon the hypothesis of the co-existence within Giacomo Zanella of "Zanella the poet" and "Zanella the Priest".

Pasquazi attaches great importance to the following lines from Passeggio solitario, in which Zanella implores the poets of Classical Antiquity to prevent him from ever causing scandal to anyone through his poetry:

Fate che il grande ardor, che mi consuma,  
Alla virtù sia sacro; e se talora  
Insultasse al pudor, pèra la piuma.

According to Pasquazi, these lines indicate "... non ... un voler porre la morale come fine della poesia, bensì un voler stabilire quei limiti oltre i quali la poesia, entrando in conflitto con la morale, si rinnegherebbe anche come poesia".<sup>73</sup> In other words, within the framework of what is morally permissible, the artist should be free to express himself in terms of the formula "l'arte per l'arte". Whilst this view is perfectly valid, it would seem to ignore the very strong moralising facet of Zanella's personality and the "positive" way in which he saw religious, moral and spiritual values as a powerful influence on literature to make it have a civilizing, educative and reforming impact on society. From his appreciation of Chateaubriand, Madame de Staël and, of course, Manzoni, one can see how Zanella's "positive" view of religious, moral and spiritual values fits in with the moderate, Catholic, Liberal current of Italian Romanticism, as defined earlier in this chapter (cf. pp. 13, 14 ).

Another of the "oscillazioni" and "incertezze", in the development of Zanella's poetica, concerns the link between artistic inspiration and aesthetic theories.

71. Ibid., p.163 and p.170.

72. Scritti vari, p.4

73. Pasquazi (1961), p.2778.



Zanella admired the way the Pre-Romantics and their successors opposed certain aspects of eighteenth-century literature: at a philosophical level they opposed sensism and favoured greater spirituality and freedom, while, at a stylistic level, they tried to eliminate the ancient rhetoric and the abuse of mythological allusions. He feels that Madame de Staël's L'Allemagne had an important impact on European literature and, in fact, subsequently,

Goethe, Schiller e Kant cominciarono la loro dittatura in Europa e misero in bando le vecchie rettoriche e la frivola scuola sensista.<sup>74</sup>

According to Zanella, the aesthetic theories put forward by Kant in his Critica del giudizio, by removing art from the theories based on the senses, restored it to its natural dignity, on account of which it only recognised the laws which God has granted to the human spirit.<sup>75</sup>

Zanella then highlights the way these aesthetic theories were put into practice in literature by Goethe and Schiller:

Spezzare per sempre il giogo delle vecchie rettoriche, gettarsi nei campi della natura e della libera immaginazione fu l'ardito pensiero de' giovani novatori, alla testa de' quali erano Goethe e Schiller.<sup>76</sup>

Zanella also shows the liberating influence of the latter and pays tribute to the literary criticism and aesthetic theories which preceded this flowering of German literature, particularly as regards the contributions of the following: Breitinger, who, by opposing the principle of imitation put forward by Gottsched, posited the source of poetic beauty "... nel nuovo e nel meraviglioso"; Baumgarten, who first used the term "aesthetics", pursued, on a wider scale, the inquiry into the nature of beauty, and applied to sculpture and painting the rules which, until then, had been applicable only to poetry; Mendelssohn, who was responsible for the famous definition which located beauty "... nella unità del vario": and Winckelmann who, from a study of ancient art, deduced that the true characteristics of pure beauty are simplicity, proportion between the parts and "la tranquillità della posa" (his doctrine informed the works of the "seconda maniera" of Goethe).<sup>77</sup>

Zanella then makes a very interesting comment:

Appare da quanto dissi, come la critica precedesse il fiorire della letteratura tedesca, che in poco tempo crebbe rigogliosa e robusta, perchè nella scienza aveva fondate le sue radici.<sup>78</sup>

However, in discussing the aesthetic theories and literary criticism which precede the flowering of German literature, Zanella was merely stating a historical fact, not stressing a causal link. For he concludes that, whilst

<sup>74</sup>. Della lett. italiana, p.18.

<sup>75</sup>. Ibid., p.43.

<sup>76</sup>. Ibid., p.43.

<sup>77</sup>. Ibid., pp.40,41.

<sup>78</sup>. Ibid., p.41.

the Germans boast of having broken the yoke of the ancient rhetoric and of having directed human thought along new paths, they have in fact systematised what the English had put into practice several centuries before. All the aesthetic theories of Kant, Lessing and Schlegel had already been put into practice instinctively by Shakespeare, while Milton, Goldsmith and Sterne anticipated Klopstock, Wieland, Goethe and all the other "creators" of the new literature.<sup>79</sup>

In fact, on several occasions, Zanella showed very clearly that he regarded the contribution of aesthetic theories to artistic inspiration and production to be at best very limited:

Ho veduto potenti ingegni affaticarsi per trovare le sorgenti e le norme del bello: dettare con accurata minutezza le regole, onde acconciamente esprimerlo colla parola; e dopo tutte queste erculee fatiche, l'arte del ben comporre e del bello scrivere andare di giorno in giorno peggiorando, o solo sostenersi con qualche dignità in coloro, che si attengono alle dottrine ed a' precetti degli antichi. La critica a' nostri giorni ha presa una tracotanza intollerabile.<sup>80</sup>

The same theme is re-emphasized very tellingly in terms of Parini:

Abbondano i professori di estetica e di critica, che non sanno comporre nè un buon verso nè una buona prosa; l'Italia li darebbe tutti pel solo Parini che scrisse un meschino trattato di estetica e dettò i più bei versi del suo tempo.<sup>81</sup>

For Zanella, the only value of aesthetic theories is in a "technical" context:

Io credo che se dai trattati di estetica si tolga quella parte che riguarda l'acquisto ed il modo di perfezionare lo strumento dell'arte, parole, stile, disegno, colorito, maneggio del pennello, dello scalpello, della squadra, ec., quei trattati riescano più dannosi che utili agl'ingegni ...<sup>82</sup>

Some important conclusions emerge: firstly, Zanella's view of the doctrines and precepts of the Ancients as being superior to both contemporary criticism and aesthetic theories; the very high regard he had for Parini; and his appreciation of German Romanticism, particularly in as much as it had opposed the worst features of eighteenth-century Classicism, at least as far as Zanella was concerned, namely, sensism and the ancient rhetoric.

The great admiration which Zanella had for Parini will be considered later in detail. But it is important, at this stage, to bear in mind that Parini represented, for Zanella, the ideal example of Chénier's "formula", namely a "new" content, an important influence on the Catholic, Liberal current of Italian Romanticism, coupled with a Classical style.

79. Ibid., p.52.

80. Scritti vari, p.1.

81. Della lett. italiana, p.224.

82. Scritti vari, p.4.

Moreover, the essence of what Zanella regarded as the ideal Classical style was exemplified by that of Parini, partly because it rejected the worst faults, and retained the best qualities, of eighteenth-century Classicism.

An interesting illustration of this is to be found by considering another of the waverings and uncertainties in the development of Zanella's poetica—his attitude towards mythological allusions and the ancient rhetoric.

As has already been stated, Zanella admired the way the Romantics and their predecessors tried to eliminate the ancient rhetoric and the abuse of mythological allusions.

However, at the same time, he was able to see the value of figures of speech,<sup>83</sup> as essential elements of style, as explained by E. Arnould in his Essais de théorie et d'histoire littéraire, Paris, 1858. He stresses the importance of colour, design and movement in style. Through the first, style conveys images, through the second, shapes, and through the last, feelings and passions. In fact, the "tropes" or figures of speech, which are so important in rhetoric, can all be reduced to these three stylistic elements of colour, design and movement. Just as Arnould has dealt with this whole subject so effectively, for the French, so Zanella wishes that there were an Italian writer who would do the same for Italian youth, thus turning a useful subject for study into an interesting one. Zanella regards it as being so important that without it (namely, the effective use of figures of speech), "... nè si comporranno, nè si giudicheranno mai bene l'opere d'arte ...".<sup>84</sup> In fact, for Zanella, to remove mythological allusions and rhetoric completely is to reduce poetry virtually to the level of prose. He feels that there is now in Italy just such a tendency, which has come from Germany and is due to a disregard for artistic expression and style.

This line of thought can be further elucidated by considering Zanella's attitude to Wordsworth. He approves of the English poet's avowed aims in the famous "Preface" to his Lyrical Ballads, to take his themes from everyday life and to use ordinary language, from which will emerge "... quel semplice colorito poetico, ch'è naturale alla parola dell'uomo che ha il cuore commosso".<sup>85</sup> Zanella feels that this theory is fine in as much as it rejects "... quell'ammasso di frasi trite e ritrite dall'uso, che ne fecero i poeti d'ogni secolo", but not, "... quando rifiuta quel linguaggio splendido, fiorito, armonioso, che distingue il verso dalla prosa".<sup>86</sup> There is here, incidentally, an interesting example of Zanella's appreciation of a "Romantic" content—themes from everyday life, the artist's

83. Ibid., p.6.    84. Ibid., p.7.    85. Ibid., p.11.    86. Ibid., p.11.



attempt to reach a wide public and express deep feelings through ordinary language—within the framework of a Classical style.

After referring to contemporary attitudes—modern poetry has banned the ancient myths, despite the vain attempts to defend them by Foscolo and Monti, while Leopardi seems more concerned with the mythical past than the ancient myths themselves—Zanella concedes that the latter should not constitute the subject-matter of poetry, but, he asks, are they not valid as a source of images and symbols? The Church, after all, has very rightly made use of symbols to express spiritual truths. Zanella then examines Dante's attitude:

A me piace ... d'intendere che pensi Dante tanto del mito, quanto dell'allegoria poetica. Niuno ignora come la Divina Commedia sia un'allegoria tratta dalle leggende del tempo ... E non è solamente allegoria la tela del poema; ma molte parti sono allegoriche,<sup>87</sup>

and points out the value, in the Inferno, of "figure mitologiche", for they are: "simboli opportuni al poeta per evitare le personificazioni di cose astratte che fanno intollerabile la lettura di molti passi del Milton e di altri poeti inglesi".<sup>88</sup> Zanella particularly admires the way Parini has made use of Classical Mythology and sees a certain similarity with Dante:

Il Parini nel Giorno e nelle Odi si è giovato della mitologia degli antichi, come Dante. Se togliamo dal Giorno quell'infelice perifrasi di Rodope e di Demofonte per esprimere la farina di mandorle, gli altri passi mitologici e le allegorie lo mostrano maestro di stile più compiuto che il Foscolo e il Monti. Che vi ha di più bello di quel fanciullo Achille sul dorso del Centauro nell'Ode l'Educazione?<sup>89</sup>

Again, Zanella turns to Dante's attitude:

Dante nel Purgatorio (XV) confessa di aver avuto dormendo certe visioni, che svegliato trovò sotto certo aspetto conformi alle cose, fra cui si trovava:

Quando l'anima mia tornò di fuori  
Alle cose, che son fuor di lei vere,  
Io riconobbi i miei non falsi errori.

E tali io tengo si debbano chiamare le favole antiche e le allegorie de' poeti usate con sapienza e con parsimonia.<sup>90</sup>

Thus, with regard to mythological allusions and rhetoric, Zanella is advocating neither slavish adherence or abuse, one of the worst features of eighteenth-century Classicism, nor complete neglect, the contemporary, nineteenth-century view, but a middle course as exemplified by Parini's wise, sparing use of them, when artistically justifiable.

Another of the "oscillazioni" and "incertezze", Zanella's attitude towards the importance and imitation of the Classics, is also related to his constant advocacy of a Classical Style.

87. Ibid., p.18. 88. Ibid., p.19. 89. Ibid., p.20. 90. Ibid., p.20.

According to Zanella, a grounding in the Classics and literature will, if well taught, prepare the student for life and for further study in any field. He stresses the great value, for him, of having studied the Classics:

Io ... confesso ... che i Greci e i Latini sono i più cari compagni della mia vita; che da loro attinsi insegnamenti e conforti ineffabili; che per loro mi sento trasportato in un mondo più sereno e più sinceramente grande ...<sup>91</sup>

but explains that it must be done in the right way, as he himself was taught:

Ebbi la sorte che ottimi professori m'introducessero nell'au-rea antichità. Essi non mi soffocarono l'anima con soverchio peso di commenti grammaticali, filologici e critici; ma m'insegnarono a riscaldarmi sopra una orazione di Livio, a pian-gere sopra un luogo di Virgilio,<sup>92</sup>

and not in the arid, detailed, punctilious way now in force, due to Ger-man influence. The unfortunate consequence of this is that the true value of the works of Classical Antiquity is not appreciated. The Germans have also been responsible for belittling the great heroes of Ancient Rome. And so History itself has suffered, with the result that faith in heroic virtue has turned to cynicism.

Zanella goes on to point out that conciseness in poetry can only be learnt from the Classics. But a study of the Classics is valuable not only for style, but also for the thoughts and feelings it inspires, as can be seen in the Italian tradition from Dante to Machiavelli and from Poliziano to Leopardi. Without this approach, Zanella feels that the study of the Classics would degenerate into mere frivolity.

However, a detailed examination of Zanella's attitude to this subject shows the emphasis shifting inexorably towards the view that the greatest benefit to be derived from the Classics is stylistic perfection. He arrives at a definition of the fundamental qualities of Italian poetry, their derivation from its Classical roots, and the limits and disadvantages which can follow from the wrong approach to imitating the Classics.

In addressing the youth of Naples,<sup>93</sup> Zanella had said that the best combination in Italian poetry would be the "onda melodica" of the Southern poets and the "incisa sobrietà" of Dante and Foscolo. He goes on to stress the importance of "il culto della parola" and after citing the examples of Cicero, Ariosto, Alfieri, Parini and Manzoni, he adds that while poetic inspiration is instantaneous, "clothing" it appropriately is very hard, slow and painstaking work—rather like cutting and polishing a diamond—but the effort and trouble are essential and very worthwhile. Zanella

91. *Ibid.*, p.226. 92. *Ibid.*, p.226. 93. *Ibid.*, p.348.

feels that Spanish influence has been responsible for the rather "flowery" quality of Neapolitan literature. In fact, even the best contemporary Spanish poets, including Zorrilla, Lara, Espronceda and Trueba, are not free from a certain exuberance of colour and sound. Zanella points out that he himself has tried to render some of their works in Italian—cf. Amore immortale (Imitato dallo spagnuolo di A. Trueba) and L'adolescente (Imitato dallo stesso)—but, if he had wanted to convey them faithfully, "avrei dato nel romoroso e nel gonfio", he adds. So he concludes that Italian poetry prefers sobriety and restraint, since Italians are the heirs to the works of Greece and Rome.

For Zanella, stylistic perfection and the best qualities of the Ancient Classics are synonymous. He feels that Sannazaro's fame is due more to his assiduous study of Latin and Italian, than to the greatness of his ideas. Zanella sees Virgil as the most perfect "artefice di stile" and pays handsome tribute to Leopardi who, from his intense study of Greek writers, "attinse l'inarrivabile perfezione della forma". Zanella concludes that only style can give eternal fame, for so many works of great thinkers have found oblivion, due to their not being well-written "... gli scherzi di Anacreonte e di Catullo" have been assured of posterity's admiration.<sup>94</sup>

Zanella returns to the theme of the Italian character and its artistic expression: "... [ne] la forma casta e severa di un verso perfettamente italiano", which expresses "quella idea prettamente italiana, semplice a un tempo e magnifica".<sup>95</sup> He illustrates this by comparing Italian literature with those of other countries:

I Tedeschi e gl'Inglesi si piacciono nelle loro poesie di un certo vago ed indistinto, che ben confassi a quel loro cielo spesso velato, alle ombre misteriose di quelle loro foreste; noi Italiani, a' quali la natura, rallegrata da un sole così bello, si rivela con tanta precisione e rilievo di forme, amiamo nella poesia lo stesso splendore, amiamo la forma contornata, esatta e scolpita; per dirlo con parola ora usitatissima, siamo "plastici".<sup>96</sup>

Zanella then considers the advantages of imitating the Classics. He expresses his admiration for both Dante and Giotto for having brought about a very important renewal in their respective fields, the former partly by means of a wise imitation of the Classics.

He feels, however, that Pontano, Poliziano, Fracastoro and Sannazaro have not made the best possible use of the Classics which, instead of being like a useful tool, have had restrictive, inhibiting effect. Zanella says that these writers modified their thoughts,

94. Ibid., p. 353.

95. Ibid., p. 360 and p. 354.

96. Ibid., p. 354.



... secondo le frasi; cioè non sempre dissero ciò che si dovea dire; ma dissero ciò che si potea con le frasi di Virgilio e di Ovidio. Manca in essi la naturalezza, ch'è prima dote dell'arte.<sup>97</sup>

Zanella goes on to show, by contrast, how the author of the Orlando furioso has judiciously imitated the Classics, without forfeiting naturalness. For Ariosto has taken the best qualities of the Ancients and scattered them liberally throughout his great work, but has used the language which was then currently in use in Italy, as well as stories which were popular in Europe. The result is that his imitation of the Classics "... non ... tolse punto nè naturalezza, nè libertà di movimenti".<sup>98</sup> Thus, although the imitation of the Classics may lead to greater "technical" or stylistic qualities, as well as greater erudition, it can also stifle "l'affetto" or the free expression of the artist's heart and soul.

Referring to Mantegna, whose teacher, Francesco Squarcione, had insisted on a rigid imitation of the Classics, Zanella says that although the painter was very knowledgeable, for his times, about anatomy, perspective and chiaroscuro, "... gli mancò l'affetto, cioè quella verità di espressione, che sola può rendere vive e parlanti le tele".<sup>99</sup>

This is further illustrated by the case of Giangiorgio Trissino, who spent years studying the Ancient Classics, and was considered "il più dotto Italiano del secolo", but "... l'arte gli chiuse inesorabilmente le porte del suo tempio". In fact, on reading his lyrics "...non troviamo che l'anima sua fosse tanto gelata, quanto ci appare nel poema maggiore", but, concludes Zanella, "... quella piccoletta vena di affetto inaridì nelle penose ricerche dell'erudizione".<sup>100</sup>

In other words, as far as Zanella was concerned, the Classics, as long as they are studied, imitated and taught in the right way, are important: to a certain extent, for content, but primarily for style, inasmuch as they do not inhibit or stifle the full expression of the human heart.

This emphasis on the human heart, as far as the content is concerned, is very "Romantic", bearing in mind the definition of this term, given earlier in this chapter, while one can see the way in which Zanella insisted on a Classical, stylistic framework.

In the last of the "oscillazioni" and "incertezze", Zanella's attitude towards Nature and its relationship with Art, one finds the usual apparent contradiction. On the one hand, Nature provides an unattainable prototype of perfection, which the artist must always strive to match although, of course, he will never be able to do so; on the other hand,

97. Ibid., p.242.

98. Ibid., p.242.

99. Ibid., p.243.

100. Ibid., p.243.

certain great artists can surpass the beauty of Nature which, in any case, should only be seen as "... un mezzo dell'arte e non altro".<sup>101</sup>

Zanella praises Nature very highly. One can learn more about God and life through Nature than through Art or books (cf. Astichello, XVIII, 1.12). Art, at least with regard to Zanella's own verses, cannot equal Nature's harmoniously perfect results, as the poet tells us in lines 9-14 of the sonnet, Natura ed arte 1877. In fact, the more a work of art approaches the beauties of Nature, the closer it gets to perfection.<sup>102</sup> Those artists, who do not learn from Nature, do not achieve their true potential. According to Zanella, this was the case with Marini, despite his great natural talent.<sup>103</sup> Nature provides the artist with a kind of sixth sense, through which it reveals certain types of beauty, which it keeps hidden from the rest of mankind. It was Nature which gave Ovid the ability to express his thoughts in verses and enabled Giotto and Canova to give substance to the images which passed through their minds, hence, the importance of the right approach in teaching. The teacher must not stifle the natural originality and talent of the young artist and should restrict himself, as far as theory is concerned, to the main principles, "... quanto alla pratica, all'uso sicuro dei mezzi dell'arte ...".<sup>104</sup>

However, there are ways in which Art is superior to Nature. In sonnet XXXIX of Astichello, Nature claims to have created everything and challenges Art: "... temeraria ancella, / Di meco gareggiar t'arroggi il vanto?" ll.7,8. Art replies: "... Se tu crei, non curi" l.9, and continues: "Io colgo a volo un tuo fuggiasco lampo, / E con la rima o col pannel lo eterno." ll.13,14. Moreover, certain great artists are able to produce masterpieces which are even more beautiful than those of Nature. Zanella feels that this is the case with the superb paintings of Paolo Veronese in the villa of the Caldogno family near Vicenza (Astichello, LXXXIII). Nature opened all her doors to Raffaello, but his work surpassed Nature (cf. A Raffaello, 1883). In lines 9-16 of the same poem, Zanella says that a divinely inspired desire to penetrate the hidden realms of creation led Raffaello to emulate the Creator by creating works of art.

The link between God, Nature and Art is examined by Zanella in Chapter 1 of La poetica nella "Divina Commedia".<sup>105</sup> He summarises Dante's views on art and creativity as follows:

La creazione di Dio è arte...Arte figlia è la creazione che fa la natura...Arte nipote è finalmente quelle del poeta, arte meno perfetta, perchè spesso la materia contrasta a' suoi intendimenti...dove nasce quella penosa battaglia combattuta segretamente dall'artista, che vagheggia una perfetta bellezza, e sente mancarsi lo strumento, onde convenevolmente figurarla. 106

101. Ibid., p.9.

102. Ibid., p.13.

103. Ibid., p.357.

104. Ibid., p.239.

105. Ibid., pp.13-15.

106. Ibid., p.13.



Thus, the necessity for the poet to avoid whatever he cannot effectively express. Although Zanella adds that there are certain "reticenze poetiche" which are more effective than any word or poetic expression, since they leave the reader "... in quel vago ed infinito ch'è nell'arte sorgente de' più dilette".

He concludes that every great artist has understood "... che l'arte è per essenza spirituale".<sup>107</sup>

This is a very important idea for Zanella and he returns to it on more than one occasion:

... l'uomo ... trova nel suo intelletto que' tipi del bello, che non appaiono se non quando sieno rivestiti di quelle forme sensibili che l'uomo toglie dalla natura.<sup>108</sup>

But Art must not become a mere imitation or copy of Nature, which is "... un mezzo dell'arte e non altro".<sup>109</sup> A scene copied exactly from Nature may provide pleasure, "... come piace l'oggetto naturale, ond'essa è l'immagine; ma sifatto piacere non è quello che si domanda all'arte, che deve destarne un diverso, assai più delicato e profondo; il piacere che nasce dal contemplare l'anima umana trasfusa nella natura lavorata; il bello intellettuale adombrato da forme sensibili; la verità coperta dei veli di graziosa menzogna; onde avviene che il verosimile dell'arte dilette assai più del vero della stessa natura".<sup>110</sup>

Once again Zanella stresses the essentially "spiritual" quality of Art, this being a very "Romantic" view, bearing in mind the definition of this term given earlier in this chapter:

Teocrito ne' suoi idilli non copiava, no, la natura, ma significava lo stato dell'anima sua.<sup>111</sup>

Zanella then summarises his view of the relationship between Nature and Art:

È ... necessario, come il possesso dell'idea da una parte, lo studio della natura, ossia del mezzo artistico dall'altra; dalla cui concordia deriva quella perfetta bellezza ch'è termine supremo dell'arte.<sup>112</sup>

Therefore, Nature, like the Classics, is important: to a certain extent, for content, but primarily for style, in so far as it is an aid and not a hindrance, to the full expression of the artist's heart and soul, because, in the final analysis:

Il bello ... è nella mente e nel cuore dell'uomo, l'arte è l'amorevole levatrice che il portato dello spirito trae in luce.<sup>113</sup>

Zanella's ever-greater adhesion to Romanticism, at least as far as "content" was concerned, in the development of his poetica, will have

107. Ibid., p.15.

108. Ibid., p.8.

109. Ibid., p.9.

110. Ibid., p.9.

111. Ibid., p.9.

112. Ibid., p.10.

113. Ibid., p.10.

emerged more clearly from a consideration of the foregoing "oscillazioni" and "incertezze".

Therefore, in attempting to define Zanella's poetica, we may add to the combination, "Classical style, modern content", implicit in Chénier's formula the contribution of the Romantics and their precursors: spirituality, religiosity, Christianity, greater prominence to the human heart, examining human feelings and the motions of the soul, a closer link with reality and Truth, greater freedom, the need to communicate with a wide public, and patriotism, in the Italian context of the Risorgimento, aiming at national unity and independence and then a moral regeneration.

Zanella particularly admired the way the Pre-Romantics and their successors opposed certain aspects of eighteenth-century literature. At a philosophical level they opposed sensism and favoured greater spirituality and freedom while, at a stylistic level, they tried to eliminate the ancient rhetoric and the abuse of mythological allusions.

Thus he feels that these two elements have made Giordani's Panegirico di Napoleone "heavier", and similarly, their effect on the works of Gaspare Gozzi has been to put the reader's patience to the test.<sup>114</sup>

For Zanella, an important reason why ancient mythology was the "unico arsenale ai poeti del tempo" is to be found in the education given by so many colleges at that time:

L'istruzione rettorica avuta nei collegi giovava a coprire coll'artificio della figura la povertà de' pensieri: metafore, prosopopee, apostrofi; periodi lunghi, increspati come la parrucca del signore ... poesie raccolte in volumi di costosa legatura in occasione di nozze o di monacati erano l'ordinario prodotto degli studi del tempo.<sup>115</sup>

Zanella not only disapproved of the ancient rhetoric on purely stylistic grounds, but also because it was no longer suitable for the changing conditions and faster pace of life.

It is, of course, very understandable that Zanella, like the Romantics, should prefer Christian imagery to that of Classical Mythology because, for him, Christianity was the Ultimate Truth and Reality.

So, Tommaso Grossi's Ildegonda, published in 1820, "... mostrò quanto allo splendido ma vuoto colorire dell'arte pagana soprastessero le tinte caste e melanconiche della cristiana".<sup>116</sup> Not surprisingly, Zanella disapproves of Charles Swinburne's attitude in his Hymn to Prosperine, in which: "la sostituzione del Cristo al Giove ellenico, è l'insulto di un retore, che disconosce l'origine e le cause dell'incivilimento moderno".<sup>117</sup> In fact, for Zanella, Christianity was the most important and distinctive feature of Romanticism. As far as he was concerned, the most fundamental

<sup>114</sup>. Della lett. italiana, pp.146 and 68.

<sup>115</sup>. Ibid., pp.57,58.

<sup>116</sup>. Ibid., p.171.

<sup>117</sup>. Ibid., p.37.

difference between Classicism and Romanticism was not in the use of mythology or the observance of the three Unities in the theatre,

... ma nel pensiero cristiano, che ha creata la società moderna ed allargato d'immensi spazi il dominio delle menti. I tempi di mezzo, ne' quali l'idea cristiana ebbe più forza e splendore, furono il campo aperto ai romantici mentre i classicisti, sdegnando que' secoli detti barbari, risalivano alla civiltà greca e latina, come ultimo termine dell'artistica perfezione.<sup>118</sup>

Zanella points out that the German poets Claudius, Hoelty and Stolberg, members of the academy, "l'Unione dei poeti", set up in 1772, had turned to the times of strong belief, cathedrals, abbeys and crusades in order to rekindle "ne' cuori il sentimento religioso da loro creduto il solo poetico".<sup>119</sup>

Just as History and Literature must pay tribute to the achievements of Christian civilization, so Science must be used to substantiate the truths of Christianity. Thus, Zanella has great admiration for Frayssenous (1765-1842):

Frayssenous si giova di tutte le scoperte della scienza moderna per dimostrare la verità del Cristianesimo. In questa magnifica impresa egli fu seguito da molti ... le cui opere fanno una letteratura di cui sola può gloriarsi la Francia.<sup>120</sup>

Zanella even sees the theme of Christian civilization in Henry Longfellow's Hiawatha:

"Hiawatha" il giovane eroe delle Pelli Rosse, ardito, sapiente, conoscitore del linguaggio degli uccelli e delle bestie, cacciatore, artigiano, legislatore e sacerdote, annunzia l'avvenimento della civiltà cristiana nel mondo.<sup>121</sup>

Understandably, Zanella thinks highly of William Cowper, not only because he was the poet of the countryside ("è suo il verso famoso, che Dio fece la campagna, l'uomo la città"), and he wrote "come il cuore gli dettava", but also because he was a sincere Christian.<sup>122</sup>

As has already been stated, the Romantics advocated greater emphasis and attention to the human heart, human feelings and the motions of the soul. This was vitally important for Zanella, as can be seen from the following extract from the preface to the first edition of his poems:

I soggetti che più volentieri ho trattati, sono quelli di argomento scientifico. Ma non è già l'oggetto della scienza che mi paresse capace di poesia; bensì i sentimenti, che dalle scoperte della scienza nascono in noi. Per questo io non ho mai posto mano ad uno di questi soggetti che prima non avessi trovato modo di farvi campeggiar l'uomo e le sue passioni, senza cui la poesia, per ricca che sia d'immagini, e senza vita.<sup>123</sup>

118. Ibid., p.190.

119. Ibid., pp.46,47.

120. Ibid., pp.19,20

121. Ibid., p.38.

122. Ibid., p.33.

123. Poesie (1928), p.XLIII.



Thus he admires the Frenchman, Jouffroy, who, with a golden thread "... ci mena pel labirinto dei fatti della coscienza, che dice più certi de' fatti esteriori. Quando il dubbio lo tolse alla fede dei suoi padri, il sincero grido di dolore che uscì dall'anima sua è una delle pagine più memorabili delle letterature moderne".<sup>124</sup>

In fact, despite nineteenth-century criticism of Metastasio, Zanella praised him (A Pietro Metastasio, 1882) for being "Vate de' dolci affetti ..." 1.9 and for having dealt with love and the secrets of the human heart, 11.9-12. Zanella himself, in writing to Fedele Lampertico, said of one of his own poems, Alla memoria di Guglielmo Toaldi professore del Ginnasio-Liceo di Vicenza, 1868: "Non è senza affetto e basta".<sup>125</sup>

Zanella also considered the importance of the human heart with regard to Science and Art, aesthetic theories, and Nature and the Classics.

Whilst Science deals with, and "portrays", the material world, Art (the expression of the human heart and soul) adds a spiritual, infinite dimension:

La scienza ... ci pone innanzi le cose come sono: il cuore soltanto le immagina come dovrebbero essere: alla bellezza naturale il cuore aggiunge la bellezza dell'idea, ch'è come dire congiunge al finito l'infinito; nel che consiste la difficoltà, ma nello stesso tempo la perfezione e la gloria dell'arte.<sup>126</sup>

The fundamental distinction between Truth, as presented by Art and Religion, and Reality, as presented by Science, is well brought out by Zanella:

Non confondiamo il reale col vero: il vero è nell'armonia dell'idea colla cosa; il reale è solo nelle cose, spesso difettive o deformi.<sup>127</sup>

Zanella returns to the theme of the fundamental importance of the human heart in artistic expression:

Ma perchè l'arte sia feconda ... conviene che si nutra, si formi, si accarezzi dal cuore; conviene sia naturale, libera, onesta, ingenua, sincera.<sup>128</sup>

He then highlights this in the context of the autonomy of Art, especially in terms of Science and its philosophical back-cloth, positivism:

Colla educazione del cuore avremo la forza della espressione ed il tono del colorito: avremo la stessa unità di composizione; poichè il cuore non esita, ma crea d'un getto il pensiero e la veste, cioè toglie dalla natura nè più nè meno di quanto basti a significare il pensiero: è la fredda scienza che si compiace nelle vane pompe degli accessori, che dell'Arte moderna hanno quasi fatto una sussidiaria dell'anatomia, della botanica, della storia.<sup>129</sup>

124. Della lett. italiana, p.24.

125. Poesie (1928), p.479.

126. Scritti vari, p.252.

127. Ibid., p.252.

128. Ibid., p.252.

129. Ibid., pp.252,253.

Zanella gave a great deal of emphasis to the importance of the human heart as opposed to aesthetic theories. He illustrates this in terms of Dante:

Dante non saprei dire se fosse più grande o più libero ingegno ... nel colorire la sua materia ha seguite alcune regole, che ricavò non da trattati ignoti al suo tempo, ma dalla sua mente e dal suo cuore; tanto sono connaturali all'anima d'ogni grande artista ...130

Once again Zanella insists on the spiritual nature of inspiration:

Dante ... conferma ... che la poesia è creazine dell'anima, non imitazione della natura, perchè dai moti dell'anima dipende la sua vita e la sua esistenza.131

This is a theme to which Zanella repeatedly returns:

Quintiliano ... pose anch'egli il cuore prima dell'intelletto ...132

and again,

È solo dal cuore che i pensieri di natura loro astratti e rigidi prendono colorito e calore ... 133

Zanella sees the link between the human heart and Nature as being of vital importance:

Il gran segreto dell'arte, anzi l'essenza sua, consiste ... in questo: che l'artista, esprimendo le cose, esprima sè stesso. In ogni opera d'arte pertanto due elementi concorrono: l'anima dell'artista e la natura. L'artista concepisce l'idea; poi domanda alla natura la forma per esprimerla. Dall'accordo più o meno perfetto di questi due elementi si può desumere l'eccellenza d'un opera, distinguere le scuole diverse; e segnare senz'altro le differenze che passano fra l'arte antica e la moderna.134

He goes on to point out that: "Negli antichi predomina la natura ... Nei loro teatri l'attore si copriva la faccia con una maschera ... Nello stesso modo può dirsi che nelle opere antiche l'artista ricopra sè stesso, perchè spicchi la sola natura".<sup>135</sup> However, Art must be, primarily, an expression of the artist's heart and soul. Zanella compares his reactions to a painting of Mantegna and to that of "un Trecentista". In the case of the former, Zanella cannot help admiring the "technical" qualities: "... quella maestria di disegno, quelle architetture, quelle prospettive condotte con tutto il rigore geometrico", but, "il cuore non si appaga". In the case of the fourteenth-century painter, conversely, Zanella sees the "technical" faults, but, "... sentiva il ... cuore attratto imperiosamente verso quelle forme". For Zanella, the secret of his "affascinazione" was that: "sotto que' tratti lampeggiava l'anima dell'artista; e per me l'anima umana ... vale l'universo".<sup>136</sup>

130. *Ibid.*, p.5.

131. *Ibid.*, p.36.

132. *Ibid.*, p.36.

133. *Ibid.*, p.36.

134. *Ibid.*, p.244.

135. *Ibid.*, p.244 and p.246.

136. *Ibid.*, pp.246,247.

He then stresses the spirituality of the art of modern times ("Romanticism") compared to that of Classical Antiquity.<sup>137</sup> Zanella pursues this line of thought in greater detail by showing that there are two ways in which a poet can "sfogare la passione che porta nel cuore".<sup>138</sup>

Firstly, he can fuse completely with the "idols" which his imagination has created, "porsi nelle loro condizioni: vivere con essi, con essi sentire" —such is the poetry of the Ancients, "cresciuti più di noi alla vita esteriore", and of modern poets like Ariosto, La Fontaine, Goethe and Monti.

The second way is when the poet "... parla ed opera personalmente, ritrae la natura, ma più col colore della sua anima che delle cose, e trasfonde le sue passioni nei parti dell'immaginazione". Petrarch, Tasso, Byron and Leopardi "poetarono in questa maniera, che i moderni avvezzi alla riflessione più che gli antichi preferiscono all'altra".

Broadly speaking, the former could be described as "Classical" and the latter, "Romantic". According to Zanella, each "group" excels in different types of literary composition.

The first "... nell'Epica e nella Drammatica, che vogliono la schietta e verace pittura de' fatti, de' costumi e delle passioni ch'entrano nella tela poetica". Zanella adds that in this it is the Ancients who are the undisputed masters.

However, as far as the other ("Romantic") category is concerned, "... nell'Ode e nell'Elegia, che sono l'espressione degli affetti e delle opinioni dell'uomo che scrive, i moderni hanno il vanto dell'eccellenza ...".

But only Dante has been able to fuse and harmonise these two "trends": "... appena nello stesso Dante si trovano congiunte in guisa che l'uomo, la donna, l'angelo, il demonio parlino il loro linguaggio; e l'anima del poeta si senta nelle loro parole".<sup>139</sup>

For Zanella the ideal combination consisted of a Classical style, with the beauty and the best qualities of the Ancient Classics, and a Romantic content, inspired by the heart and soul. Not surprisingly he has very high praise for Dante, precisely in these terms:

... Dante vestiva di nobilissime forme i concetti che gli erano suggeriti dal cuore. Ed a ciò potentemente gli giovava lo studio da lui fatto ne' Classici latini.<sup>140</sup>

The importance Zanella attached to the need to communicate with a wide public may be gauged from the way in which he criticised Wordsworth for not having realized:

... che il poeta deve esprimere quella parte de' suoi pensieri, che ha analogia coi pensieri degli altri uomini; senza la quale concordia linguaggio alcuno non è inteso.<sup>141</sup>

137. *Ibid.*, p.247.

138. *Ibid.*, p.36.

139. *Ibid.*, p.37.

140. *Ibid.*, p.40.

141. *Ibid.*, p.12.



In fact, "La poesia, per essere gustata generalmente, deve toccare sentimenti e pensieri che abbiano dell'universale; la novità è tutta nella scelta degli stessi, e nel modo di ordinarli e colorirli".<sup>142</sup>

Patriotism was another Romantic theme which kindled Zanella's enthusiasm. In particular, he admired the moral and spiritualistic foundations of the Risorgimento, at its best, as can be seen from his appreciation of Mazzini:

Nel libro I Doveri degli uomini sono eloquentissime pagine, in cui dimostra impossibile la rigenerazione d'Italia senza la base d'una austera morale e di una ferma credenza in Dio e nella vita avvenire.<sup>143</sup>

From a purely literary point of view, Zanella also thought highly of Mazzini:

Sarebbe stato il primo de' nostri critici ... se il suo ingegno non fosse stato assorto nella politica. Il Foscolo fu l'autore suo prediletto, dal quale tolse la nervosa efficacia dello stile: fu del resto uno dei seguaci più fervidi della scuola romantica, nella quale vide il principio della nostra rigenerazione.<sup>144</sup>

Zanella appreciated the politically-liberating influence of Romanticism (in Italy) which:

... col predicare la libertà delle lettere educava le menti all'idea di libertà politiche, cioè all'idea dell'indipendenza ed unità della nazione.<sup>145</sup>

However, Zanella has a rather ambiguous attitude towards the foreign influence inherent in Pre-Romanticism and Romanticism.

Thus, he pays tribute to the influence of Edward Young (1683-1765) on European literature and on Foscolo, in particular:

... piacque al secolo tormentato dal dubbio e dal terrore del sepolcro: Foscolo vi attinse la malinconia del suo Ortis.<sup>146</sup>

Similarly, he feels that the canti di Ossian by James Macpherson—"finse di avere raccolti nelle montagne di Scozia e di avere tradotti dalla loro lingua gaelica i canti di Ossian. Fortunata finzione ..."<sup>147</sup>—through Cesarotti's translation (1762), proved a useful stimulus to Italian literature "che sbadigliava fra le sonore vacuità frugoniane e le insipide dolcezze dell'Arcadia".<sup>148</sup> Zanella goes on to add that although Foscolo feared that the enthusiasm with which the canti di Ossian had been received would lead to blind imitation, Foscolo's "versi giovanili al Sole" and many passages of Ortis, l'Arminio of Pindemonte, and Monti's Bardo della Selva Nera were all influenced by the canti di Ossian.

142. Ibid., p.13.

143. Della lett. italiana, p.178.

144. Ibid., p.178.

145. Ibid., p.160.

146. Ibid., p.28.

147. Ibid., p.28.

148. Ibid., p.95.

From a patriotic point of view, however, Zanella attacks the imitation of foreign poets—" [da] la macchia più vituperosa d'una letteratura"<sup>149</sup>—and the influence of Northern European Romanticism, especially at a stylistic level, as can be seen in the poem, A Dante 1881, where Zanella invokes the help of Dante to stem the spread of the "nordica tempesta" 1.7, which is sweeping over Italy:

Strane armonie, quali fischiando il vento  
Trae dalle selve caledonie ... 11.9,10.

In the poem, Ad Elena e Vittoria Aganoor 1876, Zanella: "Polemizza con l'imitazione della poesia nordica, che dall'ultimo Settecento (infatuazione per Ossian) passò ai romantici. Ed esalta in contrasto la poesia classicheggiante di Parini e di Foscolo...".<sup>150</sup> Thus, we can see that, stylistically, at least, Zanella's patriotism made him favour the Classical tradition (part of Italy's cultural heritage), as opposed to Northern European Romanticism. For Zanella, it is patriotic motives which contribute to the preference of Northern Europeans for the Middle Ages, instead of Classical Antiquity:

Gli stranieri, che nell'antichità greca e romana non trovano cosa alcuna di che gloriarsi e la cui storia comincia colle conquiste e vittorie di Roma, rivolsero gli studi loro ai secoli di mezzo ...151

Zanella also saw the value and importance of the Classics, not only stylistically, but also with regard to their content, particularly in a patriotic context. In writing to a friend he commented on his poem, Per certi filologi tedeschi 1878:

"Vedrà ... certa mia tirata contro certi filologi tedeschi, che ridussero lo studio dei classici antichi ad una noiosa anatomia di parole con danno immenso della nostra gioventù, che in altri tempi attingeva da quelle pagine nobiltà di sentimenti e robustezza di pensieri".<sup>152</sup>

Zanella felt that Classical literature was also a source of wisdom and moral restraint (cf. sonnet V of Passeggio solitario, 1869).

It is clear that Zanella was insisting on a predominantly "Romantic" content—influenced of course by Classicism, in the two main ways mentioned above, and, to a more limited extent, by positivism (interest in Science, progress and realism)—within a Classical stylistic framework. But, one may ask, what type of "Classical" style was he advocating? For Zanella, Parini represents the ideal example of what he meant by a "Classical" style.

He particularly admired Parini's love of whatever was natural and simple, and his rejection of any form of affectation:

<sup>149</sup>. Ibid., p.123.

<sup>150</sup>. Petronio, p.513.

<sup>151</sup>. Della lett. italiana, pp.159,160.

<sup>152</sup>. Poesie (1928), p.252.

Questa sua indole robusta, severa, quadrata, immobile ...  
fu la vera sua musa: abborrimento di tutto il fittizio ed  
amore del naturale e del semplice.<sup>153</sup>

Moreover, Parini provides the best example, in practice, of Chénier's  
"formula", "Classical style, modern content":

Il Parini riconosceva ne' Greci l'estremo dell'arte: ...  
Ma questo amore del bello antico era in lui temperato dal  
culto della scienza moderna ...<sup>154</sup>

Zanella sees Parini as combining the elegance, terseness, simplicity,  
beauty and stylistic perfectionism of the Ancient Classics with a modern  
content—"Socialism" or Christian Socialism, thirst for social justice,  
interest in science; as well as the need, stressed by Zanella, to adapt  
to changing times and the faster pace of life, precisely through a modern  
content and not through stylistic innovations completely outside the frame-  
work of the Italian tradition. (Cf. Zanella's poem, Ad Elena e Vittoria  
Aganoor, as quoted by Zanella himself in "Alla gioventù napoletana" in  
Scritti vari, p.358).

In Parini's poetry there is neither abuse of mythological allusions  
("... la greca mitologia non usava che nelle similitudini o quando volea  
dare veste sensibile a qualche concetto astratto, come fa Dante"),<sup>155</sup> nor  
of "termini tecnici" ("Il Parini parlando della Coltivazione de' monti  
del Lorenzi gli move rimprovero di avere abusato di termini tecnici ...  
in luogo de' modi propri della locuzione poetica";<sup>156</sup> "Nel Parini trovia-  
mo invece il linguaggio della scienza, ma scelto con avvedutezza ...").<sup>157</sup>  
In other words, Parini uses both mythological allusions and "termini tec-  
nici" sparingly, only when their inclusion is artistically justifiable.  
Zanella admires this balance and moderation, or "Classical" restraint.  
Zanella's tremendous admiration for Parini and, to a lesser extent, Fos-  
colo, was based on the fact that they were responsible for the renewal  
in Italian poetry and represented a break with the excesses of the past,  
whilst remaining, at least stylistically, within the framework of the  
Italian tradition:

... l'Alfieri, il Parini, il Monti e il Foscolo, pure inno-  
vando e rinfrescando in molte parti la nostra corona poetica,  
si tennero nell'antico cammino.<sup>158</sup>

Thus, Parini ushers in a new age: "L'Italia col Parini entra in nuovo  
campo poetico". Zanella, in referring to Alfieri, Monti, Foscolo and  
Manzoni, adds that "I letterati conobbero il loro ufficio: dato il bando  
alle frasi sonanti presero a studiare il pensiero e cercarono coll'ornata  
parola di promuovere il bene intellettuale e civile della nazione".<sup>159</sup>

153. Della lett. italiana, p.100.

154. Ibid., p.101.

155. Ibid., p.101.

156. Ibid., p.101.

157. Ibid., p.102.

158. Scritti vari, p.31.

159. Della lett. italiana,  
p.103.



Once again one can see the important link between the Lombard Enlightenment (Parini) and the Catholic, Liberal current (Manzoni) of Italian Romanticism—as appreciated by Zanella—especially with regard to the "positive", "active" view of literature as a means of influencing, educating and reforming society.<sup>160</sup>

This need for renewal in Italian poetry justifies, in Zanella's eyes, the "inversioni" in Parini's style :

Pecca qualche volta nelle inversioni nemiche all'indole delle lingue moderne, ma voleva divezzare l'orecchio italiano dalla garrula scorrevolezza degli Arcadi ...<sup>161</sup>

Zanella particularly admires Parini for "le speciali bellezze dello stile prodotte dalla scelta e collocazione de' vocaboli, dal suono delle sillabe e dalla spezzatura del verso".<sup>162</sup> He also shows great appreciation for the "endecasillabi sciolti" in Parini and Monti, and also has high praise for the stylistic qualities of Foscolo.<sup>163</sup>

As far as Zanella is concerned, Parini represents a "peak" in stylistic development, compared to his predecessors and successors. Zanella condemns the frivolity of eighteenth-century society, as reflected in its literature. The latter is not merely out of touch with the changing times and the faster pace of life, but is also plagued by abuse of mythological allusions and the tyranny of the ancient rhetoric. Parini, however, not only rejects the worst faults of eighteenth-century Classicism, but is responsible for the renewal of poetry through a return to the best stylistic qualities of the Ancient Classics, as well as adapting to changing conditions and a faster pace of life with a modern content. Zanella feels that after Parini there has been a decline—"Dal Parini al Manzoni e dal Manzoni al Giusti l'arte italiana venne sempre più declinando"<sup>164</sup>—which he attributes to imitation of the French and Germans, and an obsession with "novità", both stylistically, "un-Italian" metre, and thematically, "nel soggetto ora turpe ora empio".<sup>165</sup> Between the extremes of the worst faults of eighteenth-century Classicism, "schiavitù delle regole", "l'artificio", and of nineteenth-century literature, "licenza", "il disprezzo dell'arte",<sup>166</sup> Parini stands as the epitome of Classical, stylistic excellence.

Before putting Zanella's poetica in its historical context, it would be advisable to consider his concept of poetry.

He sees a close link between poetry, "pittura canora", and painting, "muta poesia",<sup>167</sup> while he describes the relationship between music and poetry as follows:

160. Cf. pp.13, 14 of this chapter.

161. Della lett. italiana, p.103.

162. Ibid., p.98.

163. Ibid., pp.70;133-136;139;141.

164. Ibid., p.224.

165. Ibid., p.224.

166. Ibid., p.224.

167. Scritti varii, p.21.

Nella musica l'anima umana dal finito anela all'infinito; nella letteratura dall'infinito deve raccogliersi e ridursi al finito ... la poesia si piace ... di afferrare l'infinito nel lampo, che lo rivela all'anima, arrestarlo, imprigionarlo, scolpirlo nel breve giro della parola come la folgore si serena nel Condensatore del Volta.<sup>168</sup>

When writing of Alfieri, Zanella had described "l'essenza della poesia" as "larghezza di immaginazione e delicatezza di sentimento".<sup>169</sup>

These qualities which Zanella ascribed to poetry—its descriptive, imaginative faculty, its vividness and conciseness—also figure in the distinction which Zanella applied to poetry and prose. Thus, in Thierry's La Conquête de l'Angleterre par les Normands, Zanella finds that

"... la verità del colorito e la forma drammatica del racconto fanno del suo libro una specie di poema: Chateaubriand lo disse l'Omero della storia". Similarly, Thomas Carlyle, in his The French Revolution, A History, seems more like a poet than a prose-writer "... nel cogliere il lato pittorico de' fatti e nella rapidità del descriverli".<sup>170</sup> It is interesting that Zanella also commented that, towards the end of the 1700s, poetry was to be found more in the great events which were taking place in Europe, than in the "arte degli scrittori".<sup>171</sup>

Just as the qualities which Zanella attributed to poetry were conventional and orthodox—whilst approving of Parini's renewal in literature, Zanella admired the fact that it had taken place within the context of the Italian literary tradition—so his views on rhyme and metre (la canzone libera, endecasillabi sciolti, l'ottava) are traditional and predictable.

Thus we find him disapproving of the canzone libera. He deplors the fact that the quality, described by Dante as "lo fren dell'arte" (Purg. XXXIII), is no longer to be found in modern literature, particularly in the lack of proportion between the principal and subsidiary parts of a composition. He shows how even the great Manzoni himself was not always immune from this defect: "... basta notare come nella Pentecoste ai due versi: 'Siccome il Sol che schiude/Dal pigro germe il fior,' faccia seguire un'intera stanza di otto versi che dilava ed intorbida l'idea della similitudine".<sup>172</sup> Zanella feels that the cause of this "sproporzione" is mainly due to the present-day abuse of the canzone libera. Although he concedes that Leopardi, in using it may well have had "le sue buone ragioni della scelta", Zanella wonders whether the same can be said of Leopardi's imitators. Having found that the adoption of "il verso sciolto" was easier than "la rima", have they not convinced themselves that it is also superior?<sup>173</sup> Zanella points out that, according to the advocates of

168. Ibid., p. 347.

169. Della lett.

italiana, p. 106.

170. Ibid., pp. 23 and 39.

171. Ibid., p. 32.

172. Scritti vari,

pp. 24, 25.

173. Ibid., pp. 25, 26.

the canzone libera, "... essa seconda con più pieghevolezza l'andamento del pensiero". He feels, however, that this does not apply to many great poets, such as Horace, Parini, Foscolo and Manzoni. Apparently, Zanella adds, the critics who propose the canzone libera are unaware of how "... nelle strofe regolari sia lecito non solo, ma prescritto di passare senza punto e senza virgola dall'una all'altra ...", and also of how "... Pindaro dimezzò talvolta un vocabolo per portarne la metà nella strofa seguente". So, concludes Zanella, "In questo modo i maestri fuggono lo scoglio della monotonia, e si giovano della forza, che la necessità di stringersi in dato confine infonde al pensiero". Returning to the theme of the need for harmony and proportion, Zanella adds that "La strofa regolare lusinga l'orecchio pel costante ritorno della rima, e piace all'intelligenza che ama tutto ciò ch'è proporzionato e distinto dalle opere del caso".<sup>174</sup>

It has already been mentioned that Zanella greatly appreciated the endecasillabi sciolti in the poetry of Parini and Monti.

Not surprisingly, Zanella defends and praises the use, especially in epic poems, of l'ottava, for it has been sanctioned by tradition, from Boccaccio onwards. Poets such as Byron, Wieland and Chiabrera have also made use of it.

Zanella then explains why he has given so much attention to this whole question:

Io mi sono alquanto fermato su questa materia per premunire i giovani contro certi giudizi, che ponendo in dubbio, se non vituperando, ciò ch'era finora un vanto della nostra letteratura, rendono sempre più incerte le norme del comporre e dello scrivere.<sup>175</sup>

In other words, Zanella is concerned with the importance of maintaining what is best in the Italian literary tradition, of remaining within the framework of the latter, and not falling prey to the uncertainty—described elsewhere<sup>176</sup> as "licenza" and "disprezzo dell'arte"—which characterises nineteenth-century literature.

As has already been shown, Zanella's advocacy of a "Classical" style was a constant feature of his poetica, whilst, in terms of content, he more and more appreciated Pre-Romanticism and Romanticism, although his views on content were, naturally, also influenced by Classicism and positivism.

It has also been shown how Zanella greatly admired Parini and considered the preceding eighteenth-century Classicism and the later

174. Ibid., pp. 26, 27.

175. Ibid., p. 28.

176. Della lett. italiana, p. 224.



nineteenth-century as being inferior: the former, because of "la schiavitù delle regole" and "l'artificio"; the latter, for going to the opposite extreme of "la licenza" and "il disprezzo dell'arte".

Zanella also attacked the Scapigliati and other innovators amongst his contemporaries because, according to him, they were obsessed by "l'amore della novità". For Zanella, any "newness" or "novelty" had to come in the content and not in the style, which had to be that of the (Classical) Italian tradition—Dante, Ariosto, Alfieri, Manzoni.<sup>177</sup> It should be borne in mind that Zanella probably objected, on moral grounds, as in his attitude to French Naturalism, to the content of the Scapigliati.

Zanella's attitude to Leopardi is rather ambiguous. On several occasions he praises him highly and even seems to excuse his use of la canzone libera (cf. p. 44). His attitude is far more biting in ll. 80-88, Ad Elena e Vittoria Aganoor 1876:

...           Abbandonate a' flosci  
Schifi intelletti, cui seduce l'alta  
Melanconia dell'inequal canzone  
Recanatese, la fortuita rima  
E la strofa che ignava, a guisa d'angue  
Dilombato, or s'accorcia ed or s'allunga.  
Chiudan argini angusti il procelloso  
Vortice de' pensier, tal che si volga  
Sull'uman core più possente ...

Petronio has commented on these lines as follows:

... le Aganoor abbandonano ai poetastrì senza nerbo le strofe della canzone così detta leopardiana, in cui, com'è noto, la misura delle strofe varia dall'una all'altra e le rime sono fortuite, non collocate con una stessa legge in ogni strofe. Perciò dice che la strofe pare allungarsi come un serpe slombato.<sup>178</sup>

He then brings out the link between Zanella and Carducci:

In contrasto con la poesia facile, lo Zanella esalta la poesia difficile, in cui il pensiero è infrenato e costretto da severe leggi di stile e di metrica. Si confronti con il preludio delle Odi barbare del Carducci: "Odio l'usata poesia: concede Comoda al vulgo i flosci fianchi e senza Palpiti sotto i consueti amplessi Stendesi e dorme".<sup>179</sup>

Being opposed to the stylistic laxity of the Romantics (cf. Ad Elena e Vittoria Aganoor), and, of course, like most Italian poets of the second half of the 1800s, reacting against the excesses of the secondo romanticismo of Prati and Aleardi, Zanella, feeling that uninterrupted contact with tradition was the only way open for achieving a renewal of poetry which would not be merely external,<sup>180</sup> advocated (particularly in Ad Elena e Vittoria Aganoor, 1876) a restaurazione classicistica, as

177. Scritti vari, pp. 356, 357.

178. Petronio, p. 512.

179. Ibid., p. 513.

180. Cusatelli, p. 560.

Carducci was later to do. Both Petronio<sup>181</sup> and Cusatelli,<sup>182</sup> however, stress that any similarities between Zanella and Carducci would be stylistic rather than ideological.

Baldacci points out that Zanella's "saffica famosa", Egoismo e carità 1865, was not only highly praised by Carducci—"degno d'Orazio (massima lode) e d'un greco ... È l'unica forse nella letteratura di questi ultimi 40 anni"<sup>183</sup>—but was also echoed in one of the sonnets, Colloqui con gli alberi, of his Rime nuove.

As Arturo Graf<sup>184</sup> has said, Zanella was hailed as "poeta vero, e poeta grande", not only by Carducci, but also by Antonio Fogazzaro, Gino Capponi, Guido Mazzoni and many others. For Francesco Flora, in the slightly stylised description of friars in Sulle rovine di un antico convento 1869, 11.33-40, "si sente un'aura nuova, che spiegata vibrerà in certi giovanili versi del D'Annunzio, al pari delle vaghe fantasie che son chiuse negli ottonari dei Cavalli di San Marco".<sup>185</sup> Referring to the sonnet from Astichello, "A mezzo solco il vecchierel già stanco", Flora commented: "E già si annunziano le Myricae e i Poemetti pascoliani, sebbene con minore intensità ...".<sup>186</sup> He adds: "Del resto, cadenze e gruppi di note zanelliane sono anche nel Pascoli dei Poemi conviviali, ai quali già in qualche maniera prelude Timossena. E sono perfino nel Carducci".<sup>187</sup>

In conclusion, it may be said that while Zanella's poetica was, from the point of view of content, mainly Romantic, with contributions from Classicism and positivism, stylistically, it rejected the laxity of the Romantics, and was closely linked with the sober, moderate Classicism of Parini (and Foscolo), whilst having certain links with Leopardi, it foreshadowed certain aspects of Pascoli, (D'Annunzio) and the restaurazione classicistica of Carducci, even though "con altra ideologia e con altri spiriti".<sup>188</sup>

181. Petronio, p.509.

182. Cusatelli, p.560.

183. Baldacci, p.708.

184. Poesie (1928), p.XXVII.

185. F. Flora, Storia della letteratura italiana, Vol.4, Milano, Mondadori, 1966, p.639.

186. Ibid., p.640.

187. Ibid., p.641.

188. Petronio, p.509.





CHAPTER (3): THE INDIVIDUAL

Whilst there have been many "partial" studies<sup>1</sup> of Zanella's poetry providing excellent but perforce limited insights, at least two<sup>2</sup> have attempted to give a more comprehensive and panoramic view of the whole of his poetic output.

A composite picture of their assessments would show Zanella's poetic output as being broadly divisible into two periods: the first twenty-five years, 1839-1864, being relatively unproductive both quantitatively and qualitatively, while in the second more important phase, 1864-1887, Zanella not only wrote more and more poetry—apart from the years of his illness, 1872-1875—but also dealt with an ever wider range of themes. The vital turning point or watershed between these two periods is marked by his best poem, Sopra una conchiglia fossile, 1864.

Lampertico also stresses the importance of the 91 sonnets of the Astichello collection, 1880-1887, and shows "... [del] la continuità del pensiero nella forma stessa"<sup>3</sup> by comparing four pairs of poems, each pair comprising an early poem and a late one. This is tantamount to demonstrating the static nature of Zanella's stylistic and poetic development.

The first comparison, between a poem of 1849,

Grossa, sonante qualche goccia cala,  
La colombella si pulisce l'ala  
Sui fumaiuoli, e l'anitrella gaia  
Impazza starnazzando in mezzo l'aia;

and one of the Astichello sonnets,

Sul fumaiuolo  
Bianca colomba si pulisce l'ala,  
Grossa, sonante qualche goccia cala,  
Che di pinte anitrelle allegro stuolo  
Evita con clamor.

certainly shows striking similarities. The same is true of the second, between a poem of 1851 relating his state of mind when he had thought his mother was going to die, and A Maria Aganoor of 1876, in which Zanella described his terrible depression after his mother's death, as well as the third, between a sonnet of 1850, La farfalla, and one of the Astichello sonnets dealing with the same subject.

The fourth comparison, between a youthful sonnet, "Salice amor dell'anime pensose", and a sonnet of 1885 entitled Il salice, shows very few similarities and Lampertico himself has to admit: "Nell'ultimo raffronto

1. Reference will of course be made to them in the course of the thesis where appropriate.
2. Lampertico (Poesie (1894), Vol. I, pp. XXXIX-LV) and, in more recent times, Greenwood, pp. 340, 341.
3. Poesie (1894), Vol. I, p. XLVI.

invero è ripreso appena il motivo che si svolge in modo diverso".<sup>4</sup>

Although three of the four comparisons tended to support Lampertico's view, the present writer felt that it was insufficient evidence upon which to reach a conclusion. It was, therefore, decided that Chapters 3-6, in which Zanella's poetry was to be analysed critically, would be subdivided thematically and that within each thematic subheading the poems would be examined chronologically, thus providing several parallel ways of determining the exact nature of Zanella's stylistic and poetic development, the degree of correspondence between his poetry and his poetica, the wide range of themes he dealt with, as well as attempting to place him in his historical context.

Thus, this chapter examines in detail those poems in which Zanella dealt with the various aspects of the life of the individual, from childhood to death, from different standpoints.

#### (I) CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE

Even in such a short section as this one, it will be apparent how Zanella examines a particular subject from different viewpoints. Thus, in L'adolescente, 1863, the transitional crisis between childhood and adulthood is seen directly through the eyes of an adolescent, while, in Domenico o le memorie della fanciullezza 1871, there is an autobiographical element as the poet, with warm nostalgia, retrospectively surveys his youth.

There is another interesting feature which emerges in these two works, the way in which their dominant theme is highlighted by the presence of subordinate or complementary ones, such as Zanella's appreciation of natural beauty.

L'adolescente (Imitato dallo stesso) 1863 (cf.p.6,n.1), is divided into four parts, each of which ends very similarly, repeating the basic theme that the adolescent's insecurity and uncertainty are reflected in his longing to escape from his present circumstances and surroundings, as in ll. 15-18:

... Oh, se disciolta  
Gli fosse la catena! oh, se potesse  
Coll'aquila levato oltre que' monti  
Batter l'ala a più liberi orizzonti!

This poem is of a higher general standard than Amore immortale, but has no outstanding features such as the image of ll. 55-58 in the latter. It does, however, succeed in conveying quite effectively some of the features of adolescence, such as its anxieties and uncertainties, for it

4. Ibid., p. LII.

is the no-man's-land between childhood and adulthood, as well as the simultaneous co-existence of childish and adult characteristics.

In the first part of this work, Zanella shows in rather clear-cut terms the distinction between child and adult:

... Angelo o creta?  
 Chè le tempeste de' maturi giorni  
 Già gli ruggono in core, e l'innocenza  
 Virginali fragranze anco vi spande. ll. 3-6,

in terms of spirituality and materialism. As so often in his poetry, he sees things in precise, simplified, black-and-white terms, whereby the mutual, uneasy co-existence of childhood (innocence) and adulthood (passion) constitute the fundamental feature of adolescence.

In the second part of the poem, Zanella examines the dividing-line between the child and the man more closely. On the one hand, the fifteen-year-old boy seems indifferrent to the marvels of Nature,

Ma di fiori, di fonti e d'usignuoli  
 Al fanciullo non cal, che li calpesta  
 O gl'intorbida o scaccia, e sull'ocaso  
 Spegnersi lascia inosservato il Sole. ll 27-30,

and yet,

Fiori, fonti, usignuoli, avvolte frondi  
 E purpurei tramonti al cor gli danno  
 Ineffabil dolcezza ... ll. 34-36.

The description of the natural scene, as in ll. 27-30, for example, is not as effective as in Amore immortale, but is also less distracting, from the basic theme of the work, and in a way fits better into the poem as a whole.

He does attempt a greater degree of psychological analysis, as in ll. 36-40, which are particularly effective in conveying the sentimentality, the feeling of wonder and of being at one with the universe which are typically adolescent:

... ode una voce  
 Dall'universo uscir, che non compresa  
 Pur nell'alma gli suona e l'innamora;  
 Che ad altri mondi lo solleva, e questo  
 Pur gli fa benedir, dove dimora.

For Zanella, the adolescent's appreciation of natural beauties, ll. 34-36, and his sense of wonder and amazement, ll. 36-40—as if he were seeing everything for the first time—seem to constitute the essential difference between the child and the adolescent:

Tal de mobili regni hanno confine  
 Infanzia e giovinezza! ll. 41-42.

In ll. 42-45, the basic theme is developed further—the child seems so limited in his interests, while,



... ardentissimi  
 Smisurati fantasimi al garzone  
 Affaticano il core ... ll. 43-45.

Zanella returns once again to the sentimentality and day-dream world of the adolescent in the third part of the work. The poet has repeatedly stressed that the uncertainty and anxieties of the adolescent are characterised by a keen desire and longing for something which the youth himself cannot identify. Here, at last, however vaguely, the youth is shown as perceiving that he is motivated by a "desir d'amor":<sup>5</sup>

... nell'anima indistinto  
 T'arde un desio d'amor, che di bei volti  
 Fuggitivi ti popola le valli  
 D'immaginati elisi ... ll. 68-71

The repeated questions and uncertainties of adolescence, as presented by the poet, prepare for the youth's realization of what he is essentially searching for,

... Sente che il core  
 Ha bisogno d'un core, in cui riversi  
 I segreti suoi pianti e le speranze; ll. 86-88,  
 ... che l'ami  
 D'un amor, qual de' teneri poeti  
 Spira negl'inni e mai non vide il mondo. ll. 91-93.

The seeming triteness of these clichés is minimised by the poet's presentation of them. After all the questions which the adolescent has been asking himself, his resolution of them in such simple terms is very understandable and has been prepared for in the poem. In addition, the freshness and originality which these solutions hold for the youth are at least partially transmitted and felt by the reader.

The youth does not know what the future holds for him, but he realizes that he must work and justify his existence, ll. 75-86. The image of l.75, "Batte alle porte del futuro ...",<sup>6</sup> was also used by Zanella to convey

5. The themes dealt with by Nievo, in his last decade, included "... i primi risentimenti di fronte all'amore, complicati e spesso incomprensibili ...", as in the case of the character, "Favitta", from Il Varmò, for whom: "... tutto accade nell'adolescenza e nel suo primo scoprirsi donna, secondo il destino della bellezza muliebre condizionante l'azione amorosa nelle semplici società contadine" (Romagnoli, pp. 103 and 113).

Nievo's psychological analysis of an adolescent's attempts to come to terms with attitude to life and love seems to have found an echo in Zanella's L'adolescente. It could be said that these two writers (both from Veneto) were attempting to get closer to reality.

6. Cf. Carducci: "... e io .../battea le porte de l'avvenire;" Per le nozze di mia figlia, ll. 3,4.

his mother's approaching death, "... Colla cerea mano/Già picchiavi alle porte", A mia madre, 1865, ll.2,3.

His treatment of the themes of the daydream world of the adolescent as well as his wonder and amazement at his surroundings and the world, seem to anticipate certain features of Pascoli's fanciullino.

While the adjective "purpurei" l.35 seems to be of Virgilian derivation, Leopardi's influence is very evident, as in the case of the expression "... dell'infanzia il limitare" l.49 (cf. "... il limitare/Di gioventù ..." ll. 5,6, A Silvia).

The last lines of each of the four parts of the poem (see p.50) are reminiscent of Leopardi's youthful desire to travel and escape from his surroundings as in L'infinito and Le roccie.

There is a completely different emphasis in Domenico o le memorie della fanciullezza, an idyll of 1871 partly based on fact,<sup>7</sup> for here it is the poet himself who reminisces with wistful nostalgia about his youth, seemingly ignoring the trials and tribulations so typical of adolescence and so well depicted in the preceding composition.

Zanella's description of his happy childhood is closely bound up with his memories of Domenico, the old soldier, and with his appreciation of Nature; there are also historical allusions as well as the themes of death and separation from loved ones. As so often in his poetry, he develops and intertwines the various themes to good effect.

The poem begins with a description of Domenico, in which Zanella stresses the old soldier's ruggedness, "... e d'onorata/Cicatrice sul mento il solco impresso", ll.3,4. Later he returns to similar imagery, "... i solchi/Del suo volto guerrier..." ll.208,209. It is interesting that he uses a similar expression in Le palme fossili 1877, "La guancia delicata/solchin le rughe ..." ll. 16,17, to emphasize the change which comes with age.

While Domenico had returned from various Napoleonic campaigns<sup>8</sup> many of his contemporaries had not. The poet links the sorrows of their mothers with his own personal experiences. The caresses he received from them

7. Poesie (1928), p.184: "Il fondo dell'idillio e certi particolari sono veri. L'armaiuolo era Domenico Cristofari, nato a Chiampo nel 1782 ed ivi morto a cinquantasei anni".

8. There is an interesting thematic divergence between Leopardi and Zanella regarding Napoleon's Russian campaign in which so many Italian troops had lost their lives. The former felt that it had been a useless sacrifice, whereas Zanella (ll.60-62) considered that Italy's greatness had been enhanced by the military prowess of her soldiers. Was Zanella's attitude influenced by the very successful book, Gl'Italiani in Russia. Memorie d'un Ufficiale Italiano—the third and fourth tomes were published in 1827—written by G. De Laugier (1786-1871)? Cf. Romagnoli, p.149: "... il libro, scritto con il veemente assillo di difendere l'onore delle truppe partite dalle contrade italiane nel febbraio del 1812 verso le argenti terre russe... ebbe successo e vide presto esaurite, una di seguito all'altra, cinque edizioni...".

are contrasted with the desolation of the places where their sons had died:

...                quei che del Tago  
Già le sabbie coprivano, o le nevi  
De' rutèni deserti ...                                ll. 14-16

Zanella epitomises the terrible bloodshed on the battlefields with the Virgilian adjective "crüenti" l. 20, while ll. 22-24:

...                guerreggianti eroi  
Delle patrie frontiere alla difesa  
Accorreati frettolosi ...

have Leopardian overtones, "... a morte, / Per la patria correati le genti a squadre;" *All'Italia*, ll. 62, 63.

When Domenico had returned to his "borgo natio" he hesitated just before entering his home,

...                Stridea  
Il filatoio che, vicina al foco,  
Col piè volgea la madre poveretta;  
E pe' fessi dell'uscio il picciol lume,  
Ch'era alla cappa del camin sospeso,  
Traluceva ...    ll. 46-51.

In these lines, Zanella presents a tableau of rustic, bucolic domesticity mixed with elements of realism,<sup>9</sup> similar to those of *Due vite* and some of the *Astichello* sonnets, cf. pp. 71, 72.

The following lines show an effusion of Romantic emotion and sentimentality, as they reach a climax of joyous affection, again mixed with realism,

...                Picchiò. La nota voce,  
Come guizzo di folgore, i ginocchi  
Disciolse a quella pia, che a stento accorse  
E di pianto grondante e di sudore  
Quel bello unico suo si strinse al seno.                                ll. 51-55.                                10

9. This combination (bucolic domesticity and a certain realism) finds an interesting contemporary parallel with the poets of the *Idillio borghese* (as defined by *Cusatelli*, pp. 538, 539) — as for example rather surprisingly, with certain aspects of Vincenzo Riccardi di Lantosca's *Pape Satan Aleppe*, in which "... c'è la sobria e casta celebrazione delle virtù familiari; e della casalinga vita ottocentesca, modesta e raccolta, c'è tutto lo spirito, condensato in una serie di 'macchiette': la vedova ... il vecchio ... che ha fatto il soldato sotto Napoleone ... " (*Cusatelli*, p. 546) — as well as seeming to anticipate, to a certain extent, the "meraviglioso domestico" and "naturalizza casalinga" (*Cattaneo*, p. 388) of the best tales of Ildelfonso Nieri (1853-1920).

10. The twin themes of ll. 46-55 — a mother busy at work (ll. 46-51), the tenderness of her love for her son (ll. 51-55) — seem to find an echo in Pascoli's *La tessitrice*.



The joy and simplicity of l.55 testify to the importance which this theme, a reunion between mother and son, had for Zanella, particularly in terms of his love for his own mother and his ardent wish to embrace her in heaven, as in Ad un usignuolo, 1876, written after her death.

The poem later turns to his appreciation of Nature as a child. He sums it up in Leopardian terms,<sup>11</sup> "Onnipossente la natura al core/Favellavami ..." ll.76,77, in spite of the rather clumsy-sounding "Favellavami". In fact, he stresses that the short, happy period of his childhood, before being sent away to school, was synonymous with his enjoyment of the countryside and natural beauty, ll.77-90, adding that his greatest delight was to go out with Domenico, ll. 90-94.

Ll. 103-108 are an effective and idyllic description of the early morning scene as Domenico and the young Zanella set out together. The adjective "rugiadose" l. 104, as applied to the stars, is both realistic and idyllic, while the cry of the crane as it flies towards the East, ll. 104-106, adds a note of exoticism. Ll. 106-108,<sup>12</sup>

... la finestretta  
Apriva il montanaro e, sporto il capo,  
Guatava il giorno ancor profondo ...

further add to the realism of the scene by emphasizing how early it was.

The poet goes on to explain how exciting he found Domenico's account of his days as a soldier. Zanella brings Domenico's stories to an end and reintroduces the natural setting in a very effective and realistic way:

... quando il repente  
Ne' roveti fruscio della beccaccia  
Levata a vol, l'omerico racconto  
Troncava ... ll.119-122.

The poet then returns to describing the natural scene,

... Chiara si face già l'aria;<sup>13</sup>  
E dalle valli, ancor nel buio, un rombo  
Ascendea di campane: a mezza costa  
Coll'aspra voce l'arator garriva  
I buoi protesì: sovra i neri solchi  
E sotto i rami di vermiglie poma  
All'incarco cedevoli, opulento

11. Cf. Il risorgimento, ll.99,100: "Parla al mio core il fonte/Meco favella il mar".

12. These lines, not only reminiscent of the following, "Giocondo il montanaro in sulla porta/Fassi del suo tugurio e si conforta/Rimirando..." (from a fragment beginning "Grossa, sonante qualche goccia cala" written by Zanella in 1849—cf. Poesie scelte (1957), p.1), also remind one, even if to a lesser extent, of Leopardi—La quiete dopo la tempesta, ll.11-13: "L'artigiano a mirar l'umido cielo,/Con l'opra in man, cantando,/Fassi in su l'uscio...". (Cf. Pasquazi (1967), pp.28,29).

13. Cf. Leopardi: "Già tutta l'aria imbruna", l.16, Il sabato del villaggio.

Odorava l'autunno ...

ll. 122-129. <sup>14</sup>

The first three lines have a gentleness which is reminiscent of the Leopardian idylls. The noun "rombo" is not only frequent in Zanella's poetry, but also occurs in Leopardi. The tranquillity, softness and gentleness of these lines are heightened by the contrast with the harsher sounds in ll.124-125, due to the double z, s, g, rr and the combination of "spr" in "aspra", as well as "t" in "costa" and "arator".

To the visual, "... Chiara si faceva già l'aria", and auditory, "... un rombo/Ascendea di campane ...", images, is added the olfactory, <sup>15</sup> "... opulento/Odorava l'autunno ...". The effect is heightened by the unusual, arresting use of "Odorava"—cf. Leopardi, *Alla Primavera*, l.17, "Primavera odorata". <sup>16</sup>

In the image of the heavily-laden fruit trees, "... i rami di vermiglie poma/All'incarco cedevoli ...", the unusual adjective "cedevoli" is very apt in conveying the sheer heaviness, "incarco", of the apples on the branches, making them almost give way—the gentle cadence of the word itself almost onomatopoeically suggests the branches succumbing to the weight.

ll.126-129, with their emphasis on the space between the vividly-defined soil "neri solchi" and the fruit "vermiglie poma" on the branches of the trees, stress the physical presence of the air, <sup>17</sup> already referred to in l.122, which carried the wonderful autumnal fragrance, thus heightening the olfactory image.

In the contrast between "neri solchi" and "vermiglie poma", the poet intensifies the visual imagery and adds an element of realism. <sup>18</sup>

14. Cf. Pascoli: "C'è nell'aria un fiocco di luna/Come è dolce questo ritorno/nella sera che non imbruna!/per una di queste serate!/tra tanto odorino d'estate!" ll.26-30, *La servetta di monte*.
15. Cf. Carducci, *Faida di comune*, ll.145,146: "Forte odora per le ville/La vendemmia già matura:".
16. Cf. also Fogazzaro (*Poesie*), p.525—*Miranda*, II PARTE, ll.38,39: "... D'aprile una soave/Sera odorava ...".
17. Cf. Pascoli: "Si respira una dolce aria che scioglie/le dure zolle..." (ll.7,8 *L'aquilone*, *Primi Poemetti*).
18. The tone and mood of ll.103-108,119-132 seem to find a vague and distant echo in Carducci's *San Martino*—"Quadretto autunnale di vita di paese,colta con compendioso impressionismo". (G.Carducci, *Poesie*, a cura di Giorgio Barberi Squarotti, Milano,1978,p.305).

In addition there are some interesting superficial similarities between the two works, including: the depiction of an autumnal country scene; reference to olfactory imagery ("Va l'aspro odor de i vini/L'anime a rallegrar", ll.7,8 *San Martino*); the adjective "rosastre" (l.131, *Domenico o ...* and l.13, *San Martino*); and a certain thematic parallel between ll.103-108 (*Domenico o ...*) and ll.11-16 (*San Martino*)—in which both poets show a man contemplating the sky.

There is then a recurrent concept in Zanella's poetry: "... Il sommo giogo/Ad un punto col Sole io guadagnava", ll.129,130, of ascending a mountain or hill towards a sunrise. In his verses, this often symbolically signifies man's journey through life, with all its obstacles and hardships, towards death and the dawn of his eternal destiny, as in *La veglia*, 1864, cf.p.84. Though here these lines do not have this symbolic sense, because it frequently occurs in his poetry, there are certain lingering overtones of it.

When Domenico shows Zanella Venice in the distance, the city's beauty<sup>19</sup> is enhanced by the rays of the rising sun, "Imporporata dal nascente raggio" l.136. The sun, in all its manifestations and taking into account all the varied effects of its rays, is one of his favourite natural themes.

After Domenico has pointed out to the young Zanella the sights which can be seen from the "sommo giogo",<sup>20</sup> he points in the direction of France and becomes lost in thought. The poet then very effectively fuses the impression he had as a boy with the lasting effect it has had on him since:

... Assorto  
Io rimirava; e quel che allor sognai,  
E luminosa vision che sorge  
Dal grembo della notte; e la mia vita  
Del fresco raggio antelucan colora. ll.145-149.

Once again, he makes use of the image of the sunrise; this time to express the freshness and beauty of the dreams and vision he then had, as well as their subsequent lasting impact.

In the second part of the poem, in contrast with the peace, light and strength of ll.145-149—his happy childhood memories and their lasting, beneficial, invigorating influence—the poet describes his sorrow on returning to Chiampo, as an adult many years later, when he could no longer see Domenico's house and orchard. He exclaims, "O gioconde memorie, a cui non resta/Altra dimora che il mio petto!..."ll.164-165. To show the extent of his sadness at the disappearance of Domenico's house he compares it with the sense of desolation he feels on seeing a goat roaming through the ruins of an ancient city. The comparison is neither effective nor appropriate. It lacks real spontaneity and feeling, seeming too academic and even literary, ll.150-155. The poet goes on to

19. Zanella's co-regionist, Nievo, had expressed his love for Venice in *Le Confessioni d'un Italiano*—cf. *Romagnoli* (p.125): "Quella sua Venezia...un'immagine che rimane nella memoria... Vi sono, nel romanzo, alcuni indugi descrittivi che rivelano quanta carica d'affetto nutrisse il Nievo per quella città...".

20. *Poesie* (1928), p.184.



recall how, on returning to Chiampo on another occasion, he had also lamented the loss of his family home, ll.165-168.

He continues to reminisce about the past and in ll.195-199,

... Un foco  
 Ilare ardea nella contigua stanza,  
 E bollia gorgogliando il pentolino  
 Col cavolo frugal che vi cocea  
 La madre veccharella ...

depicts a scene of bucolic domesticity tinged with realism. This echoes not only ll.46-51 of this poem, but also similar tableaux, as in Due vite, 1862, and Astichello, LXVII, 1880-1887 (cf. pp.71-72), all of which represent an intermediary stage between Romanticism and Verismo—the vez-zeggiativi helping to attenuate the harshness of the poverty which emerges in the realism.

Domenico's descriptions of his campaigns are in Classical terms, as may be seen from expressions such as "L'omero onusti", l.239, the references to Achilles and ll.233-235,

... Narravi  
 Gli apparecchi, gli assalti e la ruina  
 Delle dome città ...

whose tone will later be echoed in Astichello, LXXXVI,

Quando il villano, ancor bagnato e tinto  
 Del sangue ostil, coll'asta il bue pungea;  
 Ed alle spose sbigottite il vinto  
 Nemico e le città rase dicea; 11.5-8.

Zanella also recalls the words of the village priest, with his references to an age of peace and unity in Europe, ll.274-278. The latter had also spoken of other things which he had not lived to see, including the wars fought by Carlo Alberto and Victor Emanuel and Italy's resurrection. On visiting the graves of Domenico and the priest, the poet exclaims,

... O quante ombre di giorni  
 Avventurosi mi assaliro! O quante  
 Nel recinto di morte io ritrovai  
 Ore di vita! ... 11.288-291.

Ll.289-291 are particularly striking in the way the poet links the memory of happy times with the cemetery where so many dead friends are buried. The apparent contradiction adds to the impact of these lines.

Although death separates us from our loved ones, he concludes that our human sorrow is tempered by the joy of knowing that one day we will be reunited with them for ever in eternity.

## (II) LOVE

As in the preceding section, Zanella not only looks at a particular subject from different angles—including, for example, the importance of dealing with the secrets of the human heart in his poetry, San Bastian dalla viola in man. Proverbio veneto. 20 gennaio 1872; the

constructive impact of mother-love, A donna Teresa Surlera superiora nel Collegio delle Dame Inglesi in Vicenza, 1877: analysing how love influences a young woman's perception of her beloved, Edvige 1881; warning a fifteen-year-old girl of the depth of feeling in the human heart, Sopra una perla 1884—but also intertwines his treatment of the dominant theme with complementary ones, such as an appreciation of natural beauty.

There is also an interesting diachronic progression in Zanella's treatment of the theme of love. Thus, the Romantic sentimentality with which the spirituality of innocent young love is presented in Amore immortale 1863, is followed by the greater realism of the psychological analysis of the relationship between Paolo and Elvira in Edvige 1881, with its echoes of Manzoni and Prati (cf. p. 64, n. 33), while, in Corrado 1885, the clash between "spirit" and "senses" has thematic affinities with Tommaseo, Fogazzaro and Remigio Zena.

Amore immortale (Imitato dallo spagnuolo di A. Trueba) 1863 (cf. p. 6, n. 1), has two striking features: the sheer mediocrity of Zanella's treatment of love, and the idyllic, Leopardian evocation of nature and the countryside.

In discussing<sup>21</sup> his translations from Trueba, Zanella stated that he needed to tone down the flowery, original Spanish in order to render it into Italian. This process of simplification may account for the fact that his final Italian version seems, in places, so trite and comes perilously close to the level of the cliché. This is particularly true of those parts of the poem where he deals with love. Thus in lines 5-8:

Malinconicamente invan battendo  
I nostri cori che il giocondo affanno  
Già sentiano d'amore e desiosi  
Si cercavano ...

the commonplace idea of two hearts searching for each other should at least receive an original treatment or presentation, which Zanella fails to provide. In lines 15, 16: "Com'è dolce l'amor! come favella/Onnipossente all'anima!" we find an example of what Arturo Graf<sup>22</sup> described as "... alcune (come ho a dire?) allumacature di romanticismo attardato e non buono ...", while the following passage is not merely trite, but has a clumsy repetition:

Chi dogliosa di lagrime vallèa  
Disse la terra, non conobbe amore;  
Perchè questa di lagrime vallèa  
A chi conobbe amore è paradiso.

ll. 37-40.

21. Scritti vari, pp. 349, 350. (Cf. also Ch. 2, p. 31).

22. Poesie (1928), p. XXVI.

Despite the obvious earnestness which Zanella displays the use of the first person narrative form, as well his attempt to simplify the original Spanish composition, he does not succeed in effectively conveying the fundamental themes of the poem. These are, of course, universal, human ideals and experiences which, by their very nature, inevitably gravitate towards the proverb or the maxim—"Love is stronger than Death", "Love is eternal and spiritual", "To be in love is to be in Heaven". Being so commonplace they should receive an original presentation, in order to be effectively conveyed in poetry. This, Zanella fails to provide. There is, however, one particular instance where, although the imagery may not perhaps be very original, it is so strikingly effective, for he has been able to convey the intensity and force of spiritual love, in its conquest of death, through a very concrete, material image:<sup>23</sup>

... un tale amore  
 Colla vita non cade: amor dell'alma  
 Rompe la pietra del sepolcro e vive  
 Come l'anima eterno ed infinito. ll. 55-58.

One can almost imagine a bolt of lightning smashing a tombstone. There is a crescendo of intensity in these lines, from the soft, gentle and yet emphatic beginning: "... un tale amore/Colla vita non cade ...", which reaches a climax in the following words: "... amor dell'alma/Rompe la pietra del sepolcro e vive", with a triumphal ending, tightly bound to these lines by enjambement: "Come l'anima eterno ed infinito. Through this close link between the material image of l.57 and the conclusion of l.58, Zanella wishes to emphasise that however "material" or "concrete" the force of love may seem in its intensity, it must, in final analysis, be viewed in spiritual terms.

Interwoven within this framework—the whole image, ll.55-58—there is also an alternation of gentle and hard sounds and phrases. The former: "... un tale amore/... amor dell'alma/ ... vive/Come l'anima eterno ed infinito", through the soft "l"s and "m"s and "n"s, convey the ethereal, intangible delicacy of spiritual love, while the latter: "Colla vita non cade .../Rompe la pietra del sepolcro ...", by means of the hard, harsh consonant "c", and "r" and alliteration of "p" suggest the intensity and almost physical force of this spiritual love by equating it with the sheer, down-to-earth solidity of the material, concrete image in line 57. This is

23. Cf. Gerard Manley Hopkins, 1844-1889—in whose poetry material, concrete imagery was used to convey spiritual themes—and, of course, Manzoni: "Nel M. c'è l'abitudine di esprimere concetti astratti o spirituali con immagini di carattere fisico ..." (A. Manzoni, Liriche, tragedie e prose, a cura di Luigi Russo, Firenze, 1971, p.33).



accentuated by the sounds "tra", in "pietra", and "cro", in "sepolcro", which onomatopoeically convey the image of the crumbling tombstone.

Zanella has effectively utilized the enjambement in ll. 57 and 58, for the whole image concludes on a note of triumphal exaltation as it bursts from the terrestrial plane of the limited, material image of the crumbling tombstone on to that of eternity and infinity.

This transition between the terrestrial and infinite planes is heightened by the rhythmic pause between "anima" and "eterno", while the final image of limitless space and infinity, which transcend earthly existence, l.58, is accentuated by the repetition of "e" followed by "o" ("eterno") and of "i" followed by "o" ("infinito"). The whole effect is to lengthen the line, thus suggesting infinite space. This image, ll.55-58, is certainly superior to that in Due vite which also deals with love being stronger than death and having an eternal value (cf.p.70).

The alternating counterpoint of spirituality and materialism in these lines is at the heart of Zanella's poetry, for it informed almost every theme he dealt with. Whereas, in many of the later poems, there will be polemical bitterness in the clash between religious, spiritual values and positivism or scientific materialism, here we find not a confrontation but rather the juxtapositioning of the terrestrial and celestial planes.

Throughout his poetic output Zanella returns to each basic theme, looking at it from different angles. It is interesting that within the context of this single poem he examines the spirituality of love in different ways. Thus, as has been in lines 55-58, he is emphasizing that love is stronger than death and has an eternal value, while lines 29,30, repeated in the poem, show that love, between a man and a woman, which at its highest level is a union of souls, attains its greatest expression in heaven. This is developed a stage further in Zanella's angelismo or stressing of the intensity and innocence of spiritual love, ll.31-34; and, of course, he deals with a very realistic feature of love, the painful separation brought about by death.<sup>24</sup> Although the poet acknowledges the terrible anguish of being separated from a loved one, ll.65, 66, he goes on to show that religion brings comfort and consolation, ll.71-2, through its promise of reunion in an afterlife, l.74.

Although these themes are not effectively conveyed in the poem, they were very important to Zanella and recur throughout his poetic output. By contrast, when he is describing the natural scene, he is far more successful and strikes a chord which is very reminiscent of Leopardi, as can be seen in the gentleness and lightness of touch of ll. 3,4: "... il

24. These themes—the innocence of young love and the separation caused by death—find vague echoes in Pascoli's I due cugini.

Sol che vaporoso/In grembo si calava alle montagne".<sup>25</sup> The adjective "vaporoso" provides a strikingly original way of describing the setting sun and is enhanced by the enjambement. Throughout his poetry there are many instances where Zanella uses phrases or expressions—cf. "un giorno di festa", l. 1, "un dì di festa", l. 93, and Leopardi's La sera del dì di festa—which are typically Leopardian. In this poem, however, it is not merely a question of a superficial resemblance, for Zanella seems so close to the tone and mood of Leopardi's lyrical, idyllic evocation of Nature and the countryside. This is particularly true of ll. 11-14:

... tra pianta e pianta  
 Guata furtiva la nascente Luna,  
 E per la valle tacita si spande  
 L'argenteo suon delle piangenti squille. <sup>26</sup>

The use of the adjective "argenteo", also having Leopardian overtones, suggests that the moon's silvery rays are in some way connected with the fading sounds of the evening, while enjambement stresses the verb, "si spande", so that it almost seems to become "lengthened" and onomatopoeically reinforces the image of these sounds spreading and wafting over the valley.

The theme of love, in a sonnet of 1872, San Bastian dalla viola in man. Proverbio veneto. 20 gennaio,<sup>27</sup> receives a different and perhaps more subtle treatment, as it is interwoven with various complementary threads including: an autobiographical element; how a poet should view reality and what he should deal with in his poetry; and, comparisons draw from nature.

Zanella says that as a boy he preferred to go looking for "la timida viola" l. 7, rather than studying Latin. Now, instead of the violet, he searches for "Fior più gentil", poetry. He concludes,

Ben è ravvolto di pungenti dumi;  
 Ma più nascosto e più da' nemi offeso,  
 Più m'affascina il cor co' suoi profumi. ll. 12-14.

In other words, he reveals his fascination with discovering the secrets of the human heart and stresses its importance as a subject for poetry. This, of course, corresponds very closely with Zanella's poetica, in

25. Cf. Leopardi, Le tre fanciulle, ll. 19-22, "tremolando la spera/calava a poco a poco;/...dietro a la pendice/d'un de' tuoi monti..." (Baldacci, p. 564).

26. Ll. 13, 14 seem to find an echo in Pascoli: "Tra il cantico sonoro/il tuo tintinno squilla,/voce argentina..." Alba festiva, ll. 10-12.

27. Poesie scelte (1957), p. 94: "Il proverbio 'San Bastian da la viola in man' annunzia che il giorno di S. Sebastiano già occhieggia tra le siepi la prima viola". (One of Nievo's "novelle camperecce" in the Novelliere campagnuolo is entitled La viola di San Bastiano).

particular with his remarks in the preface to the first edition of his verses (cf. p. 36).<sup>27</sup>

Calcaterra's comment on ll. 13,14, is as follows:

Come la viola pareva più bella tra le siepi irte e  
spinose dell'inverno, così il sentimento lirico tra  
le spine della vita, piene di nemi.<sup>28</sup>

The similarity in Zanella's reference to the violet, the metaphor of the flower symbolising poetry, and the description of the human heart as if it were also a flower surrounded by thorny bushes and brambles, provides a thematic progression which gives the sonnet an effective conciseness. From l. 11, "Ove m'attempo a limar voci inteso", one can find confirmation of Zanella's stylistic perfectionism, as can also be seen in Pel taglio di un bosco 1869, Natura ed arte 1877, and the preface to the first edition of his poems.<sup>29</sup>

There are Leopardian overtones in ll. 1,2: "Nell'età dei trastulli, a cui rivola<sup>30</sup> L'egro pensier con desiderio eterno," not only in the presence of the adjective "egro", but primarily in the theme of eternal nostalgia for one's childhood.

The smooth continuity and development of the fundamental theme of the poem, its calm simplicity, the importance the subject had for Zanella, and the appropriate imagery, are all factors which may be said to contribute to the sonnet's value and effectiveness.

In another sonnet, the simple, unpretentious A donna Teresa Surlera superiora nel Collegio delle Dame Inglesi in Vicenza 1877, Zanella indicates how constructive mother-love can be. Thus he pays tribute to donna Teresa for having brought about the modernisation of the country property known as "Il Parco":

... da gran tempo in completo abbandono quando nel  
1877 venne acquistata dalle Dame Inglesi e ridotto  
a luogo di villeggiatura del collegio. 31

Zanella claims that this transformation has been inspired by donna Teresa's "Amor materno", l. 12, for the young girls of the college.

In the tale, Edvige 1881, based on events which actually took place,

"Il fatto è vero in gran parte—scriveva lo Zanella  
il 12 aprile ad una sua ex allieva—; ho cambiato  
soltanto i nomi delle persone e de' luoghi; anche la  
fine orrenda del padre è di mia invenzione." 32

28. Ibid., p. 94.

29. Poesie (1928), pp. XLI-XLIII.

30. Cf. Carducci: "Là rivola il pensier mio", l. 27, Nostalgia.

31. Poesie (1928), p. 495.

32. Ibid., p. 435.



Zanella deals with love in several different aspects: childhood, friendship, maternal love; and in particular, the love between a man and a woman. There is greater psychological and emotional detail and also greater realism than in Amore immortale with its emphasis on spirituality, or La vigilia delle nozze, with its occasional nature. As so often in his poetry, Zanella looks at the same basic theme from different standpoints. Here, he examines the nature of the love and attraction between Edvige and Teobaldo. He begins by showing how Edvige has to come to terms with the realisation of being in love after so many dreams. She wonders what her beloved Teobaldo, whom she considers to be so wonderful and unique, could possibly see in her. At the same time, she views his faults in a different light from everyone else: thus, his pride seems "di signoril costume/Naturale grandezza", whilst his scepticism is the painful result of the lack of affection and attention when he was a child, as well as resulting from his "bollente/Avido spirto d'ogni fren sdegnoso", ll. 938-959. In other words, love, according to Zanella, is not so much blind to the faults of the beloved, as compassionate and understanding. Zanella almost seems to be suggesting that the loved one is not only loved for what he or she is, but for what he or she could become, in terms of an ideal or idealised image. Thus, there is an attempt to understand the root causes of the beloved's faults in order to help him or her to eradicate them and so draw nearer to the ideal image.

Realism and psychological analysis are also present in Zanella's treatment of the relationship between Paolo and Elvira. Thus, Zanella does not condemn Paolo's ill-treatment of Elvira<sup>33</sup> out of hand, but tries to provide a psychological and emotional analysis of the conflict, between love and ambition, in Paolo's mind, ll. 344-359.

There is an interesting thematic variation on San Bastian dalla viola in man in another sonnet, Sopra una perla 1884, in which Zanella shows his concern with the depth of feeling in the human heart. It has a certain sermonising quality reminiscent of Sopra un anello 1869, and was dedicated to the "... nobile giovinetta veronese Maria Da Persico allieva del collegio delle Dame inglesi in Vicenza".<sup>34</sup>

The poet tells the fifteen-year-old Maria that the pearl she is wearing "Senti de' venti le tenzoni orrende;" l. 8, in its original habitat. He then concludes in the second *terzina*,

33. Cf. vague thematic affinities with the repudiation of Manzoni's Ermengarda and of Prati's Edmenegarda.

34. Poesie (1928), p. 269.

Altre tempeste, o giovinetta, han nido  
 Nell'uman core, e rapido le desta  
 Un sogno, più del mar, sovente infido.      11, 12-14.

These lines are reminiscent of 11.25,26 from Sopra un anello,

Ha sue tempeste il core,  
 Elena, come il mar ...

The reference to "tenzoni orrende" 1.8, reminds one of "immani tenzoni" 1.18, in Sopra una conchiglia fossile 1864. There is also an echo of this ode in 11.5-11 where the poet describes storms at sea.

According to Calcaterra, "Il sonetto, nella sua forma compassata, sente di accademico ...".<sup>35</sup> The poem certainly seems rather laboured and the second terzina provides a hackneyed, trite conclusion. Despite the obvious technical and stylistic qualities which Zanella invariably displayed, the sonnet does seem to have the following defects, ascribed to Zanella's poetry by Arturo Graf,

... certa sdolcinatura talvolta; qualche accattata o faticosa eleganza; qualche stentata perifrasi; un po' di prosaismo e di convenzionalismo; alcuni ripieghi non dissimulati abbastanza; alcune sentenze trite; alcune (come ho a dire?) allumacature di romanticismo attardato e non buono. 36

The fact that this sonnet has these defects, the triteness of earlier works and close links with Sopra un anello 1869, whilst being itself a product of Zanella's last years — specifically 1884 — would tend to confirm Lampertico's view of the static nature of Zanella's poetic development. And yet this conclusion would ignore the fact that precisely during this period — through Corrado 1885 and some of the sonnets of Astichello 1880-1887 — Zanella displayed greater thematic realism (cf. pp. 320-2).

It is interesting, however, at this point, to note with regard to Corrado that "Anche questo racconto, come l'Edvige, è nella sua linea generale ricavato dal vero".<sup>37</sup> In dealing with the various aspects of the life of the individual, Zanella shows a greater degree of psychological analysis and realism than in Edvige. This is particularly true of his treatment of the themes of love, marriage and the priesthood.

Corrado's neighbour, Ernesto, had a son, Ippolito, who, from childhood, had seemed destined to become a priest. However, when he came home from the seminary on a visit and saw Giannina, Corrado's daughter, he fell in love with her. For a year he was torn between his love for her and the idea of becoming a priest. Zanella shows the tremendous force of Ippolito's love and the way he is affected by it. Ippolito then gave up the

35. Poesie scelte (1957), p. 122.

36. Poesie (1928), p. XXVI.

37. Ibid., p. 450.

struggle and returned home, but still did not seem to find peace, ll. 203-207.<sup>38</sup> Giannina, however, realised what was happening and fell in love with him, ll. 207-209. Eventually they were married and knew great happiness.

Although Zanella does not comment on whether the young man should have become a priest and he does not disapprove of Ippolito's marrying Giannina, his attitude to their love seems ambiguous: on the one hand, he stresses the spirituality of their love, "i guardi/Messaggeri dell'anime scontrarsi" ll. 216, 217, and yet on the other hand he depicts Ippolito's love for Giannina as a violent attack on the senses, ll. 185-189. Although Zanella seems to approve of the marriage and the great happiness which derives from it, ll. 276, 277, he describes Ippolito's internal conflict as a battle, whose outcome is a surrender. Did the poet in fact disapprove of those seminarists who left to get married? In any event, when one remembers that Zanella was himself a celibate priest, he showed a very deep appreciation of the value of marriage and family ties, as will be seen in the following sections.

The fundamental clash between "spirit" and "senses", experienced by Ippolito, finds interesting affinities with Tommaseo — not only in his novel, Fede e bellezza 1838, and his poetry, but also in his life "... fin da giovane si sforza di liberare l'amore dalle scorie del senso e di renderlo spirituale al punto di trascendere del tutto la nostra natura corporea";<sup>39</sup> the novels of Fogazzaro, for example, Malombra 1881, in which, "Corrado Silla, 'ardente spiritualista' ma tentato dal demonio della voluttà tetra', è la vittima destinata a soccombere nell'antagonismo 'dello spirito e dei sensi'.";<sup>40</sup> and Remigio Zena's L'apostolo 1901.<sup>41</sup>

(III) MARRIAGE

In the poems where marriage is the dominant theme one finds that Zanella concentrates mainly on a woman's viewpoint. Thus he examines in detail the anxieties and uncertainties of a bride-to-be, as in La vigilia delle nozze 1861 and Nelle nozze Lampertico Mangilli. Alla sposa 1876, although in the latter they are not taken quite so seriously as the poet seems preoccupied with his own state of mind. While La suocera al genero 1863 exposes the feelings of a bride's mother towards her son-in-law, and Timossena 1865 shows the worries experienced by a young wife,

<sup>38</sup>. One is reminded of two recurring themes in Fogazzaro: "... la rinuncia all'amore seguita, più che dalla pace, dal tormento, il richiamo dei sensi travestito di inquietudini spirituali ... " (Cattaneo, p. 426).

<sup>39</sup>. Sticco, p. 269.

<sup>40</sup>. Cattaneo, p. 416.

<sup>41</sup>. Ibid., p. 390: "Il protagonista del suo romanzo è un credente, senza oscillazioni nella sua fede, ma debole di fronte alle tentazioni del mondo, rappresentate da un amore per una giovane enigmatica ... ".



Due vite 1862, from the other end of the arc of human existence, retrospectively evaluates the joys and benefits of married life through the eyes of an old widower.

In 1861 Zanella produced the first version of La vigilia delle nozze which was published for the wedding of the Countess Maria Porto di Vicenza and Giovan Battista Prina. Subsequently, Zanella made the following changes: "Maria, tu siedi muta..." became "Tu siedi taciturna ..." 1.13, while 11.41,42: "... Non tu Maria, / Che il patrio tetto<sup>42</sup> puoi lasciar contenta" became "... Ma la natia / Soglia, o gentil, tu puoi lasciar contenta". Removing the name "Maria" was part of Zanella's attempt to eradicate all traces of the fact that the work had originally been composed as an occasional poem. In this respect it is like Una madre, but is superior to the latter, for it has greater imagination and delicacy, attempting as it does a psychological and emotional analysis of a young girl's feelings on the eve of her wedding. She is sad at the thought of leaving her home and family and is anxious about the new life she is about to begin. The poet tells her not to worry, for when she is united, "... con lui che adori / Per te fia volto in un elisio il mondo" 11.47,48.<sup>43</sup> The detailed examination of the workings of the mind and heart, or soul, is, of course, very much in line with the strong Romantic tendencies of Zanella's poetica as seen in the preceding chapter.

The construction of the poem and the way Zanella develops the basic theme, as well as his choice of the most appropriate metre, bear witness to the meticulous perfectionism of his craftsmanship.

The first three verses describe how happy the young girl had thought she would be when the time came to leave home and get married, while in the central part of the poem, verses 4-14, the poet depicts the girl's conflicting emotions; her sorrow at leaving her home and family and her anxiety and uncertainty about her new life and her dependence upon her husband. In the final part, verses 14-18, of the work, Zanella reassures the girl that her fears are groundless and that she will find great happiness in her marriage. One can see how effectively the young girl's anxiety is heightened by the contrast with the happiness depicted in the initial and final parts of the poem.

In lines 16-21,

42. Cf. Leopardi's poem Nelle nozze della sorella Paolina, (l.1. "... patrio nido"), which also deals with a young girl leaving home to get married.

43. A similar theme is repeated in Nelle nozze Lampertico-Mangilli, Alla sposa 1876 and Sopra un anello portante incisi un cuore, un'ancora e una croce 1869.

Piangi fanciulla! Ad uom chi i noti lari  
 Cangia con mobil pino e si periglia  
 Entro la scura immensità de' mari,  
 L'anima il primo dì non si scompiglia,  
 Come a modesta vergine, che tolta  
 Venga al segreto della sua famiglia.

Zanella attempts to define the extent of the young girl's fears by suggesting that they are greater than those experienced by a man who leaves his home and familiar surroundings to venture onto the open sea. The simile is appropriate and effective since it conveys the depth of fear and anxiety the girl must feel. The description of a ship as "mobil pino" is particularly noteworthy. To refer to a ship as "pino" conveys the idea of its smallness, narrowness and flimsiness, while the adjective "mobil" emphasizes the way the ship will be tossed by the waves. It should be noted also that "pino" has overtones reminiscent of a coffin, thus stressing the fact that the man is putting his life in peril and facing death as a very real possibility. Whilst this noun and adjective are very effective, they form a particularly felicitous combination in which they continually reinforce each other in various ways. Thus, "mobil" emphasizes this basic theme of danger by providing a contrast with the safety and firmness of dry land, for it heightens the ship's helplessness in the face of the terrible menace of the "scura immensità de' mari", l. 18. This in turn reminds one of the ship's alarming vulnerability. Since one might have felt great sympathy for the girl's fears, but not taken them too seriously, the simile serves an important function, because it illustrates, in dramatic, life-and-death terms, the very real anxiety felt by her. The simile's effectiveness is heightened by its position, coming as it does between the joy—"vaghi sogni", l. 3, "esultanza", l. 6 — the girl thought she would have felt and the almost idyllic description of the peace and happiness of the home and family she will be leaving ("cheto stanzino", l. 22, "augellino" and "fior", l. 25). The use of the vezzezzeggiativi — "stanzino" and "augellino"—suggests peace, calm and a cocoon-like safety and security in contrast with the menace of the sea. The combination of "cheto stanzino", with its overtones of a quiet convent cell, prayers, the peace and charm of the garden with its birds and flowers, all convey the idea of the safety, beauty and calm of a cloistered, enclosed convent garden. The picture is completed by the reference to the girl's sewing and writing.<sup>44</sup>

44. Cf. Fogazzaro (Poesie), p. 218 — Il canto della ricamatrice, ll. 9-11, "Al par d'un augello son sola, soletta, / Dell'ago, dei fiori, dei canti godrò; / Un nido odorato sarà la stanzetta,".

The poet then pinpoints, ll. 34-39, the heart of the problem as far as the girl is concerned; she will be solely dependent upon her husband and his love for her, whilst, at the same time, she will be abandoning her home, family, familiar surroundings and all that has represented safety and security up to that moment. Zanella then reassures her and tells her that she has nothing to fear; in fact, the world will seem even more beautiful.

The poem has a rather weak ending in its trite, maxim-like sententiousness. Whilst it is obviously not one of his best poems it does rise above the level of occasional poetry and reveals sensitivity, delicacy and imagination on the part of Zanella.

One can also see how idealised his view of women was. As will be shown later (pp. 92-94), he was strongly influenced in this regard by the young noblewomen he met as pupils. The way he presents women in his poetry has certain interesting similarities with Leopardi, particularly as regards A Silvia. Both poets see women as gentle, delicate creatures happy to be writing, sewing or working in the peace and calm of familiar surroundings.<sup>45</sup> This is true of La vigilia delle nozze and Una madre (cf. p. 81). There is a further similarity between La vigilia delle nozze and Leopardi's A Silvia; the happiness of the young girls is partly due to their dreams of future joy:

allor che all'opre femminili intenta  
sedei, assai contenta  
di quel vago avvenir che in mente avevi.     A Silvia, ll. 10-12.

Zanella's reference to the young girl's "cheto stanzino", l. 22, echoes Leopardi's "chete stanze" l. 8, La sera del dì di festa and "quiete/ Stanze" ll. 7, 8, A Silvia. The word "affanna" l. 28, recurring frequently in Zanella's poetry, also has strong Leopardian overtones.

The use of the short, three-line verses or terzine, by atomising the material, facilitates the poet's detailed psychological and emotional analysis of the girl's feelings. While the rhyme-scheme, rime incatenate, of the terzine provides the poem with a unifying link.

Almost as if to justify the promise of future happiness made to the young girl in La vigilia delle nozze, Zanella deals with love and marriage as seen from the other end of the arc of human existence, in the poem Due vite 1862. The comfort and joy of marriage and family life in old age are illustrated by a comparison between two lives: that of

45 • Cf. also Carducci— Sogno d'estate, ll. 36, 37: "Lauretta empieva in tanto di gioia canora le stanze, / Bice china al telaio seguiva cheta l'opra de l'ago"; Per le nozze di mia figlia, ll. 17, 18: "Ripensa i giorni quando tu parvola / coglievi fiori sotto le acacie," l. 25: "E tu crescevi pensosa vergine"—and Pascoli: La Sementa, Per casa, ll. 10-12: "Poi la fanciulla dai capelli d'oro / tessea cantando. Andò la spola a volo / corsero i licci e il pettine sonoro".



an inveterate old bachelor who is alone and neglected, verses 1-8, and that of an old, married man surrounded by the warmth and affection of his family and grandchildren, verses 9-19. Even though he has lost his wife, the old peasant's life is still more meaningful than that of the bachelor. For when the old peasant, sustained by his son, visits his wife's grave, he learns that love is stronger than death and that one day he will be reunited with her:

... e l'ermo  
 Recinto, dove la morta compagna  
 Di sotto l'erba con sommessa voce  
 A sè lo chiama e del tardar si lagna.<sup>46</sup> ll.51-54.

This image, touching upon Romantic themes which were very important to Zanella—the spirituality of love, the painful separation from loved ones brought about by death, and reunion in the afterlife—presents them with a sombre, melancholy sadness in a nostalgic, elegiac tone, which is in sharp contrast with the power, vitality and inherent optimism in ll.55-58 of Amore immortale 1863, (cf. pp. 60, 61).

The expression "con sommessa voce", l.53, is very reminiscent of "sommessi accenti" Voci secrete, l.3, which Zanella had used to describe the faint "voices" he seemed to be hearing. In both cases, the double "m" tends to give an impression of gentleness and smoothness, while the alliteration of "s" gives an echoing, lingering, sustained quality. The resulting effect seems appropriate in describing the way the old peasant's dead wife "si lagna" l.54.

The poem as a whole is perhaps too didactic and moralising, for the "two lives" are presented in such a sharp, simplistic, black-and-white contrast as to seem rather unconvincing. There is a strange combination of influences in the poem. The contrast has implicit Parinian undertones, for the old bachelor is presented as being rather well-to-do, he sleeps on "... profumati serici guanciali", l.11, whilst the old married man is a poor peasant living in a "capanna bruna", l.25. Thus, evil and wealth, on the one hand, are contrasted with goodness and poverty on the other. Zanella illustrates this by showing how badly the old bachelor sleeps:

Da ree memorie combattuto e ròso  
 Sui profumati serici guanciali  
 Hai querula la veglia, ansio il riposo. ll.10-12.

This contrast will be developed in Corrado 1885:

46. Similar imagery will also be found in Carducci — Funere mersit acerbo, ll.3,4: "Non hai tra l'erbe del sepolcro udita/Pur ora una gentil voce di pianto?" and ll.12-14: "...Oh, giù ne l'adre/Sedi accoglilo tu, ch'è al dolce sole/Ei volge il capo ed a chiamar la madre." — and Pascoli, Alba festiva, ll.16-19: "Ma voce più profonda/sotto l'amor rimbomba,/par che al desio risponda:/la voce della tomba".



the idealised images of the Romantics and the starkness of Verga's Verismo. But, of course, in the case of Zanella it is the religious, moralising dimension which is so marked. We have here the seeds of the moralising Realismo<sup>52</sup> which will blossom later in poems such as Corrado 1885, Amori contadineschi 1887 and some of the Astichello sonnets, 1880-1887.

As in so many of Zanella's poems, here too one finds Leopardian overtones and associations: l.8, "affannoso"; l.28, "...sudato campo", cf. "...le sudate carte," l.16, A Silvia.

In his description of the old bachelor, Zanella has not only correlated evil and wealth, but also a life of dissipation with physical illness and terrible loneliness. The old bachelor's spiritual and emotional deprivation is conveyed in ll.19-24, where Zanella describes how an old bird waits for death in winter. The image does depict the helplessness and gradual, irrevocable decline towards death of the old bachelor, but does not transmit his evil selfishness and emptiness. In any case, the death of the bird is part of Nature's inevitable pattern, whilst the old man seems, if not to have hastened his own end, at least to have made it much more lonely and bitter than it would have been if he had followed the example of the old peasant:

O natura, natura!<sup>53</sup> Alla tua legge  
Ben saggio è chi si arrende; e d'uno schermo  
Amoroso i caduchi anni protegge! ll.46-48.

While lacking the delicacy, imagination and originality of Voci secrete, or even La vigilia delle nozze, this poem succeeds inasmuch as it fits into the poet's moralising, didactic intention through its distinct presentation of two very different lives.

This work also represents an interesting stage in Zanella's evolution towards greater realism, both in terms of the clash between Classicism and Realism in his poetry and the transition from Romanticism towards Verismo.

Like La vigilia delle nozze, the ode La suocera al genero (Imitato dall'inglese) 1863,<sup>54</sup> also deals with the prospect of a forthcoming marriage. This time, however, it is seen from a different viewpoint, that of the bride's mother. Addressing her future son-in-law, she expresses her anxiety about her daughter leaving home to begin married life. Through

52. This term is used throughout the thesis, with reference to Zanella, only in a thematic context and not with any suggestion of its implicit stylistic characteristics.

53. While the loneliness of the bird in ll.19-24 seems, in a way, reminiscent of Leopardi's projection of his own sense of isolation in Il passero solitario, the invocation of l.46 "O natura, natura!...", echoes l.36, "O natura, o natura," of A Silvia.

54. Poesie (1928), p.41: "Questi versi sono imitati dall'inglese di Lidia Scurney, gentilissima poetessa americana. L'ode fu pubblicata per le nozze della contessa Lucia Cittadella di Padova col conte Giulio Giusti di Verona".



the image of two hearts uniting, "... il core/Fidato asilo nel tuo cor ritrovi:" ll.18,19, cf. L'adolescente, ll.86,87, she exhorts him to show care, tenderness and concern for his wife. She goes on to stress the importance and necessity of love for human beings: "Fiori noi siamo che viviam d'amore" l.20. The poem has an element of originality in the basic theme of a mother asking her future son-in-law to take care of her daughter. However, Zanella's treatment of the subject does not rise above the level of the cliché, as can be seen in ll.18-20, quoted above. It is also rather unusual and surprising, in his poetry, to find double consonants producing harsh, awkward, unpleasant sounds: l.13, "arrecheratti"; l.18, "scontrerassi"; l.30, "largiratti". In ll.14,15 "... in sulla sera/Atenderà di tue pedate il suono:", the word "pedate", referring to footsteps, seems inappropriate and has a jarring, ugly effect in a sentimental context.

In the first two verses, the poet shows the natural resentment which the mother feels towards her future son-in-law: "Tu che l'usignoletta al nido involi," l.2.<sup>55</sup> He is "stealing" her daughter from the "pacifico nido" l.3; the adjective implies that things were happy and peaceful before his intervention. It is not only the mother who will miss her daughter, her home and surroundings will also feel "bereaved": "Piange il vedovo sito ...", l.5. The use of "vedovo" is effective in this context of personifying the girl's home. The mother's sorrow and resentment are well summed up in ll.7,8: "... piangendo io la richiamo,/Ma d'altri, che di me, la voce ascolta". Once again, in verse 3, the mother demonstrates that her daughter's love for her future husband is so great that she is willing to leave her home: "Per te lascia la memore dimora,/Ove la vita le splendea felice" ll.11,12. Despite the impassioned plea in the last verse, the rest of the poem, from the fourth verse onwards, is at a lower level, that of the cliché, as was pointed out earlier with reference to ll.18-20. The images of the ruby and the rose are too trite:

Ecco io ti cedo il gracile rubino,  
Che a splendere dal mio vien sul tuo petto:  
Traslata fiorirà nel tuo giardino  
La rosa ch'educai con tanto affetto.                      ll.25-28.

It must be concluded that the ode seems too reminiscent of occasional poetry.

The themes of love and marriage, a woman's viewpoint and the anxieties of a young bride all return in the endecasillabi sciolti of the idyll Timossena, 1865. Here, however, it is not the prospect of a forthcoming marriage, as in La vigilia delle nozze, which worries the young bride, but

<sup>55</sup>. Cf. Carducci: "tu mia colomba t'involi, trepida/il nuovo nido voli a contessere", Per le nozze di mia figlia, ll.9,10.

whether her husband, Plutarch, still loves her. She tells him that having dreamt of her fears being resolved by a visit to an altar to the god of love, she would like them both to ascend Mount Helicon and reconsecrate their love to each other at the altar of Cupid. He agrees and the idyll describes their pilgrimage.

The poem is an unusual combination of different influences, although it conforms with Zanella's poetica. Undoubtedly the original inspiration of the work is Classical— "Lo spunto dell'idillio è nel dialogo di Plutarco intitolato Amatorio ..." <sup>56</sup>—as is the vocabulary as well as the overall stylistic framework within which Zanella has transposed his own Christian, Romantic views on love and marriage. Thus the poet points out that the love between husband and wife must unite in their love of God:

... che un Dio m'ispira  
 Provvido, immenso, onnipossente Iddio,  
 Cui siam cari ambedue ... 11.56-58,

while Zanella also stresses the husband's responsibilities towards his wife, "... dal dì che .../... di tua vita/Mi affidasti il governo ..." 11.81-83. Very similar ideas were expressed, for example, in La vigilia delle nozze and La suocera al genero, although their triteness is perhaps attenuated in this idyll by being presented as dialogue. The poem is another example of the way in which Zanella looked at the same basic themes from different standpoints. Here he views the reconciliation between a husband and wife and their re-affirmation of their marriage vows within a Classical, mythological framework. The idyll also shows an interesting element of realism inasmuch as Zanella highlights the problems which can threaten the survival of a marriage even when the husband and wife are deeply in love.

In addition, the ascent of the mountain, "Elicona", could be taken to represent the sacrifices and efforts which must be made by both marriage partners, to achieve reconciliation and sustain their marriage. Similarly, the image of ascending a mountain had referred to man's journey through life, as in La veglia, 11.83, 84 and 31, 32 (cf. p. 86).

The description of the countryside and natural setting as in the following,

Di mattutina nebbia ancor velate  
 Le falde eran del monte, e non veduto  
 Già le sue cime illuminava il Sole.  
 Con lungo mormorio di giogo in giogo,  
 Di vallone in vallon sciogliea le chiome  
 La divina foresta a ber la pioggia  
 Del vitale splendor ... 11.95-101, <sup>57</sup>

56. Poesie (1928), p. 67.

57. Cf. 11.98-100 with Leopardi, Il primo amore, 11.31-33: "... qual tra le chiome/d'antica selva zefiro scorrendo,/un lungo, incerto mormorar ... " .

is not merely appropriate within the context of the idyll, but also reflects Timossena's state of mind, or rather is able to lift her spirits, ll.108-117. This is unusual, since it is so often the natural scene which is shown as passively reflecting a character's state of mind.

In fact, the descriptions of the beauties of Nature in Timossena compare very favourably with those in L'adolescente, ll.34-36. Thus for example the personification of the forest in ll.95-101, quoted above, has effective and evocative imagery in depicting the freshness of a morning in the mountains. In addition, the images of natural beauty, as in ll.160-163,

... Or mentre l'aura  
Rapla stridendo le odorate nubi  
Che ricadean bianchissime sul bosco, 58

have a quality of Classical limpidity absent in the earlier poem.

There are interesting links with earlier and later poems. Thus, Timossena's words in front of the altar of love are like a hymn of praise to God or Nature — the vital, living, immortal impulse of ever-renewing Nature which informs the Universe, revitalising the old and the decaying whilst creating new things: ll.165,166;172,173;176,177. These themes, Spring and the renewal of Nature, are also present in La veglia, 1864 and Le palme fossili, 1877.

There is also, in a mythological context, an anticipation of the image of God as "Lord of the Universe",

Voli fra gli astri; e de' pianeti estinti  
Ventilando la polve a' giovanetti  
Soli prepari le purpuree cune.  
Come rotante turbine procedi  
Novi lacci stringendo e lacci antichi  
Rallentando ... 11.195-200,

which will be taken up and developed in Milton e Galileo 1868, ll.769-786.

The Classical vocabulary — as in "talamo", l.38 — and expressions were anticipated in the earlier work, Psiche 1847, as in the following:

Della donna sull'omero la destra  
Posò Plutarco intenerito ... 11.76,77,  
... dal dì che sul mio seno  
Reclinasti il bel capo ... 11.81,82; and,  
Assonnando dechina la cervice  
Sovra l'omero ... 11.79,80, Psiche.

But the superiority of Timossena may be seen from the comparison of the following lines,

58. Cf. the personifications and idyllic tone of ll.95-101, 160-163 with Pascoli's Nel bosco, ll.1-4, "Sussurrano le mille aure del bosco:/son mille arcani mormorii nell'onde:/la luna bacia il cipresseto fosco/ che con un molle fremito risponde".



... come in sulla bella  
 Faccia immobile figge la pupilla  
 In dolce estasi assorta la donzella! ll.34-36, Psiche,

and

... Immoto il guardo  
 L'ansia donzella vi tenea; ma l'alma  
 Le vagava pel bosco ... ll.143-145, Timossena.

In the case of the latter one can see how the imagery is both unusual, arresting and effective, with its apparent contradiction. As so often in Zanella's poetry, the vocabulary is a mixture of Classical, archaic, and everyday words and expressions, as well as typical examples of the Italian poetic tradition.

In this regard, it is interesting to note the influence of Manzoni, "Sparsa le trecce morbide", from Morte di Ermengarda, in the expression " ... sparsa le chiome" l.163, Timossena.

Whilst it is tempting to see this poem as Parnassian,<sup>59</sup> even if only stylistically, at least in places, or even as a Christian anacreontic work, one has to conclude that it is really too much of a hybrid to fall into any convenient classification. Perhaps, as Arturo Graf suggested in the case of Alcione 1864,<sup>60</sup> the Classical, mythological background of this idyll was an escape for Zanella from the cold materialism of his own age, as well as the harshness and unpleasantness of reality. In this context there is an interesting parallel with Leopardi who expressed his nostalgia for a bygone, mythical Golden Age and its favole antiche.

In the poem Nelle nozze Lampertico-Mangilli. Alla sposa<sup>61</sup> 1876, Zanella once again considers the anxiety of a young bride about her new life. The poet tells her not to feel anxious about leaving her home, family, surroundings, friends, for she is marrying a worthy young man, l.47, and love will make her feel that she is in Heaven, wherever she may be, ll.59,60.

This had been the fundamental theme of La vigilia delle nozze 1861, and had also been touched upon in La suocera al genero 1863, and Sopra un anello 1869.

When one remembers that this ode of 1876 was written in a few hours as an occasional poem, at very short notice, when Zanella had only recently emerged from his "three-winters'" crisis, it is not surprising that it is not among his best works.

It is almost as if Zanella himself were aware of this, for he describes these verses he is addressing to the young bride in the following terms,

59. Cf. pp. 310-1, as to whether Zanella could be viewed as a Parnassian.

60. Poesie (1928), p. XXIII.

61. Ibid., p. 199.

Come d'arpa spezzata ultimo accento,  
 O novissimo olir di moribonda  
 Rosa negletta, a cui divelse il vento  
 L'ultima fronda,

Sposa gentile, a te vola il mio canto,  
 Se pur reggere al vol sanno le piume,  
 Or che le bagna di segreto pianto  
 Assiduo fiume.

ll.1-8.

The similes in ll.1-4 are clumsy and trite, while the imagery of ll.5-8 seems more of a play on words and is inconsistent with the poet's message to the young girl. He is writing about her forthcoming marriage, a very joyous event in her life, and is also trying to allay her fears and anxieties. In this context, his referring to his own depression and unhappiness sounds incongruous.

As in other poems, Zanella shows a young girl's home to be a refuge of peace, calm and idyllic happiness, "L'ermo sacrario della tua dimora/ Oggi abbandoni ... " ll.9,10, and in addition here he has emphasized the sanctity of the home and family circle. The mixture of love and anxiety felt by a young girl, as her wedding approaches, is well brought out in ll.9-20, but despite the obvious similarities with La vigilia delle nozze, the poet has here presented the girl's fears in milder terms, for they are referred to as, "... lievi nuvole, che il Sole/Dietro si trae ..." ll.13,14. In ll.21-40, he not only conveys very effectively a portrait of the girl's character, but uses it to appeal to her wisdom and common sense in order to try and reassure her.

She prefers solitude, flowers and books to empty, meaningless games, "loquaci sale" and "gai costumi", l.22. He attributes to her appreciation of "aurora" and the beauties of the countryside an almost mystical and religious value, ll.25-8.<sup>62</sup> One again, in the link between the dawn and spirituality, one can see Zanella's appreciation of the spiritual dimension of virtually every subject he dealt with. The poet goes on to describe the girl's love of children and poetry. He praises her for visiting the homes of the poor and humble, ll.29-32, as he had also done in the case of his artistic creation, Elena, in Il Piccolo Calabrese, 1871. The comparison between flowers and poetry, ll.37-40, also occurs in other poems, such as San Bastian dalla viola in man 1872.

Zanella adds that the girl will be happy because her future husband is a worthy man, "Prode garzon, cui rise il ciel non parco,/ Sposa ti guida" ll.47,48. L.49, with its Parinian overtones, reflects Zanella's approval of the industrious members of the nobility, "Non ei de' signorili ozî si piacque;", however, the ode descends to the level of triteness

62. Cf. a somewhat similar attitude towards the sunset in Pascoli, L'imbrunire, ll.1-8.

with the imagery of ll.57,58: "Con lui tessuta di purpureo filo/Di tue giornate correrà la tela.". The following lines,59,60: "... ogni rimoto asilo,/Amore inciela ",were anticipated in La vigilia delle nozze,ll.47-48: "... con lui che adori/Per te fia vòlto in un elisio il mondo".

Towards the end of the ode,ll.65-8,there is an appeal to Angelina Lampertico,the young bride-to-be,not to forget the poet who has known her and loved her since her childhood. The last quartina,ll.69-72,reflects the lingering pessimism of Zanella's terrible "three winters'" crisis. He refers to himself as old,unable to write any more poetry,forgotten by all,and hoping only in God.

The last line of each quartina (ABAb) is a quinario,which,coming after three endecasillabi,has the effect of an anticlimax and tends to reinforce the mood of depression and pessimism.

#### (IV) FAMILY TIES

In this section,there are two interwoven,thematic strands,an autobiographical element — the importance of family ties for the poet himself,as in Voci secrete 1850 and La veglia 1864 — and an appreciation of motherhood. The two threads fuse in La religione materna 1865, in which Zanella shows the close link between his love for his mother and the faith she had taught him.

One of the earliest poems in which Zanella shows the great importance of family ties,both for himself and by inference in general terms,is the ode Voci secrete. The exact date of composition is not known, but Graf suggests that it was most probably thought of,if not written,in 1850:

... l'anno in cui il poeta ebbe a subire in seminario da parte della polizia austriaca una perquisizione,alla quale probabilmente non furono estranee le 'lingue scortesie' e 'i maligni petti' della seconda strofe ... 63

As Elizabeth Greenwood has rightly stated,the maturity of the poetic expression would tend to suggest that the ode was in fact composed later.<sup>64</sup> For the present writer,a probable date would be 1864,the year in which Sopra una conchiglia fossile and La veglia were written.The vocabulary is Classical and typical of the Italian poetical tradition as well as containing everyday words which are,however,imbued with a poetic quality,which is very reminiscent of Leopardi.<sup>65</sup> One also finds a certain delicacy and Classical conciseness which pervade the whole poem.

The ode seems to have been spontaneously inspired by a common human

63. Poesie (1928), p. 13.

64. Greenwood, p. 345, note (30).

65. Cusatelli, p. 562.



experience:the feeling that one can hear mysterious voices or sounds which make one think of people far away who are perhaps talking about one. Zanella applies this common phenomenon to his own particular situation, concluding with a universal application. The well-constructed development also reminds one of Leopardi. Ll.1-4 introduce the initial impact of this incident, while the next three verses are a series of questions and answers as to the nature of this occurrence. This has the effect of sustaining the reader's interest until the last two quartine provide a solution which suggests that the poet feels at one with the Universe.

There are several ways in the first verse,

Aeree voci, che di concerti  
Misteriosi l'orecchio empite;  
Fiochi susurri, sommessi accenti,  
  Donde venite?

ll. 1-4,

in which he conveys the impression of hearing voices. Particularly striking is his use of onomatopoeia. Thus the alliteration of "s" in line 3 effectively suggests the soft, rustling sounds produced by whisper-like breezes or "susurri".

The impression of softness and gentleness is not only heightened by the consonants (double "r", double "m" and "n") in l.3, but also by the slowing down, "lengthening" effect of the double hiatus in "Aeree" and the dieresis of "Misteriosi". The latter is anticipated, and therefore reinforced, by the mysterious vagueness of "Aeree", with its overtones of ethereal intangibility. The suggestion of softly-whispered words being carried by a breeze is enhanced by the poet's use of rhythm in these lines. Thus the rhythmical pauses after "voci" l.1, "susurri" l.3, "accenti" l.3 and "venite" l.4, produce short phrases which blend well with the longer one, "...che di concerti/Misteriosi l'orecchio empite;" ll.1,2, whose continuity is cemented by the enjambement.

The alternating rhyme, ABAB, gives the effect of an echo<sup>66</sup> as the sounds reverberate ("Aeree voci.../...l'orecchio empite;" l.1,2) in the poet's ears. The shortness of l.4 simulates the way in which an echo gradually fades.

In the second verse, ll.5-8, there is a crescendo of intensity as the poet refers to the evil mutterings of his enemies. The use of the epithet "obliqui", l.5, is appropriate to the indirect, back-stabbing, unwar-ranted hypocrisy of the slanderous remarks of "lingue scortesii" l.6 and "maligni petti"<sup>67</sup> l.7. The increasing intensity of evil — apparent in

66. This is also, to a certain extent, reinforced by the relationship between "Aeree" and "Misteriosi" referred to above.

67. Cf. Manzoni, In morte di Carlo Imbonati, l.4, "... maligno petto" — "... questi versi per l'Imbonati sono pieni d'alto sdegno... contro 'l'operosa calunnia' dei pettegoli" (A. Manzoni, Liriche, tragedie e prose, op.cit., p.4, n.1).

the progression from "scortesi" to "maligni"—is heightened in ll.7, 8: "Fan di me strazio maligni petti/Ch'io non offesi", by the word "strazio", which suggests the degree of suffering inflicted on the poet. His suffering is intensified by the knowledge that it is unprovoked. The ensuing outrage to his sense of justice magnifies the whole effect.

The poem's thematic development, referred to earlier, is reinforced by the way in which the unkindness and suffering of ll.5-8 are counterbalanced by the delicacy, charm, affection and warmth of ll. 9-12, as Zanella tenderly recalls his mother's love for him. In fact, for Calcatera, "Il momento lirico più soave è in quest'ode il richiamo alla madre ...".<sup>68</sup> The way in which the poet compares his mother's voice with the "... tintinno d'arpa remota", l.10, makes it seem distant and imbues it with overtones of a certain delicate, celestial, almost spiritual quality.

In the fourth verse, Zanella offers yet another possible answer to the origin of these voices. He suggests that they could be greetings from friends and boyhood companions.

The last two verses provide the poet's comforting conclusion that these voices bring him the consolation and reassurance with which to face life's obstacles. From his own particular situation, Zanella ascends to the level of a universal application: "Fammisi immenso tempio d'amore/ Tutto il creato.", ll.23,24. The two double "m"s tend to "expand" the penultimate line, giving it an all-embracing, universal quality appropriate to the poet's reference to all creation.

This ode is probably one of Zanella's most underrated poems when one bears in mind its technical and stylistic qualities. It is also noteworthy in that it provides an excellent example of the way in which so much of Zanella's poetry conforms with the broad outlines of his poetica. In other words, within a Classical, stylistic framework, the poet deals with an essentially Romantic theme, which is sentimental, emotional, nostalgic, personal and yet having a universal application.

In this short poem Zanella shows how he drew strength from his home background in times of stress. In addition there are two other very important themes: his great love for his mother and the strength of the spiritual bond of love which overcomes any material barrier whether of time, space or distance. These simple ideas, which hover on the brink of becoming clichés, are delicately and effectively dealt with by the poet.

This is not the case with Una madre 1860, which Zanella did not in fact include in the fourth 1885 edition of his verses.

The original title, Alla contessa Giuseppina Lampertico-Valmarana di Vicenza, nel suo giorno onomastico, 19 marzo 1860, was changed to

<sup>68</sup>. Poesie scelte (1957), p.2.

Una madre for the third edition. Although Zanella often modified works which had originally been composed as occasional poems in order to remove all traces of this<sup>69</sup>, as is attested by the change in the title itself, in this instance he was not completely successful.

The lack of spontaneous inspiration detracts from the poem's effectiveness. Although Zanella was dealing with themes which meant a great deal to him, the importance of mother love and family ties, the central, pivotal rôle of a woman in a family, they border so much on the level of the cliché that only an original or striking treatment — which is here lacking — could make the work effective. It succeeds at the level of occasional poetry, the poet's original intention, but lacks the spontaneity of Voci secrete.

According to Zanella's poetica, Classical, mythological allusions and figures of speech should only be employed when their use is artistically justifiable. However, the simile in ll. 33-36 is over-extended in ll. 37-40:

Vivi pe' tuoi! Come fulgor di Sole  
 Da molti specchi ripercosso intorno,  
 L'amor tuo dallo sposo e dalla prole,  
 Doppiando i raggi, a te farà ritorno;  
 Tal che di blanda luce circonfusa,  
 Vittrice dell'età, che discolora  
 Crespo semblante di beltà delusa,  
 Tu vaga splenderai d'eterna aurora.                      ll. 33-40,

while the Classical, mythological allusions, attempting to convey an atmosphere of lavish riches, in ll. 13-16 :

O ti dèsse a regnar l'avventurose  
 Isole, dove un dì fate sirene  
 Visser tra grotte di smeraldo ascose,  
 E fiumi che volgean d'oro l'arene.

appear too vague and ineffective, in that they seem inappropriate as a means of suggesting fabulous wealth. They have closer associations with an exotic, mythical past rather than with incredible wealth.

In ll. 5-8,

Quando ti miro a' bei lavori intenta,  
 ...  
 ...                      e la contenta  
 ...                      Anima tutta sfavillarti in viso;

where Zanella depicts the countess at work, there is a striking resemblance with Leopardi's treatment of a similar theme,

Allor che all'opre femminili intenta  
 Sedevi, assai contenta                      ll. 10, 11, A Silvia.

The poem shows how much Zanella was in tune with the climate and literature of Risorgimento Italy, at the time of national unification, in his exaltation of family ties, mother love and the rôles of a mother and

69. Greenwood, p. 343, note (6).



wife at the heart of the family:

al centro della famiglia era la figura della madre adoratissima: la letteratura ottocentesca è gremita di madri sante, votate esclusivamente al sacrificio. <sup>70</sup>

In the poem's fundamental theme — the mother only wants to be with her beloved ones, she does not care about fabulous wealth and material treasures — one can see not only its Classical origins (the story of "Cornelia and her jewels"), but also the presence, at a comparatively early stage in Zanella's poetic output, of the all-important leitmotif of "spirituality and materialism", which, in later poems, will assert itself more starkly and forcefully.

While Voci secrete demonstrated that Zanella saw his family background as an important source of strength and support, the ode La veglia shows how his view of life and his spiritual, moral values were linked to his home and family.

Although inspired by his return to his childhood home some years earlier, the ode was in fact written in 1864, the same year as Sopra una conchiglia fossile. La veglia is one of Zanella's best poems and one of the earliest in which his polemical bitterness towards Darwin's Theory of Evolution and scientific materialism comes to the fore.

Undoubtedly the beginning of the poem and the development of the themes are very effective. The poet deals with, amongst others, the following: the passing of time, so graphically illustrated by a swinging pendulum, ll.13-16; the happy childhood memories of his home, family and parents; his father's death, death in general, and the immortality of the soul; since the soul is anxious to reach its goal, God, l.40, the poet will not complain about his dying body or the passage of time, ll.41-44, for death is merely a transition from this earthly existence to man's immortal destiny and goal, ll.69-72: "Una patria superba oltre le stelle" l.80.

In the first verse, the image of the raging wind coming down the chimney and rekindling the dying embers, gives the beginning of the ode "una turbata movenza", <sup>71</sup> which the poet maintains in the next verse. Thus the shadows thrown on the wall, ll.5-8, are depicted in a very effective image, particularly the way the poet uses the verb "aggira" to describe how the tremulous flame makes the shadows of the chairs flicker and move, "In fantastica danza" l.6,

La tremebonda vampa  
In fantastica danza i fluttuanti  
Sedili aggira, e stampa

ll.5-8.

<sup>70</sup>. Cattaneo, p. 427.

<sup>71</sup>. Poesie scelte (1957), p. 12.

Sull'opposta parete ombre giganti. ll.5-8.<sup>72</sup>

The very effectively conveyed visual imagery of the first two verses, ll.1-8, is followed by Zanella's description of the restful, almost hypnotic sound produced by the swinging of the pendulum, which lulls him into a nostalgic re-evocation of happy childhood memories<sup>73</sup> of his home, family and parents. The way Zanella conveys the monotonous repetition of the sound of the swinging pendulum, "Lenta, sonante, uguale/Batte sul cavo porfido una goccia;" ll.11,12,<sup>74</sup> is reminiscent of a similar description in an earlier work of 1849, "Grossa, sonante qualche goccia cala,"<sup>75</sup> The reference to the former "liete voci" l.17 of his family produces a telling contrast with the fact that he is now alone in his childhood home—his father, Adriano Zanella, had died in 1852, "Morte per sempre ha chiusi/Gli amati labbri ...", ll.21,22 —and with the personification of Death in ll.21,22, while the rest of the verse,

... Ma tu già non taci,  
Bronzo fedel, che accusi  
Col tuo squillo immortal l'ore fugaci, ll.22-24,<sup>76</sup>

not only provides a link with the previously mentioned pendulum but also very effectively connects its sound with the passing of time. The adjective "immortal" reinforces the intensity and persistence of the sound of the swinging pendulum and anticipates the idea of immortality which Zanella will later introduce in connection with the soul. One can see not only how the themes are well developed, one leads naturally to the next, but also how they are intertwined and linked, for the poet reconnects themes and images with preceding ones, while anticipating and preparing for later ones.

After adding that the sound of the swinging pendulum does not merely remind him of the passing of time, but also of the ceaseless activity which is going on, "L'universo non dorme e non si arresta" l.28, the poet asks, "Che son? che fui? ..." l.29, in a tone of enquiry about life and the universe which is very reminiscent of Leopardi's Canto notturno di un pastore

72. Cf. Longfellow, Footsteps of Angels, ll.5-8; "Ere the evening lamps are lighted/And, like phantoms grim and tall,/Shadows from the fitful fire-light/Dance upon the parlour wall;" (G. Savinelli, Formalismo e religiosità nell'arte di G. Zanella, Firenze, 1939, p.19).

73. Certain themes — sitting in front of a fire, remembering the happiness of childhood, but saddened by the knowledge that it is forever lost— would seem to be echoing Prati's Una serata d'inverno, ll.13-18 (Baldacci, p.609)

74. Cf. Pascoli: "il cader lento d'una goccia rossa/solo restava del fragor ...", ll.140,141, La Buona Novella, Poemi conviviali.

75. Poesie (1894), Vol. I, p. XLVI. (See also p. 49).

76. Cf. thematic affinities with ll.5-8, 69-72 of Longfellow's The Old Clock on the Stairs (subsequently translated by Zanella in 1877).

errante dell'Asia.<sup>77</sup> From a common human experience, his return to his family home and the resulting recollection of his happy childhood, through a well-developed series of interrelated themes and images, Zanella is led to wonder about the passing of time and reaches a cosmic vision which has a universal application and importance — there is also a Leopardian parallel in this sequence and development adopted by Zanella — particularly with regard to the immortality of the soul. Once again his vision is in terms of "spirituality and materialism". The image of the spiritual, eternal soul and the gradually decaying material body frequently recurs in Zanella's poetry, as for example in Le palme fossili, 1877. Here the image has a note of triumph and exaltation, (reminiscent of the tone and mood of Sopra una conchiglia fossile):

Precipitoso io varco  
 Di lustro in lustro: della vecchia creta  
 Da sé scotendo il carco  
 Lo spirto avido anela alla sua mèta.                      11.37-40.

There is a sense of urgency and haste in these lines which echoes the "forte ansia immaginosa"<sup>78</sup> of 11.29-32:

...                      Pel clivo  
 Della vita discendo, e parmi un'ora  
 Che garzoncel furtivo  
 Correa sui monti a prevenir l'aurora,

whose imagery, in turn, prepares for the emphatic, exultant pronouncement of 11.37-40. In 11.29-32, the descent of life, or ageing, is followed by the symbolic ascent towards heaven and Man's true destiny. For "l'aurora" does not only refer to death but also to the dawn of Man's immortal destiny. So the poet concludes that he will not complain about his "dying" body or the passage of time, 11.41-44.

Every living thing aspires to perfection, 11.45-48, whether it is a caterpillar turning into a butterfly or a seed flowering and becoming a fruit, 11.49-52. In fact, nature is continually renewing itself.

For Calcaterra,<sup>79</sup> the importance of eternity and the afterlife as well as the way Nature, life and the universe are continually renewing themselves constitute "il punto centrale, direi il cuore" of Zanella's poetic vision. Although these themes were undoubtedly vital to Zanella, the present writer feels that the most important and central point in Zanella's poetry is the clash between spirituality and materialism.

77. Zanella would also seem to have been anticipating Pascoli's sense of wonder and mystery at the immensity of the universe, as in La pecorella smarrita, 11.22, 23: "Mucchi di stelle, grappoli di mondi, / nebbie di cosmi ...", and 11.28-31: "... milioni/d'astri ... / là tra le grandi costellazioni / nella profondità dell'Universo ...".

78. Poesie scelte (1957), p. 13.

79. Ibid., pp. III-V.



It is hoped that as the evidence is presented, during the course of this thesis, this view will emerge more clearly.

Zanella continues with the theme of change and renewal by referring to the fact that the world itself went through an evolution from being an incandescent "rotante mole" l.56 to its present state. In three short verses, ll.53-64, he recapitulates his view of the world's evolution up to the advent of Man — a subject already dealt with in Sopra una conchiglia fossile, although without the latter's evocative imagery. It is noteworthy that in describing the world's geological evolution before Man, "Come infocata nave, / L'erta ascendeva de' celesti calli" ll.59,60, La veglia, and its later spiritual evolution, after human history,

Compiute le sorti,  
Allora de' cieli  
Ne' lucidi porti  
La Terra si celi:  
Attenda sull'ancora  
Il cenno divino  
Per novo cammino. ll.92-98, Sopra una conchiglia fossile,

Zanella should use the image of the world as an enormous ship on the ocean of infinity. In other words, he saw the earth's geological formation, the period of human history, and the world's subsequent development as being integral elements in its "spiritual" evolution. This juxtapositioning, also dealt with in Sopra una conchiglia fossile (cf. p. 232), reminds one of Teilhard de Chardin's view of the cosmos evolving towards Christ. Perhaps of more immediate literary relevance is the link with Zanella's disciple, Fogazzaro, who extrapolated the Darwinian Theory of Evolution from the material and biological level to the spiritual and moral plane, cf. Ascensioni umane. It should of course be borne in mind that Zanella would not have accepted the views of Fogazzaro, or even the French Jesuit, on Man's evolution from lower species.

Zanella returns to an emphatic, triumphal re-affirmation of his Faith, in Thomistic terms of body and soul, through his assertion that the physical, material "death" of his body will be the prelude to the immortal destiny of his soul,

Cadrò: ma con le chiavi  
D'un avvenir meraviglioso. Il nulla  
A più veggenti savi:  
Io nella tomba troverò la culla. <sup>80</sup> ll.69-72.

For Calcaterra, at this point, "L'ode, liricamente, è, a dir vero, finita ... In quest'ultima parte lo Zanella si lascia attrarre a polemizzare col darvinismo, che prevaleva nella cultura scientifica e filosofica del suo

80. This imagery, correlating death with a cradle, seems to find an echo in Pascoli, Il mendico, ll.53,54: "Son giunto: alla tomba; che trova / contigua la querula cuna,".

tempo".<sup>81</sup> Although written in the same year as Sopra una conchiglia fossile and dealing also with the world's spiritual evolution, the tone and mood of La veglia have a more muted optimism, while polemical bitterness and direct opposition to Darwinism intervene rather ineffectively in the rest of the poem from l.73 onwards. In Sopra una conchiglia fossile, Zanella's opposition to the theory of Evolution has been expressed in indirect and far more effective terms.

There are, however, echoes of his triumphal exultation in his Faith, "Ma co' fanciulli io scòrsi/Una patria superba oltre le stelle" ll.79,80, and again, "Io verso le serene/Plaghe dell'alba la montagna ascendo" ll.83,84, where, as in ll.31,32: "... garzoncel furtivo/Correa sui monti a prevenir l'aurora", the poet depicts a symbolic ascent through life towards death, the dawn of Man's immortal destiny.

There is also the "forte ansia immaginosa" of previous verses in ll.85-88, which also have an air of optimism about the future. For Zanella, these indications of a better world would come from the East, whose exotic and mysterious nature is well conveyed.

But, again, these indications of a better world and future are couched in spiritual terms: "O di futuri elisi/Intimi lampi e desiderî immensi" ll.93,94, which will be derided by the materialistic nineteenth century.

The recurrence of some of the themes from La veglia — the renewal of Nature, evolution, the rejection of Darwinism and the affirmation of Man's immortal soul — in Le palme fossili 1877 testifies to their importance for Zanella.

In the ode La religione materna 1865, he continued to explore the influence of his home background on his view of life. As is evident from the title, he considered the very close link between his love for his mother and his faith.

According to Calcaterra, "L'ode ha alcune immagini vive; ma esteticamente è in complesso appesantita dalla persistente linea allegorica".<sup>82</sup> On the contrary, the present writer feels that the continuity of the allegory, embracing the whole poem, gives the ode an effective, taut conciseness.

A pilgrim, Man in general or the human soul, sets out on a journey with a small lamp, Faith, which his mother had given him. By means of this lamp he is able to find his way<sup>83</sup> until the intensity of the noonday sun makes

81. Poesie scelte (1957), p. 15, note (1).

82. Ibid., p. 17.

83. Cf. Pascoli, La poesia, ll.73-76,83-90: "Io sono la lampada ch'arde/soave! nell'ore più sole e più tarde,/nell'ombra più mesta, più grave,... lontano risplende l'ardore/mio casto all'errante che trita/notturno, piangendo nel cuore,/la pallida via della vita:/s'arresta; ma vede il mio raggio,/che gli arde nell'anima blando:/riprende l'oscuro viaggio/cantando"; and also vaguer thematic echoes in A.B. Brunamonti's Lungo la marina, ll.43-46,50-56, (Muscetta and Sormani, Vol. II, p.1506).

him think that the lamp has gone out. But when it becomes dark again he finds that this is not so. When he is tired, he stops and puts the lamp down. He then waits in the hope of being reunited with his mother, who had given him his faith.

The sun, which blinds the pilgrim to the presence of the lamp, the truths of Faith, represents the seductive face of life — the attractions of science, art, glory and love — which comes to be seen as an end in itself. But disillusionment sets in and the soul cannot satisfy its tormenting quest for happiness. It thus turns back to God as the source of peace and joy.

This deceptively simple work is not merely a calm, steadfast reaffirmation of Zanella's faith, but also implicitly contains several themes: Faith means believing even when things seem hopeless; Faith is a sure guide even at the most difficult times; Man is more likely to turn to God in times of adversity; the soul can only find true peace and joy in God, certainly not in scientific materialism or any other earthly attraction — which will be taken up and developed in later poems. Yet again the clash between spirituality and materialism provides the implicit back-cloth of the poem and anticipates the conflict between Science and Faith which will emerge very forcefully in Zanella's subsequent works.

The close link between his love for his mother and his faith is repeated throughout the ode:

Un pellegrino ...  
 A cui fedel lucerna  
 Diè nel partir la carità materna. 11.4-6,  
 ... Eterno  
 Vive il ricordo dell'amor materno. 11.29,30,  
 ... materna fede  
 La lampa accese che al partir gli diede. 11.41,42,

whilst in the last lines,

Posa attendendo il messo,  
 Che lo rinnovi nel materno amplesso. 11.47,48,

there are two very important themes: Death will be like a messenger calling the soul to be reunited with its loved ones, and Zanella's fervent wish to be reunited with his mother in Heaven. This theme will of course become more and more insistent after his mother's death in 1872, as for example in the following lines:

Al seggio tuo m'appresso;  
 E cupido, tacendo,  
 Libere braccia io stendo  
 Al santo amplesso. 11.73-76, Ad un usignuolo, 1876.

La religione materna was, in fact, written in 1865, the year his mother almost died.





the third 1877 edition of Zanella's poems and the stanzas reduced from twenty-five to thirteen. For the fourth 1885 edition, only nine stanzas were retained.

The "occasional" circumstances of the work are easily summarized. Fedele Lampertico's wife, Olimpia Colleoni, dies, leaving three children to be brought up by their grandmother, Angela Lampertico, who will therefore once again have to take up the rôle of a mother for her orphaned grandchildren.

The change of title naturally shifts the whole emphasis of the poem from a consideration of the rôle to be played by future generations to a more personal, individual level, not merely in terms of the Lampertico family itself, but also in terms of the glorification of motherhood and the family, in relation to patriotism, cf. pp. 81-2, and the importance of wives and mothers in nineteenth-century Italian life and literature.

Although the reduction in the number of stanzas tends to give the work an air of occasional poetry, the final version constitutes a definite improvement. The "additional" verses of the original seemed to have too much patriotic rhetoric and repetition, which in later years Zanella was able to see as being perhaps too dated and irrelevant. The mood of the country had changed from that of patriotic fervour and rhetoric towards greater realism, Verismo in literature, and the need to face up to internal, social problems. From a purely literary, stylistic point of view the additional verses were of an inferior standard. The shortened, nine-stanza, final version is much more balanced; the final stanza goes far enough to stimulate the reader's imagination towards a patriotic consideration of Italy's future, without indulging in exaggerated rhetoric.

The first verse sets the sombre scene in the family home, even the dawn is grey, as the servants go about their business in silence. Maids put away Angela Lampertico's fine clothes and jewels, while she herself grieves for her dead daughter-in-law, ll. 5-8.

The human sorrow and finality of separation from a loved one through death, as conveyed in ll. 13-16: the children's cries and tears could never recall their dead mother, are heightened by being preceded in ll. 9-12 with the description of the three small children playing happily together, unaware of having become orphans: "...ruzzolavano in lieto/Clamor tre bimbi dalle teste bionde;" ll. 11, 12. The next four quartine deal with the fact that Angela Lampertico will have to be mother for her three grandchildren; her life will be so different from what she had expected.

In l. 32, facing life's problems is presented as a steep climb, "Ancor la rupe della vita ascendi". This "imagery of ascent" recurs frequently in Zanella's poetry, as was seen in La veglia 1864, La religione materna

1865, and Timossena 1865.

The final stanza, ll. 33-36, broadens the horizons and context of the whole poem to a national level—the three boys must be brought up to be "...gentili, / ... pensosi e forti ..." ll. 33, 34, for the resolution of Italy's problems requires this.

From a consideration of the particular circumstances of the Lampertico family, Zanella is led to an appreciation of the rôle of a mother in a family. Although the patriotic theme only emerges in the last quartina, it is given prominence by being the final note of the work.

The poem may be said to succeed within the context of the poet's limited aims. On the whole it is superior to Una madre, 1860, with which it has certain thematic similarities.

Although themes concerning the life of the individual are only a part of the long tale, Il Piccolo Calabrese 1871,<sup>84</sup> they include, despite Zanella's rather prosaic presentation, an appreciation of the importance of family ties—the love, tenderness, joy and strength of family life; the strong bond between Allano and his sister, Elena, ll. 313-320; maternal love, ll. 741, 742; peace and harmony in the family are more important than material wealth, ll. 757-760; virtue is fostered when a man devotes himself to family life instead of gambling and drinking<sup>85</sup>, ll. 801-808.

In the short poem, Alla stessa 31 Maggio 1876, which was addressed to Lucrezia Marzolo De' Fabi,<sup>86</sup> one of his former pupils, Zanella yet again stresses the overriding importance of family life and motherhood, for he shows Lucrezia as a proud young mother. Now that she is busy looking after her baby, Lucrezia Marzolo De' Fabi has not written any verses recently, but she asks the poet, is her baby not worth a thousand poems, l. 12.

This composition is effective, pleasant and charming, as Calcaterra pointed out, "Vaghiissimo idillio. La giovane mamma presso la culla..."<sup>87</sup> In the first quartina, Lucrezia's youthful, precocious ability to compose poetry is well brought out. Thus in l. 2, "prorompea" gives the onomatopoeic suggestion of a spontaneous utterance, in this case specifically her poetry. The freshness, originality, spontaneity and charm of the young girl's verses are well conveyed in the imagery of ll. 3, 4, "Che più fragrante di rosa non tocca / Scotea di gioia a' circostanti il petto". The

84. Cf. pp. 208-9, for a detailed consideration of its stylistic deficiencies and an indication of its wide variety of themes.

85. Greenwood, p. 291.

86. Poesie (1928), p. 207. Cf. other poems addressed to her, including: A Lucrezia Marzolo De' Fabi 5 Settembre 1863 (pp. 92, 93), Alla Stessa 31 Marzo 1869 (p. 157).

87. Poesie scelte (1957), p. 99.



reference to the fragrance of the untouched rose is in harmony with l.1  
"... dalla virginea bocca".

For Calcaterra, ll.6-8,

D'uno stanzin nell'angolo romito  
Presso una culla tacita seduta  
Porti alle labbra sorridendo il dito.

are the best part of the poem—"Questa è la parte più propriamente poetica dell'idillio; quell' 'angolo romito', quella 'culla tacita', quella mamma che porta alle labbra il dito ...".<sup>88</sup>

Certainly the idyllic, sentimental quality of this charming tableau, the young mother with her baby, is appropriately conveyed with great economy of expression and detail, but without triteness, despite the hackneyed nature of the theme and the image. The use of the abbreviated vezzezzativo, "stanzin", often employed by Zanella, as in La vigilia delle nozze, to convey idyllic calm and peace, introduces the charming sentimentality which is reinforced by the phrase "angolo romito", which highlights the smallness, delicacy and gentleness implicit in the vezzezzativo.

One is reminded of another demonstration of maternal love, ll.40-42, La religione materna:

D'una solinga stanza,  
Ove materna fede  
La lampa accese che al partir gli diede.

Ll.7,8 depict the scene with almost impressionistic conciseness. The simplicity of expression contributes to its effectiveness. The use of the two adjectival participles "tacita seduta" is particularly striking.

L.10, "E con tripudio, che a fatica premi", with its suggestion of suppressed energy and exultation, provides an effective contrast with the idyllic peace and calm of ll.5-8.

L.11, "Mi mormori in sommessi accenti brevi:", with its soft consonants, m, n, r, and its whispering (repetition of "s") onomatopoeia, reminds one of Voci secrete: "sommessi accenti" l.3, and "Forse una cara mormori al figlio/ Materna nota?" ll.11,12.

The last line, "Questo giglio non val mille pöemi?", seems like a transposition of the moral from the story of "Cornelia and her jewels". Here, let alone jewellery, even the composition of poetry, so highly valued in the sonnet Ad Andrea Maffei, cannot equal the importance of motherhood. The whole work has a singular delicacy, charm and freshness.

Closely linked thematically with this composition is the sonnet, Ad Elisa De Muri Grandesso 1878, in which Zanella shows that despite

88. Ibid., p.99, note (2).

the talents of this poetess, looking after her family and children is more important than any honours she might acquire through her poetry.<sup>89</sup> In fact, the sonnet is inferior to the poem Alla stessa, for it lacks the latter's simplicity and delicacy of expression. It is like a tired imitation and has an element of laboured clumsiness.

Thus, the same basic idea which is expressed in the two terzine of the sonnet,

O nata a'serti multiformi, Elisa,  
 Fior non saresti più caro né vago,  
 Che quando a'rai di cheta lampa assisa,  
 Lasciando in breve obbligo Fedro e Tibullo,  
 Ansiosa sollecciti coll'ago  
 Il giubberel promesso al tuo fanciullo.

had already been so effectively and concisely conveyed in the last line of Alla stessa, "Questo giglio non val mille pœmi?".

#### (V) ATTITUDE TO WOMEN:

Bearing in mind the importance Zanella gave both to a woman's viewpoint, in the poems dealing with marriage, and to motherhood, in the section on family ties, it is not surprising that his attitude to women should merit a section to itself.

It will be seen that the characteristics Zanella attributed to the women he actually knew, as in A Lucrezia Marzolo De' Fabi 5 Settembre 1863, Alla contessa Giuseppina Aganoor 1872, and Aglaia 1878, were projected on to his own artistic creations: Elena, Il Piccolo Calabrese 1871; Edvige, Edvige 1881; and Giannina, Corrado 1885.

It is also noteworthy that throughout Zanella's poetry descriptions of a woman's physical appearance are rare and generally restricted to her hair.

In the quartine, A Lucrezia Marzolo De' Fabi 5 Settembre 1863, (cf. p. 90, n. 86), the poet marvels at the extreme sensitivity of this young girl whom he unwittingly offended with "una parola inavvertita", l. 3. He would never have imagined "Sotto s'è gaio fanciullesco aspetto/.../Tanto tesoro di celeste affetto?" ll. 6-8. He asks her to forgive him and continues: "Chi dell'anima il lampo e l'esultanza/A te può tôr? Chi provocarti al piano?" ll. 15, 16.

It is true that this unpretentious work, inspired by a simple occurrence, should be viewed within the context of the poet's own limited intentions, and yet when compared with, for example, Voci secrete, it lacks the latter's effectiveness. The ode, while also inspired by a common human experience, was able to reach a universal application which is absent in this poem of

89. Poesie (1928), p. 243.

1863.

Zanella's appreciation of sensitivity seems to owe as much to Romanticism, as defined in pp. 13, 14, as to the eighteenth-century, Pre-Romantic concern with sensibilità.

Certainly his concern with sensitivity provides an implicit, underlying link in the portraits of the five Aganoor sisters in Alla contessa Giuseppina Aganoor 1872. <sup>90</sup>

These are not physical profiles but interior ones, in which he has succeeded in conveying a very accurate picture—dedicating an ottava to each girl—by concentrating on one essential, definitive characteristic: Angelica: everything she does is invested with the sweet innocence of youth; Maria: is a dreamer; Elena: is a painter; Virginia: takes delight in everything ("Come in cheto mattin, passi la vita", l.36); and Vittoria: is a poetess.

However, as with so much of Zanella's poetry, it is of a very uneven standard. Thus, the first four lines are rather trite, particularly with the ABBA rhyme-scheme.

The second portrait, Maria, has rather hackneyed and contrived imagery,

A te, Maria, quando dormivi in cuna,  
Sul finestrello si posò la Luna;  
E col dito fosforico di rose  
Morbide e bianche i tuoi sogni compose.            11.13-16,

especially in ll.15,16. However, l.17, "Placide notti, inargentati mari", <sup>91</sup> is very reminiscent of Leopardi's treatment of natural beauty.

Despite the repetition in ll.6,7, the imagery of the first portrait, Angelica, is effective in conveying the atmosphere of her inner world; the succession of images—"Nivea colomba", "una rosa", "profumo eterno"—prepare for the far-away "... giardin che non conosce inverno" l.8, which epitomises the sweet innocence of youth enveloping her world.

While ll.33,34, "... de' percossi avòri/L'onda sonante ...", of the fourth cameo, Virginia, seem rather heavy, the final one, Vittoria, is probably the best. It displays a concise, thematic interplay, for the first four lines prepare for the exotic Eastern images in ll.41-43, while 44 provides an effective conclusion with the declaration of her essential quality which the poet wishes to highlight,

Vittoria, a te, quando cadean le nevi  
E tu pensosa al davanzal sedevi, 92

90. Poesie (1928), p.193: "Questi Ritratti furono la prima volta pubblicati col titolo di Profili ...".

91. Cf. Leopardi, Ultimo canto di Saffo, l.1, "Placida notte, e verecondo raggio"; and Fogazzaro (Poesie), p.387—Dal "Libro dell'amore immortale", XV, ll.7,8: "Le placide montagne, / Il limpido ponente".

92. Ll.37,38 are reminiscent of Leopardi's A Silvia: thus, "E tu pensosa ..." echoes "E tu, lieta e pensosa..." (l.5), while "... al davanzal sedevi", recalls "... all'opre femminili intenta/Sedevi ..." (ll.10,11).



L'Aurora diede un bacio, e L'Oriente,  
 Culla de' tuoi, t'irradiò la mente.  
 Sogni le palme; il suono odi del Gange  
 Che de' pagòdi alle scabee si frange;  
 Sogni il deserto; e dell'ardente clima  
 Pregna intanto dal cor t'esce la rima. 11.37-44.

The first four lines are simple and particularly noteworthy. The image in 1.39 is unusual and arresting, while the linking of Aurora with its birthplace, the East, and the reference to the latter as the birthplace of Vittoria's ancestors<sup>93</sup> are very effective. The Aurora is the birth of a new day; in Zanella's poetry it often symbolises the dawn of man's immortal destiny; and here marks the beginning of a new phase for Vittoria, since through the Aurora, "... l'Oriente/... t'irradiò la mente" 11.39,40,<sup>94</sup> and she drew inspiration for her poetry from exotic visions of the East, "... quando cadean le nevi/E tu pensosa al davanzal sedevi," 11.37,38. The tone and mood of this work are reminiscent of La vigilia delle nozze, Sopra un anello and other poems where Zanella is describing the calm and idyllic peace of a young girl's life at home before her marriage. Thus, "stanzin" 1.31 and "cheto" 1.36 echo the expression "cheto stanzino" 11.22, from La vigilia delle nozze, and its illustrious Leopardian antecedents (cf. p. 69 ).

Another instance of Zanella presenting his own particular profile of a woman he actually knew is to be found in Aglaia 1878, addressed to a cultured noblewoman, "Col poetico nome di 'Aglaia' è celebrata la gentildonna ... Elisa De Muri Grandesso".<sup>95</sup>

Despite her great beauty, talent, wisdom, elegance and spirituality—"Bella, sdegnosa di terreno omaggio, /.../.../Avvezza a vagheggiar l'eterno raggio, /Aglaia, vivi ..." 11.1-5—the poetess, Elisa De Muri Grandesso, is very modest and does not take advantage of her talents to have a host of admirers. The basic theme of these quartine is Zanella's praise for this noblewoman, which, however, seems exaggerated, when compared with the sonnet also addressed to her (cf. pp. 91-2), and stretches the reader's credulity. Thus, 11.9-20 extravagantly exalt Aglaia in terms of Classical Mythology—she has the wisdom of Minerva, 1.9, the bearing of Juno, 11.9, 10, the long, dark, flowing hair of the three Graces or the Muses, 11.10-13, and seems like Homer's inspiration for "... l'alta forma/Fascinatrice d'Elena ...;" 11.19,20<sup>96</sup> although the poet then adds,

93. Poesie (1928), p.193.

94. Cf. Fogazzaro (Poesie), p.405—Una ricordanza del lago di Como, 11.2-5, "... d'Oriente/.../... irradiando/Tutta la terra ...".

95. Poesie (1928), p. 245.

96. Cf. Baldacci, p.733, regarding 11.18-20: "si pensi soprattutto all'apparizione di Elena nel libro III dell'Iliade (vv.201-8 nella traduzione del Monti)".

Se l'austero contegno e la parola  
 Pregna di lampi non diceva aperto,  
 Che a miglior vanto e a men caduco serto  
 Eri cresciuta in più sublime scola. 11.21-4.

In other words, Aglaia has all the beauty and fascination of these feminine figures from Classical Mythology, but none of their pagan, immoral connotations.

Illustrating a woman's beauty through comparisons with goddesses and figures from mythology is particularly reminiscent of Parini,

Parve a mirar nel volto  
 E ne le membra Pallade,  
 Quando, l'elmo a sè tolto,  
 Fin sopra il fianco scorrere  
 Si lascia il lungo crin:

Se non che a lei dintorno  
 Le volubili grazie  
 Dannosamente adorno  
 Rendeano a i guardi cupidi  
 L'almo aspetto divin.

Il pericolo, 11.41-50;

and Foscolo,

Tal nel lavacro immersa,  
 che fiori, dall'inachio  
 clivo cadendo, versa,  
 Palla i dall'elmo liberi  
 crin su la man che gronda  
 contien fuori dell'onda.

Armoniosi accenti  
 dal tuo labbro volavano,  
 e dagli occhi ridenti  
 traluceano di Venere  
 i disdegni e le paci,  
 la speme, il pianto, e i baci.

A Luigia Pallavicini caduta da cavallo, 11.25-36,

especially in All'amica risanata—"... dove la donna è trascesa nella sua contingenza mortale ed è diventata una lontana donna dell'Ellade eterna."<sup>97</sup>— not only in 11.19-30, but also in 11.37-42:

... o quando  
 balli disegni, e l'agile  
 corpo all'aure fidando,  
 ignoti vezzi sfuggono  
 dai manti, e dal negletto  
 velo scomposto sul sommosso petto.

as well as, to a lesser extent, Carducci,

—Se ben si pare a le fattezze tue,  
 Tu fusti nata in cielo a l'armonia;  
 E mi fai rimembrar Psiche qual fue  
 Quando sposa d'Amor tra i numi uscia.  
 Tardi ritorna a la spera natia!  
 Donami ch'io t'adori, o forma eletta!

—11.135-140, Poeti di parte bianca.

97. U. Foscolo, Prose e poesie, a cura di Luigi Russo, nuova edizione accresciuta, Firenze, 1964, p. 98.

It is interesting that Zanella's references to female beauty are relatively rare; he would tend to exalt other qualities such as sweetness, sensitivity, modesty, religiosity, innocence, moral rectitude, devotion to family life and responsibilities, intellectual and artistic attributes; but when they occur are usually in Classical terms, as in ll.58-79 of Possagno 1849, and ll.10-16 of this poem,

...        Se sprigioni il crine  
 Che in lunga e sinuosa onda al confine  
           Del piè ti scende ventilante e bruno,  
 Una sei delle Grazie e delle Muse,  
           Quali il canto fingea d'età remota  
 Nell'Ilisso lavarsi e nell'Eurota  
           A mortal guardo inviolate e chiuse.

It has already been seen in other poems that in describing a woman's physical appearance, Zanella seemed to concentrate on her hair, as is attested by the frequent repetition of "crine" and "chiome". The same is true in this poem, where ll.10-12 provide the only detail of Elisa's physical appearance (the word "ventilante" is both unusual and arresting), apart from the reference to her height, l.19, "... l'alta forma".

The above lines, particularly 10-12, remind one of Parini,

E il bel crine oltra il costume  
 Scorrer libero e negletto;                    11.21,22: Le nozze,  
 E il bruno sottilissimo  
 Crine che sovra lor volando va.    11.29,30: Per l'inclita Nice,  
 Musa, mentr'ella il vago crine annoda,  
 A lei t'appressa ...                    11.49,50: Alla Musa,

as well as ll.43-5 from Il pericolo, quoted on p.95 ; and Foscolo,

allor che, a' nodi indocile,  
 la chioma al roseo braccio  
 ti fu gentile impaccio.

A Luigia Pallavicini caduta da cavallo, ll.22-24,

...        e i crini  
 sul collo irti svolazzano;  
           A Luigia Pallavicini caduta da cavallo, ll.55,56,

All'agitarti, lente  
 cascan le trecce, nitide  
 per ambrosia recente,  
 mal fide all'aureo pettine  
 e alla rosea ghirlanda

11.43-47, All'amica risanata.<sup>98</sup>

The Classical, mythological allusions increase the aura of beauty and fascination surrounding Elisa, for they make her seem even more rare,

98. Cf. also Aleardi, Le tre fanciulle, ll.59-62: "l'inanellato e sciolto/volume de' suoi crini/carezzava con vago/ondeggiamento lo sfiorito volto:" (Baldacci, p.565), and Prati, Antimaco, ll. 215,216: "... alla corvina/chioma ondeggiante sulle nivee spalle" (Baldacci, p.669).



distant and unattainable. This effect is enhanced in the simile of ll.33-36, where Elisa is likened to a star, for she is "Sull'ultimo orizzonte" and yet shining brightly.

In the last three quartine, Zanella returns to a more Christian and spiritual tone. Although he praises Aglaia very highly, the emphasis returns to an appreciation of her spirituality, as already seen in l.4, and her modesty, ll.29-32; as already seen in l.1. The last stanza is an appropriate simile for conveying her beauty, brilliance and modesty,

Come stella che tremola del mare  
Sull'ultimo orizzonte; e nell'istante  
Che l'addita a' compagni il navigante,  
Sfavilla e rapidissima scompare.      ll.33-36.

In spite of this and the fact that the poet refers to Elisa, for whom he had a deep admiration, with the poetic title of "Aglaia"—thus removing the composition from a purely realistic appraisal of this cultured lady—the poem does nevertheless seem too exaggerated in its praise, as in ll.25-8,

Nell'universo stai, come in tuo regno.  
L'onnipossente mano ha nel tuo volto  
Il più bel fiore del creato accolto  
E sovrana t'ha data aura d'ingegno.

which could almost seem as though they were addressed to the Queen of Heaven. In connection with the simile of the star, ll.33-36, it is interesting that one of the Madonna's titles is "Morning Star".

The poem is noteworthy, however, in representing a summation of the attributes of Zanella's nineteenth-century, Romantic, Italian ideal of womanhood: Elisa's beauty, modesty, spirituality, appreciation of poetry, wisdom, dignity, fascination and wit, as well as her concern for her family (cf. pp. 91-2) and her great love for her "cari morti", cf. Ad Elisa De' Muri Grandesso durante un'ecclissi, p.129.

Many of the characteristics Zanella attributed to the young noblewomen he taught and met, such as the Aganoor sisters and Elisa De' Muri Grandesso, he projected onto his own artistic creations—Elena, Il Piccolo Calabrese 1871; Edvige, Edvige 1881; and Giannina, Corrado 1885—who also seem to embody the nineteenth-century Romantic Italian ideal of womanhood.<sup>99</sup> In addition, although they are presented as young and beautiful, there is a lack of physical detail, which helps to spiritualize them and highlight their qualities. Thus, Elena, described merely as being blonde, displays compassion towards the peasants, Il Piccolo Calabrese, ll.361-364; great love for her brother, Allano, ll.313-320; and also sensitivity, since she is deeply affected by his death; while it is she who helps

<sup>99</sup>. See the assessment of Zanella's attitude towards women in Greenwood, pp.141-148.

Cirillo, the unfortunate "Piccolo Calabrese" sold into slavery, and restores him to his family.

Similarly, Zanella enhances Giannina's goodness and spirituality by merely referring to her as "soave/Beltà", ll. 45, 46 Corrado; while in the case of the virtuous Edvige—her beauty and innocence are instrumental in bringing about Teobaldo's conversion—the poet restricts himself to describing her hair: "... Rannodate in fretta/Le bellissime trecce ..." ll. 1, 2 and again, "... il bruno della lunga chioma" l. 249, Edvige.

#### (VI) DEATH

In this section, perhaps more than in any other, it is apparent that there is virtually no development in Zanella's attitude to a particular subject, but rather, an excellent illustration of the way in which he looks at its different aspects. These are linked by three interwoven threads, each of which provides an alternating counterpoint, as in the recurring autobiographical element—including Zanella's own avowed hope of obtaining cathartic relief through his verses—and his sincere attempt to also bring comfort to others who had suffered terrible losses. Similarly, the fundamental leitmotif of spirituality and materialism emerges forcefully as the poet's efforts to provide consolation to the bereaved oscillate between these two polarities. In addition, the fluctuating optimism and pessimism in these poems almost appear to reflect Zanella's own changes of mood.

In 1868 Zanella wrote Alcione,<sup>100</sup> in which he deals with the sorrow and anguish of being separated from our loved ones and the ardent desire to be reunited with them.

Although the theme of death is obviously important in this poem, it must be viewed within the context of Zanella's turning to Classical Mythology as a pleasant escape from the cold materialism of his own age:

Dolce è pur torsi ad un'età che sete  
Solo ha di lucri e fredda intende al vero;  
E seguir l'ombre dilette e liete

Che a' lumi spenti sorridean d'Omero! ll. 106-109.

According to Graf, Zanella

... si distoglie da un'età che solo ha sete di lucro e fredda intende al vero (L'alcione); si disvia dietro antiche immagini e sogni antichi; si rifà contemporaneo di Omero, e di quanta è la "coronata famiglia de' poeti" di Atene e Roma, "sacerdoti del pensiero" (Passeggio solitario, V). 101

100. Alcione was later to become the title of one of D'Annunzio's works.

101. Poesie (1928), p. XXIII.

Alcione,<sup>102</sup> like Psiche 1847, and Timossena 1865, as well as some later poems, is part of what could be called the "Classical trend" in the clash between Classicism and Realism, which characterised Zanella's poetry.

It is interesting to note how l.35, "... dechinasti il collo", and l.80, "E sovra il petto cadendo col mento", compare with ll.76,77 and 81,82 of Timossena, as well as ll.79,80 from Psiche, "Assonnando dechina la cervice/Sovra l'omero...". Similarly, there is a link between ll.48,49: "... le bionde/Chiome discioglie ..." Alcione, and "... sparsa le chiome" l.163, Timossena, as well as, "Sparsa le trecce morbide" from Manzoni's Morte di Ermengarda.

The unpleasant imagery of ll.82-90, with which Zanella depicts how Cécile's dead body is shown to Alcione, is certainly effective in its horrifying impact, for it enables the reader to share in Alcione's shock and so lends verisimilitude to her reaction and her resulting suicide. The fact that such imagery is absent from the poem Il poeta, which deals with an actual death, tends to support the view that Zanella was less concerned with death and bereavement in the terzine of Alcione, but rather with Classical Mythology, as an escape from the harsh reality of his own age.

In the short poem Il poeta, probably of 1868,<sup>103</sup> Zanella stressed the close connection between love, death and suffering, as he himself wrote to Lampertico in 1868: "Nei versi Il poeta intesi l'affetto, che quando è profondo non è mai scompagnato di dolore".<sup>104</sup>

Here Zanella considers the sorrow of a mother whose son lies at the bottom of the ocean. Despite the triteness of the imagery, the tone is much more delicate and restrained than the unpleasant images of Alcione, ll.82-90, but still lacks the consoling effect of the sonnet All'amico Emilio Valle, in morte della sua figlia Emilia 1880,

102. Ibid., pp.470,471: "Compresa tra le poesie originali nella prima e seconda edizione dei Versi, venne poi dall'autore passata nel 1887 nelle Varie Versioni poetiche coll'indicazione "Fictum ex antiquo", e mutando il titolo L'alcione in Alcione. Il Graf ... vi accenna come a cosa originale".

103. Ibid., p.472: "Questa breve poesia comparve nella prima e seconda edizione dei Versi, ma la data precisa non si conosce". Although the exact date of composition is not known, it would seem to be 1868 since the poem deals with death and is therefore thematically linked to other poems of that year.

104. Baldacci, p. 748.



Viene sull'alba a visitarti ...

...

il tuo lamento ascolta;

Poi quasi rampognando il duol paterno,  
Sfavilla in volto, e dice: "il mio mortale  
Caro dunque t'è ancor più dell'eterno?"

11.9-14.<sup>105</sup>

In this sonnet, not included by Zanella in the main editions of his poetry, one of the most beautifully consoling poems which he addressed to those who had suffered a bereavement, he was stressing the distinction between the spiritual, eternal soul and the material, decaying, mortal body.

The expression "gracil fior", l.10, Il poeta, conveys the vulnerability of the dead boy and reminds one of the Virgilian image of the cutting down of a delicate flower symbolising the death of a young person.

The poet does succeed in his intention of conveying the mother's sorrow and also demonstrating the link between love and suffering.

In the quartine entitled Alla memoria di Guglielmo Toaldi professore nel Ginnasio-Liceo di Vicenza 1868, Zanella deals with the subject of death from a different viewpoint. Here, he is concerned with stressing the close link between the living and the dead. He does so by addressing his late friend, Guglielmo Toaldi, directly.

In assessing the value of the poem one must obviously consider the poet's intention in writing it. In this regard, Zanella's comment to Lampertico is interesting and revealing:

'Ieri ... ho mandato al Barbèra le due nuove poesie su Pasini e sul povero Guglielmo. Ti trascriverei quest'ultima, ma il tempo mi manca. Non è senza affetto e basta'.<sup>106</sup>

The poem is in effect an expression of Zanella's affection for his dead friend, Guglielmo Toaldi, and deals with three main themes: the dead can seem so near to us, giving us guidance, comfort and advice, ll.11-16; it is only the body which is enclosed in the tomb, ll.19,20; and that purification through suffering<sup>107</sup> leads one closer to God, ll.29-36; as well as a patriotic element.

In the first three verses, the poet shows how close he feels to his dead friend—this whole feeling is summed up in the third verse—for if he were to see him,

105. Poesie (1894), Vol. II, p.229.

106. Poesie (1928), p.479.

107. Cf. Pascoli—the importance of suffering to purify the soul—  
"Insegni, con l'acre tua cura/rodendo la pietra e la creta,/che  
sempre, per essere pura,/si logora l'anima lieta.", ll.65-68,  
La canzone della granata.

Meraviglia o terror già non avrei  
 Come al cospetto di defunta salma.  
 Così vivo ti pingo agli occhi miei  
 Memore l'alma! 11.9-12.

He then returns to the fundamental distinction between spirituality and materialism with an emphatic, optimistic re-affirmation of his belief in the immortality of the soul: "Ma contro miglior alba agita l'ale/Lo spirito illeso" 11.19,20.

While the first three verses appear rather slow, laborious and almost too mechanical, with their down-to-earth details—references to a creaking door and footsteps—the fourth and fifth verses strike one as being more inspired and the poem seems to come alive.

The central part of the work contains Zanella's reminiscences about the many talks he had had with his friend concerning the afterlife and the rôle of suffering in leading one closer to God, 11.21-36.

The last part of the poem is essentially patriotic and reflects Zanella's anxieties about Italy's present state and her future. He asks Guglielmo Toaldi: "Di noi, d'Italia che ti sembra?" 1.41. There is here an element of convincing psychological truth: wondering how things on earth must seem, from the perspective of eternity, to those who have died. The last three verses have a slightly rhetorical tone, but nonetheless convey Zanella's sincere feelings, hopes and anxieties—Italian youth has paid a high price for Italian freedom, but their sacrifice will have been in vain, unless modern youth follows their example in facing "altre prove", 1.60.

Zanella has used the rhyme and metre to good effect to convey and reinforce the poem's basic intention. Thus, while the three endecasillabi of each stanza give an impression of calm stability, the other elements—the use of the quartina, the alternating rhyme scheme, and the inclusion of the short quinario as the final line in each stanza—tend to lighten the poem and highlight the hope and optimism with which Zanella wants to stress the close link between the living and the dead.

In spite of this and the fact that the poem may be said to succeed, within Zanella's own terms of reference, "Non è senza affetto e basta", it nevertheless has a certain pedestrian, uninspired, heavy quality. It is interesting that he himself should sound rather defensive about the stylistic value of the work and in fact omitted it from the third and fourth editions of his poetry.

In Sopra un anello portante incisi un cuore, un'ancora e una croce 1869, addressed to Elena Aganoor, Zanella touches upon several themes—the love and joy of the family circle, 11.19-24; love and marriage as well as separation from her childhood home for the bride, 11.25-36; and a woman's view of life—but they are underpinned by the occasional cir-

cumstances of the composition, the death of Elena's aunt, and the resulting mood of melancholy pessimism which pervades the ode.

It is like a rather vague sermon addressed to the young noblewoman, Elena Aganoor, and the poet warns her in general terms, "Navighi ignoto mare/Con sospettosa vela..." ll.7,8. There is an interesting analogy with the earlier poem La vigilia delle nozze, 1861, in which the beginning of the young girl's life as a bride, or rather her anxieties, was presented in terms of the image of a ship going to sea.

There is a certain logical sequence in the imagery of the first three verses, in which Zanella describes childhood as a "ruscelletto", l.1, youth as a "sonante e tumido torrente", l.4, and the adult world as "ignoto mare", l.7.

The poet wonders if the young Countess is aware of the problems and troubles which lie beneath the apparently calm surface of her life,

... Odi tu l'onda  
Che immota al sommo e radiante appare,  
Sotto i piedi muggir vasta, profonda? ll.8-10.

Whilst this image succeeds in conveying the powerful menace of these hidden forces, the following one highlights their deceptiveness, "Forse nel porporino arco dell'iri/Prossimi nemi nereggiar rimiri?" ll.11,12. The dark mood of these opening lines is enhanced by the resulting contrast with the gentleness and delicacy of the third sestina, in which the poet conveys Elena's spirit and liveliness by comparison with the brilliance of the sun and the beauty of a pearl, ll.13-16; the whole effect is heightened by the exoticism associated with "Armenia" and "Asia", ll.14,15. Apart from their effectiveness, these associations were, of course, completely appropriate:

La famiglia Aganoor, con la quale lo Zanella fu messo in relazione da Andrea Maffei, era da tempo stabilita a Padova, quando il poeta scrisse quest'ode. Oriunda armena, questa nobile famiglia prima di passare nel 1835 in Europa era rimasta a lungo prima in Persia e poi nell'India. 108

Zanella goes on to praise her for devoting her attention to poetry and for not leaving her home and the love and joy of the family circle. With the word "lari", l.24, he gives an almost Roman sense of family-feeling, solidarity, loyalty and attachment. 109

An element of continuity is the reference to the storms of the heart and sea, "Ha sue tempeste il core,/Elena, come il mar...", ll.25,26. The

108. Poesie (1928), p.142.

109. Cf. analogous sentiments in Carducci: "Del buon del vero del decente, e vivo/D'esempi lume/Vedeano i figli ne la sacra etate/De' genitori e ne' pudichi lari;/E sobri usceno cittadini cari", ll.55-59, Agl'Italiani.



"marine" imagery continues in ll.28-30, but the final part, in terms of a ship being able to reach port, is perhaps too hackneyed: "... e senza ria vicenda/Placida in porto la tua vela ascenda".

As so often in his poetry, Zanella returns to a particular theme looking at it from a different angle: "... Se dal materno/Amplesso un giorno ti discioglie amore," ll.26,27, for, as in La vigilia delle nozze, he looks at a young girl's anguish at being separated from her mother due to her love and forthcoming marriage.

But, if Elena has to face any problem or crisis, she should draw comfort and solace from the ring, mentioned in the title of the ode, which was given to her by her aunt, Rosa Pacini, shortly before the latter's premature death.<sup>110</sup>

In the last sestina, the poet states that a humble prayer, hope and resignation are the only things that can assuage the wounds which life inflicts on wives and mothers.

There are no particularly striking images, while a certain triteness tends to weigh down the ode. It seems to reflect a pessimistic mood in the poet, for he normally presents love and marriage in glowing, almost idyllic terms, cf. La vigilia delle nozze, 1861; Due vite, 1862; Corrado, 1885. There is a combination of Romantic sentimentality and a form of sombre, "pre-veristic", pessimistic realism, as seen in ll.7-10.

There is also an interesting link with Leopardi in the wistfully nostalgic description of youth as "De' tuoi verd'anni",<sup>111</sup> 1.2—cf. "verd'anni", 1.50, Ultimo canto di Saffo.

In the same year, 1869, in two superior compositions, the ode, Pel taglio di un bosco,<sup>112</sup> and the sonnets of Passeggio solitario, which almost constitute a single unit—bearing in mind their "occasional" circumstances and the use of nature or the countryside as a framework, within which the fundamental theme of death is highlighted by being intertwined with complementary ones—the initially subdued, elegiac mood leads

110. Poesie (1928), p.142: "La zia materna, Rosa Pacini, morta di tisi, non ancora trentenne, donava negli ultimi giorni del viver suo all'Elena l'anello che avea costantemente portato in dito".

111. Cf. also Carducci: "De' tuoi begli anni il fiore," 1.137, Carnevale; and, "... de' miei verd'anni", 1.65, Piemonte.

112. Poesie (1928), pp.145,146: "Il bosco, soggetto di questa poesia, fu quello di Montegaldella, in quel di Vicenza tra i Berici e gli Euganei, di proprietà della famiglia Lampertico, cominciato a tagliare nel 1869 per dar luogo alla coltivazione del grano e della vite. Presso la famiglia Lampertico a Montegaldella, fin dal 1852, era solito lo Zanella passare la stagione autunnale. Un vialone lungo e diritto, fiancheggiato da platani e da olmi, conduceva dalla villa al bosco, che fu per molti anni mèta gradita alle passeggiate del poeta".

imperceptibly to an emphatic conclusion, particularly in the final sonnet of Passeggio solitario.

In Pel taglio di un bosco, as Calcaterra<sup>113</sup> has pointed out, the continuous changes which occur in life, the world and nature constitute the fundamental link between the various themes in the poem.

Zanella's disappointment at the cutting-down of the wood<sup>114</sup> finds immediate expression in l.1, "l'ingrata scure",<sup>115</sup> and is amplified in ll.7, 8: "... E quanto/Gaudio d'un dì con voi troncarsi io vidi!".

In the next two quartine, we find the poet's ability to accept change and appreciate the features of the "new" view afforded by the absence of the wood, such as the beauty of the setting sun as reflected in the windows<sup>116</sup> of a villa on one of the nearby hillsides,

E splendido mi fêre  
In faccia il Sol, che dell'alpestre villa  
Nelle rosse vetriere  
Presso all'ocaso tremola e sfavilla.            11.13-16.

In fact, the sun, whether setting, rising or being reflected, is a recurring natural image in Zanella's poetry, as in Amore immortale 1863, ll.3,4: "... il Sol che vaporoso/In grembo si calava alle montagne" ..

Nevertheless, the poet reiterates his sorrow at the disappearance of the wood, ll.17-24, and then turns to one of the most important recurring themes in his whole poetic output, the bond of love and closeness uniting the living and the dead:

Querce romite! A rivi  
Dal cor profondo mi sgorgava il pianto  
Leale; e redivivi  
Gli estinti amici mi sedeano accanto.            11.25-28.<sup>117</sup>

This quartina is effective in the way the deep sorrow, ll.25-27, is counterbalanced by the image, ll.27,28, of the poet being reunited with his dead friends. This particular image has an effective simplicity and directness without being trite. It also shows the comfort and solace he was able to draw from his deep immersion in thought and memories, which would come to him while walking in the wood.

In addition, spending time there helped Zanella in two other ways. Firstly, as may be seen in ll.29-32,

113. Poesie scelte (1957), p.61.

114. Similar themes—there will no longer be a welcome shade, nor will birds be able to nest in the branches—as in ll.1-8, find an echo in Pascoli: La quercia caduta.

115. Cf. Pascoli: "l'ingorda sega", l.65, Il ciocco.

116. Cf. Aleardi—Le tre fanciulle, ll.8-10, "... ancora sul monte/scintillavano i vetri/d'un paesel lontano," (Baldacci, p.563)—and Pascoli, La fonte di Castelvecchio, ll.2-4, "il sole.../...fa...splendere i lontani/vetri di Tiglio;".

117. Cf. Aleardi, Un'ora della mia giovinezza, ll.84,85, "... Oh! ch'io rivegga/redivivi i miei cari..." (Baldacci, p.504).

Larve d'onor superbe,  
 Larve fugaci carolar vedea  
 Nel raggio, che sull'erbe  
 In tremoli occhi d'oro si pingea;

through the "tremoli occhi d'oro"—a striking and original image—produced in the grass by the sun's rays, the poet is able to see the brilliance, attractiveness, frailty and transience of earthly honours. The adjective "tremoli" is effective, not merely in a purely descriptive sense, but also in the way it reinforces the idea of "Larve fugaci" by stressing the unstable, passing nature of the "occhi d'oro" or earthly honours.

Secondly, while walking from the wood to the villa, Zanella would often be able to find ways of completing his verses,

E spesso col pensiero  
 Ne' dolci arcani delle muse immerso,  
 Al fine del sentiero  
 Il fin trovava del sudato verso.                      ll.33-36.

Line 34 has a soothing, gentle effect which reinforces the impression of the poet's sweet reveries as he is immersed in the composition of his poetry. The unusual use of "arcani" as a noun—it would normally be used as an adjective—is effective in preventing the expression "dolci arcani" from becoming prosaic. The same is true of the inversion "dolci arcani", due primarily to "arcani" being used as a noun. The use of the adjective "dolci" is a good example of the way Zanella, like Leopardi, was able to imbue a word from everyday language with a poetic quality. Another similarity with Leopardi is Zanella's use of the adjective "sudato" in the expression "sudato verso", l.36 (cf. *A Silvia*, "le sudate carte", l.16). Zanella had also used this adjective similarly in *Due vite*, "sudato campo", l.29.

From these lines, 33-36, one can also find confirmation of his stylistic perfectionism, to which he also referred in the sonnet *Natura ed arte*, 1877.

After regretting the passing of his youth, Zanella points out that while the trees of the wood will be used to make ships which will have to face terrible storms, he himself will also have to face an equally violent one, ll. 41-44.

The poet strikes an exotic, mysterious note through the Eastern names, "Cina", l.52; "Gange", l.54; "Giava", l.55, of the places the ships will visit.

In ll.57-60, he turns to the theme of European emigration—a subject dealt with in great detail in *Il lavoro* 1865—for these ships will also be taking European emigrants to the New World where they will be able to earn a living, which had been denied to them by "avara Europa", l.60.

In the last stanzas, Zanella states that the past is disappearing, while tempestuous "novi tempi" are about to descend. But however loud



or proud: the voice of the new, transalpine doctrines, which are attacking "le paterne are", l.68, may be, he will not be blind to the truth, nor will he slavishly adopt these new, foreign creeds—positivism, naturalism—and reject his own values. Ll. 69-72,

Me non vedrete gli occhi  
 Di bende avvolto a sfingi oltramontane  
 Piegar servi ginocchi,  
 E quel ch'oggi adorai schernir domane;

are a forceful and effective declaration of Zanella's moral independence.

By referring to his own beliefs as "le paterne are" l.68, Zanella presents them as traditional, sacred values which he invests with an almost Roman sense of patriotism. In the last stanza, he proclaims his steadfast allegiance to "... gli antichi affetti, /L'arte d'Italia e la materna fede" ll.75,76. This is probably the clearest enunciation of Zanella's credo to be found anywhere in his poetry.

The six sonnets of Passeggio solitario<sup>118</sup> 1869 are in effect an illustration of the poet's thoughts and ideas during one of his walks through the wood,<sup>119</sup> referred to in the preceding work, Pel taglio di un bosco 1869. There is in addition an external link, for the last line of each sonnet is repeated as the first line of the next one<sup>120</sup>—this is a very obvious indication of the importance he attached to the framework of his compositions.

Arturo Graf saw the Classicism of these sonnets as representing Zanella's desire to escape from the harsh reality of his own age (cf.p. 98 ). Cusatelli, however, was probably closer to the truth in viewing Zanella's advocacy of a Classical, stylistic framework, within which he wished to move closer to reality, as an important, conscious decision:

... l'essere classicista non implicava necessariamente, per lui, il proposito di una restaurazione. Al contrario, Zanella ravvisava nel contatto ininterrotto con la tradizione l'unica via aperta ad un rinnovamento non esteriore della poesia. Già nei sonetti giovanili del Passeggio solitario aveva tentato, su modelli prevalentemente leopardiani, di restituire nella nitidezza della realtà, senza l'incerto alone della 'Schwärmerei' romantica, una situazione di malinconica contemplazione della natura (si noti, nel titolo, un ricordo di Rousseau) e di meditazione morale. 121

118. The title has a striking, if superficial, resemblance with Prati's Passeggiate solitarie (Baldacci, p.608).

119. See note 112.

120. Baldacci (pp.603,604) gives the text of two of Prati's sonnets— "... rispettivamente il IV e il V di una piccola collana, sono tratti ... da Memorie e lacrime (1844) "—in which the last line of sonnet IV is repeated as the first line of V.

121. Cusatelli, p.560.

The first sonnet has a very calm tone in the two quartine, but comes alive in the terzine, thus reinforcing the poet's basic message that "... si è più vicini alla verità tra la semplice natura",<sup>122</sup> than in the palaces of the schools of philosophy. There is an analogous theme in the Imitation of Christ and in Zanella's poem Dopo una lettura della "Imitazione di Cristo" 1869, ll.41-44.

Baldacci<sup>123</sup> has pointed to a stylistic similarity between "Questa foglia che cade e sotto i piedi/Spinta dal soffio mattinal mi suona!" ll.13,14, and the following lines from Tommaseo's poem A una foglia 1855: "Foglia, che lieve a la brezza cadesti/sotto i miei piedi". The basic theme of a leaf being separated from its tree by the wind also occurs in Leopardi's La foglia<sup>124</sup>, translated and adapted from a French poem by Arnault, Zanella's translation (La caduta delle foglie)<sup>125</sup> of Millevoeye's La chute des feuilles and also in Pascoli.<sup>126</sup>

In sonnet (II) there is also a clear distinction between the quartine and the terzine, for as in (I), the former seem calm and moderate in tone, while the latter are much more dramatic and contain the essence of what the poet wishes to communicate. Zanella points out that while a tree appears to be completely insensitive to the loss of its leaves, for it will acquire new ones in Spring, ll.1-8, Man suffers when the power of his faculties diminishes, with the passing of time. The poet concludes that he does not fear death, but the thought of the "mali che reca con sè la vecchiaia".<sup>127</sup> This is a very human and understandable attitude, but it presents a sharp contrast with the emphatic affirmation in La veglia 1864:

Non io, non io, se l'alma  
Da' suoi nodi si sferra e si sublima,  
Lamenterò la salma  
Che sente degl'infesti anni la lima.      ll.41-44.

It is noteworthy that the poems of 1869 reflect a greater pessimism in Zanella. This will be examined in greater detail with regard to Dopo una lettura della "Imitazione di Cristo" 1869.

The third sonnet has a delicacy and lightness lacking in the others. Calcaterra has rightly referred to it as "il più poetico".<sup>128</sup> It has a very peaceful, pastoral, bucolic quality, as well as an almost Virgilian appreciation of the countryside.

122. Petronio, p.514.

123. Baldacci, p.724.

124. G.Leopardi, I canti, a cura di Luigi Russo, Firenze, 1962, pp.392-3.

125. G.Zanella, Versioni poetiche di Giacomo Zanella con prefazione di Ettore Romagnoli, Firenze, 1921, Vol.II, p.283.

126. Cf. I due alberi and Foglie morte.

127. Petronio, p.515.

128. Poesie scelte (1957), p.66

Punge il memore cor segreta cura  
 Degli anni estremi. Ove romito poggia  
 Un colle aprico non superbe mura  
 Nè vigne io chieggio nè frumento a moggia,

Ma poche zolle (in più breve misura  
 Già presto giacerommi), ed una loggia  
 Che mi discopra la varia natura  
 E dal Sol mi sia schermo e dalla pioggia.

Il vecchio servo or mi colga una pera,  
 Ora ciliege e prugne; e di viole  
 M'infiori il caminetto a primavera.

Io di mia man disegnerò le aiuole;  
 E sotto il pergolato in sulla sera  
 Con qualche amico cangerò parole. Passeggio solitario, III.

Zanella did in fact eventually have a small villa near the river Astichello—the collection of sonnets, 1880-87, written during his stay there is named after this river. This sonnet (III) anticipates sonnets I and II of the Astichello collection in mood and content—there is also an important similarity with the Latin poem, Carmen alcaicum 1884, which was published with the first fifty Astichello sonnets—while Baldacci<sup>129</sup> and Wilkins<sup>130</sup> have rightly pointed to the link with Horace.

The relaxed, homely, gentle tone and mood of this sonnet are stressed by the repetition of soft double "g": "poggia" 1.2; "chieggio", "moggia", 1.4; "loggia", 1.6; "pioggia", 1.8. Particularly noteworthy is the poet's choice of "chieggio" rather than harder alternatives such as "chiedo" or "chieggo".

It is interesting that Zanella's reference to his own death and burial, 11.5,6, is almost light-hearted compared to the sombre pessimism of sonnet II, 11.12-14:

Temo non già l'ignuda sepoltura,  
 Ma de' mali, che adduce il tempo estremo,  
 Punge il memore cor segreta cura.

This last line of II is, of course, the first of III and is probably the only instance in Passeggio solitario where the first line seems inappropriate and is not properly integrated with the rest of the sonnet.

As so often in Zanella's poetry there is a Leopardian echo,<sup>131</sup> especially

129. Baldacci, p.725: "III. 2-8. "Ove...poggia": il motivo è genericamente oraziano; cf. .... Serm., II, VI, 1-3".

130. Wilkins, p.446: "Zanella would have been quite at home on Horace's Sabine farm, and Horace would have been quite at home in Zanella's villa!"

131. Sonnet III is also reminiscent of Giambattista Maccari's Il cocomero, 11. 1-8, cf. Baldacci, p.388; while there are instances of expressions from sonnet III seeming to find an echo in Carducci: "mi pungerà", 1.6; "memore petto", 1.3; "bel colle aprico", 1.5 (Agli amici della valle Tiberina); "colle aprico", 1.9, (Ad Alessandro d'Ancona); "colli aprichi", 1.45, (Primavere elleniche, II DORICA).



in ll.2,3: "... Ove romito poggia/Un colle aprico ...". The mood reverts to pessimism in IV, whose impact is enhanced by its concise, thematic development, concentrating as it does on death and separation from loved ones, with the implicit hope of reunion in the afterlife. This is a very important recurring theme in Zanella's poetry and is, of course, part of his spirituality—the spirituality of love, the bond of love and reciprocal prayer between the living and the dead.<sup>132</sup>

The way in which the cheerful, sociable tone of the last line of sonnet III, "Con qualche amico cangerò parole.", takes on the sadness which imbues IV, when it naturally becomes the first line of IV, is very effective. Line 14, "Se i viventi non ho, parlo a' sepolti", echoes in its simple directness ll. 27,28 of Pel taglio di un bosco, "... e redivivi/Gli estinti amici mi sedeano accanto".

L.14 of IV takes on an unexpected meaning as Zanella uses it as the first line of V, to refer, not to dead friends, but the poets of Athens and Rome in his library. There is a further link with the sonnets of Astichello, for in one of them he describes his library in a similar way.

As in some of the other sonnets of Passeggio solitario, there is a distinction between the calmer tone of the quartine and the more dramatic emphasis of the terzine. Zanella states that he hopes to learn from the books he possesses and from the civilizations of Athens and Rome, ll.1-8; and, in particular, he hopes that they will preserve him from ever shocking or scandalising others,

Fate che il grande ardor, che mi consuma,  
Alla virtù sia sacro; e se talora  
Insultasse al pudor, pèra la piuma.      ll.12-14.

These oft-quoted lines correspond to Manzoni's earnest hope of never causing scandal or being a bad influence.<sup>133</sup>

In sonnet VI, a vigorous, emphatic reaffirmation of his belief in an afterlife and spiritual, eternal values prevents these themes from degenerating into stereotyped clichés, as can be seen in the opening lines,

...      Gloria che vale  
Senza virtù? Fatuo rimbombo e spuma  
E nebbia di rapaci aure sull'ale.      ll.2-4.

Baldacci has pointed to a similarity with the sonnet Feroce spirto by Della Casa, "Gloria non di virtù figlia che vale?" l.11.<sup>134</sup> The noun

<sup>132</sup>. Death and separation from loved ones also figure prominently in Pascoli's poetry.

<sup>133</sup>. A. De Poli, "Il pensiero religioso nella poesia di Giacomo Zanella", Rassegna Nazionale, 1st. May, 1919, p.45.

<sup>134</sup>. Baldacci, p.726.

"rimbombo" l.3, with its appropriate onomatopoeia, occurs elsewhere in Zanella's poetry and has Leopardian overtones.

ll.3,4 are particularly effective in conveying that whatever value or substance earthly honours may have is quickly and irretrievably lost, being literally snatched by a "rapacious winged-breeze". "Fatuo rimbombo" l.3, gives the impression of a loud, blustering clamour, which has the emptiness and inconsistency of an echo which will, of course, fade away, despite its deceptive loudness. The visual imagery of "spuma" and "nebbia" reinforces the idea of something which seems very real, but is in fact very inconsistent and insubstantial. The expression "rapaci aure sull'ale" l.4, with its Classical overtones, is very striking as it so concisely conveys the speed, ease and apparent malevolence with which destiny or the Fates can seize and therefore nullify earthly honours. In addition, the latter would be even more empty and meaningless for the poet if they were to lead to his being separated from his loved ones for all eternity,

Or che varrammi se l'incenso fuma  
E verdeggia l'allòr sopra il mio frale,  
Quando in eterno dall'amata schiera  
Diviso io sia de' miei cari vissuti  
Sol di fede contenti e di preghiera?                      ll.7-11.

In these lines Zanella has imbued his spirituality with a warm humanity. He concludes, almost as if he were answering ll.2,3, "... Gloria che vale/Senza virtù?", that only those things which have value in the perspective of eternity are worth pursuing, "... sol quella gloria è vera/Che il giusto ciel retributor non muti." ll.13,14.

In ll.5,6, where Zanella returns to the theme, very common in his poetry, that death is a transition from one form of life to another, "Dopo l'ocaso altrove si ralluma/ Questa nostra fuggiasca ora mortale",<sup>135</sup> once again he makes use of the images of sunrise and sunset. The latter represents death while the former is the dawn of man's immortal destiny, cf. La veglia.

The emphasis changes in two sonnets of 1870, A Carolina Tattini nata marchesa Pepoli di Bologna and Alla memoria di John Malcolm, which are concerned with simply recognising the depth of suffering following a terrible loss.

The former has similarities with Il poeta 1868, thematically and in terms of background, since both poems deal with mothers whose sons have drowned<sup>136</sup>, as well as stressing the close link between love, death and

135. Petronio, p.517, has interpreted these lines as follows, "dopo la morte, simile a un tramonto ("ocaso"), la nostra vita si riaccende altrove, come il sole che, tramontato a noi, risplende altrove".

136. Poesie (1928), p.482: "Le morì il figlio Napoleone, ventenne, in un viaggio marittimo da Buones-Ayres (sic) a Montevideo. Ella n'ebbe la nuova nell'agosto 1870, mentre era all'acque di Recoaro. (Z.)".

suffering.

It is interesting that there is no attempt by Zanella to offer consolation by referring to a reunion in the afterlife, for the sonnet is a very, literally, sympathetic recognition of the mother's grief by the poet himself. The very sombre mood reaches a climax in the last two lines, "E come il mar, dove il tuo caro giacque, / Il dolor che t'inonda è cupo, immenso.", in which Zanella has captured the terrible darkness, pain and bewilderment which bereavement brings. The apparent triteness of the simile, between the sea where her son has drowned and her own deep sorrow, does not spoil this very simple but effective illustration of the crushing, almost unbearable, all-enveloping anguish of grief, from which, especially at first, there seems no escape.

Alla memoria di John Malcolm,<sup>137</sup> shows how deeply Malcolm is mourned by his brother,

... dall'angoscia affranto  
Pensa a' dì corsi teco, alle fortune  
Or liete, or meste, e non trattiene il pianto. 11.6-8.

The poem is less dramatic than the preceding one, but even though it is directly addressed to the deceased, it is very similar in that it expresses, in a sombre mood, the sorrow of bereavement. The fact that there is no direct mention of the immortality of the soul is highlighted by the almost pagan, materialistic emphasis on John's grave as his eternal resting-place: "... l'alterno romor delle Lagune/Odi, Giovanni, al tuo sepolcro accanto" 11.3,4, and "... simboli di lutto/La pietra ornar del tuo riposo eterno." 11.13,14, for John's brother had never thought that the flowers which John had cultivated would be placed on his grave.

These are very common, hackneyed expressions, and it is surprising to find them in Zanella's poetry without reference to reunion in the afterlife or any attempt to console the bereaved, beyond a compassionate appreciation of the depth of their grief. This is all the more surprising when one remembers the emphatic reaffirmation of Zanella's belief in death as a transition between this earthly existence and man's immortal destiny, in La veglia, or the beautifully consoling sonnet All'amico Emilio Valle, in morte della sua figlia Emilia, with its echo of the biblical "Why seek ye the living among the dead?", (cf. pp. 99, 100).

Perhaps the sombre mood of these two sonnets of 1870 could be partly due to lingering pessimism from 1869; this question will be considered in greater detail when Dopo una lettura della 'Imitazione di Cristo', 1869,

137. Ibid., p. 483: "I fratelli Malcolm, inglesi stabiliti a Venezia, furono dallo Zanella conosciuti a Padova nel '69 in casa della contessa Giuseppina Aganoor".



is dealt with ( cf. pp. 261-5 ). Zanella, fully aware of the stylistic deficiencies of this and the preceding sonnet, omitted them both from the fourth edition of his poetry.

Although there is nothing new or striking in Zanella's prosaic treatment of the theme of death in Il Piccolo Calabrese 1871—the sorrow, suffering and pain of being separated from a loved one by death, ll. 433-456; a desire to help others who are also suffering, ll. 465-480; the memory of a loved one, ll. 485, 486; a desire to continue the good works which the loved one was pursuing, ll. 486-488; the link between the living and the dead, ll. 483, 484; everything that had been dear to her brother, Allano, was now very dear to Elena, ll. 489-496; our loved ones who die are still with us, influencing and guiding us, ll. 1293-1296—the idyll Un pioppo, also of 1871, affords the poet the opportunity to set his spiritual view of death and eternity against the background of a narrative based on a true story:

Il fatto che costituisce la trama di questo idillio è vero anche ne' suoi particolari. Il nonno si chiamò Candido Danda, ricco benestante di Chiampo; la nipote Elisa De Biasi, che, lasciata erede universale, finì per la cupidigia dei parenti in un convento ad Arco nel Trentino. Il pioppo fu dal nonno piantato in un suo prato alla Pieve. 138

Particularly significant is the way in which the poet makes use of the rhyming of the ottave, ABABABCC, to reinforce the mood of calm, peaceful melancholy which pervades the whole poem.

In the opening lines, Zanella immediately introduces a note of pastoral tranquillity,

... di maggio  
Era un mattin; più l'anno io non rammento;  
Era l'erba recisa e pel villaggio  
Il grato odor ne diffondeva il vento; ll. 1-4.

The references to "maggio" l. 1 and "grato odor" l. 4 have similar overtones of spring-time as the Leopardian expression "maggio odoroso" in A Silvia, l. 13.

The phrase "... più l'anno io non rammento" l. 2, not only involves the poet as narrator and provides an element of credibility and realism, but also tends to push the story further back in time and gives it a certain quality of poetic vagueness, due to the lack of a specific date. This effect will be repeated and stressed in l. 49, "In que' lontani giorni io l'ho veduto".

In l. 3, the adjective "recisa" has the Virgilian reminiscence of a young life cut down in its prime, cf. the episode of Nisus and Euryalus

from the Aeneid, so preparing for the young girl's premature death, as does the reference to "cari estinti", l.11.

The girl's grandfather plants the young poplar in the "sito più bello" l.7, of his garden as a symbol of his joy at her birth. The tree seems to be a witness of the events which occur to the family.

In ll.15,16, "... il vagito l'avvertì che spenta/Il Signor non volea la sua sementa ", Zanella gives full expression to the religious dimension which pervades all his poetry, as, of course, his whole life and values. He highlights the importance of Divine Providence, which has willed the continuation of the old man's family, as well as the fact that man's desire for continuity and immortality also finds expression through his wish to have descendants.

In the third ottava, the idyllic, pastoral tone is heightened in the description of the countryside, with the soft alliteration of "s": "erbo-so", "coperse", "fresca", "stelo", "asperse", ll.17-20; the "delicate" vocabulary: "velo", "barbe fragili", "delicato stelo", "man tremolante", ll.17-20; and the way the old man addresses God,

'Oh Tu, — dicea, — che doni a'fior la veste  
Ed il verde ristori alle foreste; ll.23,24.

In his prayer, the old man compares his granddaughter to a flower, ll.29-31, and asks that she and the poplar may grow together, "... entrambo fra-  
li,/Di beltà, di vigor crescano eguali" ll.31,32. The grandfather then prays that when the girl has grown up, is married and surrounded by her children, while sitting round the "felice/Pianta", ll.37,38, she will count its branches and be reminded of him. Thus, the poet intertwines the tree's fortunes with those of the family.

There are further Leopardian overtones in l.45, "sùbito morbo"—cf. "chiuso morbo", l.41, A Silvia—and l.46 "affanni", referring to the old man's anxieties after the death of his granddaughter's parents.

In l.50, the expression "dolcissimo peso" is an effective and striking combination—the joy of having the child with him and the tremendous responsibility of having to bring her up—which is echoed in l.52: "Con sorriso e con lagrime negli occhi".

The way Zanella describes the young girl is similar to his description of the daughters of the Countess Aganoor, cf. Alla contessa Giuseppina Aganoor 1872, in that he gives very little emphasis to a purely physical description but concentrates on a particular characteristic which seems to epitomise the girl—who is delicate, sensitive, slender and artistic and whose most prominent physical feature, in the poet's description, is her hair: "Del color del crepuscolo, chi i fini/Invade della notte, erano i crini" ll.63,64. This is true of Zanella's description of women in other

poems, as can be seen from his frequent use of words such as "crine", "crini" and "chiome". The girl's growth was matched by the poplar—she garlanded it on her birthdays, ll.65-72.

Once again the poet links the family's fate with that of the tree. For, when the girl's grandfather died,

... Sul conscio tronco il nome  
 Volle scolpirne: lo cerchiò di rose;  
 E più sovra quel prato orma non pose. 11.78-80,

Zanella describes the old man's death—the separation of body and soul—in terms of spirituality and materialism: "Quando dell'adorato avo la bella/Alma depose le vetuste some" 11.75,76.

After her grandfather's death, the girl, "Conforme al suo cercò più volte un core" l.89, but in vain. This line echoes ll.86,87 of L'adolescente, "... Sente che il core/Ha bisogno d'un core...".

She evaded the world by entering a convent but died within a year, "... presso a profferir l'eterno giuro,/Dio si tolse il bel fior di già maturo." ll.103,104. Once again Zanella views death in spiritual, religious terms—Divine Providence chooses the best possible time for a soul to be separated from the body, in terms of its eternal salvation, ll.103,104, or "divino amplesso" l.108.

Just before her death, the young girl called out to her grandfather and wished to see "... un prato ed una pianta", l.111. The poet returns to the theme of the bond of love between the living and the dead and the importance the tree had for the young girl—it was virtually her age and she remembers it as she is dying.

Years after the old man and his granddaughter had died, his name was no longer visible on the tree. But at the end of the poem, Zanella stresses the link between the poplar and the family, for as he is standing under it, its falling leaves symbolise the "fuggite ore gioconde" l.119.

Although it is not one of his best poems, it does have characteristic elements of his technical and stylistic ability, such as his utilization of the rhyme to reinforce the underlying tone and mood of the work, or the way in which he develops and intertwines the various themes. One can also see how an image is anticipated, or prepared for, earlier in a poem, while it is highlighted by being echoed by a similar image or theme later.

In the sonnet Ad Andrea Maffei 1872, Zanella considers death from yet another viewpoint. Here, in referring to a sonnet which Maffei had addressed to the Countess Giuseppina Aganoor, Zanella is concerned with how a person should face death.

He tells Maffei that the prospect of death frightens the man who has wasted his youth "tra fatue sirene allettatrici" l.7,—similarly in



Due vite 1862, the inveterate old bachelor fears death because of his mis-spent youth: "Bevesti al nappo di venali amori", l.4—but this is not the case for the man who has let himself be inspired by the "candide Muse", for death will bring with it an eternal reward. In other words, a good and useful life, in which one exploits one's own particular talents or follows one's vocation, is the best preparation for death. A similar idea informs sonnet XLV of Astichello 1880-1887.

It is interesting that, as in so many of his poems, Zanella refers to death as nightfall, "... de' tuoi dì la sera/... discenda ...", ll.1,2; and sunset, "ocaso",<sup>139</sup> while the sunrise symbolises the dawn of man's immortal destiny, "Ed ei sul capo suo d'un giorno eterno/Salir contempla la superba aurora" ll.13,14. Similar imagery has already been noted in other poems, including La veglia 1864, and Passeggio solitario, 1869, sonnet VI, ll.5,6.

Once again, Zanella's recourse to Classical themes and mythological allusions could be regarded as an attempt by him to escape from harsh reality. Analogously, one finds that he uses Classical expressions, euphemistically. Thus he refers to mistresses as "fatue sirene allettatrici" in this sonnet, and to prostitutes as "Scinte baccanti" l.44, in Le ore della notte 1863.

Not surprisingly, Zanella omitted this unpretentious sonnet from the fourth 1885 edition of his poetry.

If a useless life is to be deplored, as the poet suggests in Ad Andrea Maffei and in Astichello, XLV, the same is true of a futile death. This is the underlying theme of Dopo un duello 1872,<sup>140</sup> in which Zanella describes the tragic aftermath of a duel: the sorrow of the dead man's family, his hurried and ignominious burial, and the uselessness of his death; he has not even sacrificed himself for a noble cause, such as patriotism. The poet has very effectively conveyed these themes in what appears to be a moralising, didactic poem.

The grief of the dead man's family and the tragic futility of his death are stressed by the dark, sombre mood with which the poet has invested the whole composition. Even the physical features of the surrounding countryside are painted in dark colours. The adjective "foschi", meaning "dark", also implies the idea of something sinister, while the valley is described as "petrosa" giving a rather arid, depressing overtone to the scene, "Pe' foschi avvolgimenti/Di petrosa vallata," ll.1,2. This is highlighted by comparing this desolate landscape with a pastoral, idyllic alternative, in the form of a denial, "Non d'acque rallegrata/Nè di mugghio d'armenti,"

139. Cf. Pascoli, for whom, correspondingly, "tramonto" refers to death, in l.28, Commiato.

140. Poesie (1928), p.190.

11.3,4.<sup>141</sup>

The dead man's body is tied to a horse accompanied by four boys, who were unknown to him and his family, thus emphasizing his isolation even in death, 1.5. They walk "a capo basso", sadly and in silence, stressing the shame and ignominy of the circumstances of his demise and of the whole affair, which they wish to bring to an end with his burial as quickly as possible: "Affrettavano il passo", 1.8. The corpse on the horse is first referred to as "...strano involto" 1.12, and then graphically described in gruesome, Virgilian detail,

Cadea dal manco lato  
Dondolando una testa,  
Che coll'insanguinato  
Crine radea la pesta.                    11.13-16.

The hastily-prepared grave has neither a crucifix, nor flowers laid on it. Its neglected and forlorn condition is heightened by a series of negatives,

Sotto deserto noce  
Cavata era una fossa.  
Ma nē braccia sull'ossa  
Ivi allargò la Croce;  
Nē si sparse giacinto;  
Nē sventolò bandiera;  
Nē saluto o preghiera  
Seguì laggiù l'estinto.                    11.17-24.

The isolation of "l'estinto" even involves his family—his mother and sisters, "Ululavan lontane", 1.25, are naturally deeply affected by his death, but they are far away. The ultimate desolation of this solitary, uncared for grave is highlighted in the last lines of the poem:

Poi la foglia caduca  
E co' suoi nemi il verno  
La sconsolata buca  
Occultâro in eterno.                    11.29-32.

The haste with which the body is taken for burial to the hurriedly-prepared "fossa", as well as the sense of urgency which pervades the whole work, are reinforced by the poet's use of settenari instead of endecasillabi, more usually adopted in ottave.

The rather unusual rhyme-scheme, ABBACDCD—as well as the appropriately emphatic rime incrociate of 11.17-24, ABBACDDC—tends to reinforce the haste, urgency and sense of desolation, which would not have been the case with the typical ABABABCC, ottava rhyme-scheme with its more reassuring, repetitive, stable effect.

141. Ll.1-4, with their presentation of an arid scene, heightened by being contrasted with an idyllic alternative (through a denial), would seem to have an illustrious, Leopardian antecedent: La ginestra, ll.1-4, "Qui su l'arida schiena/del formidabil monte/sterminator Vesevo,/la qual null'altro allegra arbor nē fiore,".

One is also struck by the fact that Zanella has completely ignored the reasons for the duel, as if to underline how utterly meaningless and irrelevant they seem, when viewed against the perspective of the tragic outcome.

This is undoubtedly one of Zanella's most underrated works, when one considers the way in which all the elements of the poem—rhyme, metre, vocabulary, imagery, and the concise thematic development—combine harmoniously and reinforce each other to convey the fundamental theme very effectively.

The autobiographical strand, running through this section, re-emerges forcefully in the ode Ad un usignuolo 1876. Since Zanella had been deeply affected by the loss of his mother in 1872 and the ensuing "three-winters" crisis, during which he did not compose any poetry, it is not surprising that this poem should deal with death, sorrow and his attitude towards his own verses.

He begins by saying that his poetry used to have the spontaneity of the song of the nightingale.<sup>142</sup> But that was before his terrible ordeal, "Poi vasta m'avvolgea/Notte di pianto" ll.7,8, which he describes in very similar terms in A Maria Aganoor 1876, "... D'orrenda sera/Vidi i miei giorni avvolti;" ll.35,36. In both instances, Zanella is stressing the dark, crushing depression which enveloped him.

As in other poems, for example, Alla contessa Adriana Zon-Marcello 1876, ll.5,6 "Le brevi feste e l'infinito pianto/Hai già provato delle umane cose", Zanella points out that the joys of life are so fleeting, in two rather unusual images:

È subito baleno  
Che l'anima percote  
Quel che di gioie ignote  
Inebria il seno;

È roseo fior del mare  
Che in torbida tempesta  
Gli occhi un istante arresta  
E poi scompare,

ll.9-16.

He goes on to illustrate this by referring to how many of his friends and loved ones have died, ll.17-20. He contrasts the sweet memories with the bitter, painful separation, ll.21-24. However, the most appropriate comparison, for its simplicity and effectiveness, in illustrating the fleeting nature of human joy is in ll.25-28,

Umana gioia è vento  
Che rapido trascorre.  
Sull'alto d'una torre,

142. L.4 "Ermo usignuolo"—cf. Leopardi comparing himself with Il passero solitario.



Io lo rammento,<sup>143</sup>

which are far superior to the original ones —

Sul culmin d'una torre  
Che truci etā rammenta,  
A cui non lungi Brenta  
Ondoso corre,

and in fact "Questi quattro versi si leggono cancellati nel manoscritto e sostituiti".<sup>144</sup>

He continues to stress the brevity of human joy through the image of a bright star, which can be seen for an instant, and then seems to disappear; ll.29-40. A more concise and striking illustration is in ll.41-44,

Ben l'arco si rallenta,  
Quando è la freccia uscita;  
Ma fonda la ferita  
Il cor tormenta.

where the very graphic, physical reference to an arrow-wound is a forceful way of conveying intense spiritual or emotional suffering. The poet has also indicated, through this concentrated presentation, that pain can come so swiftly and yet last so long and be so deeply felt.

Zanella then turns to one of the most important themes in his poetry, the spirituality of love. Whilst a material body can prevent the absolute union of two souls, this will occur, after death, in Heaven, where love will be harmonious and unaffected by any hint of bitterness or malice.

The next four quartine are an expression of his great love for his mother, ll.61-76. In heaven, from among the many thousands of souls, he will see his mother and rush to embrace her.<sup>145</sup>

In ll.62-64,

Fra mille e mille volti  
Dall'uman vel disciolti  
Io ti discerno,

and in ll.17,18 of A Maria Aganoor 1876, "L'anime nostre. Il cielo/Lor diè diverso velo", one finds Zanella referring to the human body as "vel" and "velo". In other words, in terms of the perspective of eternity, the poet is exalting man's immortal soul and demonstrating the relative unimportance of his material body, to which he attributes the frail, weak, transparent, insubstantial and almost intangible qualities of a veil. Just as the intensity of spiritual suffering had been expressed through a very

143. Cf. Pascoli: Notte d'inverno, ll.1,2 "Il Tempo chiamò dalla torre/lontana...". and ll.34,35 "E il Tempo lassù dalla torre/mi grida ch'è giorno..."

144. Poesie (1928), p.490.

145. Cf. the way in which similar themes—the poet's deep love for his mother, his sorrow at her death, his desire to be reunited with her in eternity, as well as the consequent joy and peace of the afterlife—frequently recur in Pascoli, as in Il ritorno a San Mauro: ll.25-30, La messa: ll.19-21, La tessitrice: ll.29-36, Mia madre: ll.27-32, 39-44, Commiato: ll.13-18, Giovannino.

physical, concrete image, ll.41-44, so here, ll.62-64, the inconsequentiality of the human body is conveyed by making it seem almost ethereal and evanescent, while the soul appears more real and substantial.

The expression "santo amplesso" l.76, had been anticipated in earlier poems—"beato amplesso", l.52, La vigilia delle nozze; "materno amplesso", l.48, La religione materna—and recurs frequently in Zanella's poetry, as does the theme of his reunion with his mother in the afterlife: "Con questa speme i giorni/ Io nutro dell'esiglio;" ll.77,78 Ad un usignuolo; "Posa attendendo il messo,/ Che lo rinnovi nel materno amplesso" ll.47,48 La religione materna. His description of heavenly bliss is rather unusual but effective,

Sull'infinito stuolo  
Dell'anime, che l'onda  
Del sommo Ben gioconda,  
Ecco io trasvolo: 11.69-72, <sup>146</sup>

the use of the verb "gioconda" being particularly striking.

The poem ends with Zanella stating that his future work will be an expression and catharsis of his pain,

O flebile usignuolo,  
Come tu fai, col canto  
Darò di tanto in tanto  
Uscita al duolo. 11.81-84,

and, in fact, this ode itself partly fulfilled this function. Zanella's declaration that his poetry would resemble the song of the nightingale not only brings one back to the opening lines, but also confirms his recovery from the poetic silence of his terrible ordeal. This is very reminiscent of Leopardi's state of mind when he wrote Il risorgimento, in which according to De Sanctis, "... canta la risurrezione della sua immaginazione, del suo sentire".<sup>147</sup> Perhaps Zanella had this poem in mind when he wrote of the "flebile usignuolo" l.81; cf. Leopardi's reference to "flebile usignol", l.56, Il risorgimento.

Zanella never published the ode Ad un usignuolo, and the following lines were changed from,

Nello splendore eterno  
Fra mille e mille squadre,  
O mia perduta madre,  
Io ti discerno,

to the final version,

Nello splendore eterno  
Fra mille e mille volti  
Dall'uman vel disciolti  
Io ti discerno, 11.61-64.

146. One is implicitly reminded of Alcega's Dantesque expression, "... per lo mar degli esseri..." l.64, Un'ora della mia giovinezza, which Baldacci (p.503) compares with Paradiso, I, 113.

147. G. Leopardi, I canti, a cura di Luigi Russo, op.cit., p.238.

Rather than having anything to do with the poem's supposed deficiencies, Zanella's decision not to publish it could have been motivated by a desire not to divulge such personal, intimate feelings.

As well as a source of cathartic relief, Zanella also tried to use his poetry to bring comfort to others. Thus Materialismo. Al prof. P.E. in morte di sua moglie, a sonnet of 1876, addressed to a bereaved widower,<sup>148</sup> is an attempt to console him by reinforcing his belief in the afterlife. The poet's approach is to suggest that even an atheist, when confronted by death, renounces his denial of the immortality of the soul, ll.12-14.

This sounds a rather sweeping and unsubstantiated assertion. That being confronted by death might possibly make an atheist have second thoughts about lightly rejecting the immortality of the soul could, perhaps, be a reasonable view, but the one put forward by the poet does give the impression of being too categorical.

Zanella attempts to discredit what he sees as an atheist's materialistic, "squallide fole" by presenting them in an unfavourable light:

... Colei che piangi e chiami

...  
...

Tutta perì. Già sciolta in polve e mista  
All'eterna materia, occulti stami  
Di sè prepara e screziata lista  
Al fiore, al pomo, e nutre il verde a' rami; ll.2-8.<sup>149</sup>

The effectiveness of this presentation is reinforced by the first of the terzine,

Benediresti, o Piero, alla parola  
Livida, glaciale che all'alma oppressa  
L'ultimo avanzo della speme invola? 11.9-11.

Here the poet refers to an atheist's beliefs as cold and hard for they tend to rob the sorrow of the bereaved of their only hope and comfort —the immortality of the soul and the reunion in the afterlife with their loved ones. These two important articles of religious faith are not actually mentioned, but they are eloquent by their absence and because the strong unfavourable presentation of the materialistic arguments suggests their inclusion as a counterbalance and more pleasant alternative. Once again the clash between spirituality and materialism is the fundamental note.

The sonnet is well-constructed and serves the poet's intention of

<sup>148</sup>. Poesie (1928), p.208.

<sup>149</sup>. Do these lines represent an indirect attack on the Scapigliati's macabre view of death? (Cf. "Quella loro letteratura di vermi e di bare, quella contemplazione ossessiva della putredine del sepolcro, sono infatti... sostanziale espressione di un dibattito religioso." Cusatelli, p.502).



attempting to discredit an atheist's beliefs while, by inference, making the immortality of the soul seem more acceptable. One wonders, however, how comforting the poem would have been—surely its primary object—for the bereaved widower to whom it was addressed, at least in comparison with ll.9-14 of the sublimely consoling sonnet All'amico Emilio Valle, in morte della sua figlia Emilia (cf. pp.99, 100).

Widowhood and bereavement are also the main themes of Alla contessa Adriana Zon-Marcello 1876, which was written six years after the countess had lost her husband.<sup>150</sup>

Throughout the poem, Zanella suggests that Adriana's life has nearly always been a mixture of happiness and sadness. In the first quartina, the poet uses a rather inappropriate simile. He likens the "Gaia, pensosa ..." l.1 Adriana's state of mind to the daily changes in the "veneto mar" l.2 which seem to reflect, according to the poet, "gioia" and "lutto". The inappropriateness of this imagery is well brought out in ll.5,6, "Le brevi feste e l'infinito pianto/Hai già provato delle umane cose", for if the joys of life are so brief and the sorrows almost unceasing, how can this contrast be reflected by the daily and presumably frequent changes in the colour of the sea? The reference to "lutto" foreshadows Adriana's future bereavement.

Despite its hackneyed nature, the metaphor in ll.13-16,

Un giorno io ti conobbi, e mi parevi  
Giovinetto querciuol, che dai profondi  
Fessi dell'alpe rigida di nevi  
Ricerca il Sol con palpitanti frondi.

does reinforce the combination of happiness and sadness in Adriana, mentioned above. The reminder of her meeting with her husband, ll.17-24, returns to this same combination with a rather trite and almost theatrical reference to her premonition of some future tragedy,

Era un ciel d'Oriente; e sovra il volto,  
Ove col riso un indistinto, oscuro  
Presentimento combatteva, accolto  
Ti splendea tutto il roséo futuro.      ll.21-24.

Adriana learns to face the hardships of life from the natural spectacles around her, such as the "...cipresso/Flessüoso al passar della bufera", ll.30,31, but the beauties of nature cannot drive away her sadness. L.37, "Rimembri o speri?...", very concisely summarises the way in which the young countess is torn between the past and the future. Is she thinking of her past happiness with her husband or hoping to be reunited with him in eternity?

In the last quartina,

<sup>150</sup>. Poesie (1928), p.210.

Tanto ti aggrava la terrena salma,  
 Quanto la veste di conchiglie adorna  
 Ed un votivo ramoscel di palma  
 Tardano il passo a pellegrin che torna. ll.41-44,

the poet stresses that Adriana's spiritual outlook on life is so single-minded that it cannot be deflected by earthly preoccupations.

Not surprisingly, in another poem of 1876, A Maria Aganoor nel suo giorno natalizio 24 settembre 1876 in Napoli, the spiritual bond of love between the living and the dead is also considered, but here it is emphasized and seen in the autobiographical context of the poet's relationship with his mother. This is intertwined with his long illness—not only since it was probably precipitated by his mother's death, but also because her direct intercession with God must have brought about his recovery—and brought into relief by the consolation he also derived from another bond of love, his great affection for Maria Aganoor, as is evident from the circumstances of the composition of the poem:

Scritta dallo Zanella durante il suo soggiorno a Napoli presso la famiglia Aganoor, che s'era ivi trasferita da Padova. 'Ti mando—scriveva al Maffei il 29 settembre 1876—alcuni versi che ho dettati quasi all'improvviso per la nostra buona Mary, che mi parla sempre di te come di un angelo consolatore. Dopo i lunghi dolori che ho provati, mi sento stretto d'un affetto più forte a questa ottima giovane. È serena e tranquilla: discorre meco volentieri de' passati suoi casi.' ... 151

A noteworthy feature of the work, which also helps one to appreciate its impact better, is the unusual nature of the "strofe", which are not of uniform length. Not only is this contrary to Zanella's poetica, but it is all the more surprising when one considers that this poem was written in the same year as Ad Elena e Vittoria Aganoor, in which Zanella had censured Leopardi for adopting "... la strofa che ignava, a guisa d'angua/Dilombato, or s'accorcia ed or s'allunga.", ll.84,85.

A Maria Aganoor has its settenari arranged in five "strofe" of fourteen, twenty, eight, twenty-four and twenty lines respectively. The poet has used these varying lengths, like the movements in a symphony, to transmit the changes in mood of the "strofe".

In addition, the short settenari and the many rime bacciate produce an effect of quickness and briskness, as well as a certain cohesion, heightened by enjambements. This is particularly apparent in ll.1,2: "Come rapidi i vanni,/Sono, Maria, degli anni!",<sup>152</sup> where this very briskness illustrates very well how rapidly time passes. The first "strofa" has a nostalgia for the poet's youth, very reminiscent of Leopardi, especially ll.3,4,

151. Ibid., p.217.

152. Cf. Carducci: "Fuggono, ahi fuggon rapidi/Gl'irrevocabili anni!", ll.1,2 Dopo Aspromonte.

"Come de' sogni pronta/La cara età tramonta!". In other poems, Zanella had used the image of sunset to convey death; here he uses it to describe the passing of youth—cf. Leopardi Il tramonto della luna—while sunrise heralds birth, or rather its concomitant hope and optimism for the future, ll.6-8.

The poet looks longingly back to his youth and regards the future with pessimism,

Undici lustri addietro  
Io già mi lascio; e tetro  
Vidi farsi il cammino,                    ll.9-11.

The enjambement of ll.10,11 places the important keyword "tetro" in a position of prominence and therefore makes its impact greater.

There is an interesting slowing down of the pace in ll.11-14, which, together with the change to rime alternate, helps to communicate the poet's depression and pessimism, while the faster pace, rime baciate and enjambements, of ll.1-10, had reflected the vigour and optimism of the young girl. The reference to Zanella's pessimistic attitude anticipates the main theme of the third "strofa", his long illness.

The four remaining "strofe" all begin with the vocative exclamation, "Maria!". Although providing an element of continuity, this vocative is too repetitive, trite and heavy-handed, when compared with the subtlety and delicacy of Leopardi's in A Silvia.

In the first three lines of the second "strofa", Zanella brings in the spiritual dimension of birth; it is not purely material and biological but involves the direct intervention of God in creating man's immortal soul:

Maria! Lo stesso mese  
Vide quaggiù discese  
L'anime nostre...                    ll.15-17.

Although Zanella and Maria Aganoor are linked by being born in the same month, Heaven gave their souls "... diverso velo/E vie diverse ...", ll.18,19. He continues very effectively in this spiritual vein by playing down the relative importance of the human, material body. Just as he had exalted the spirituality of love through a very concrete, material image (cf. Amore immortale, pp. 60-61), so here he demonstrates the relative unimportance and inconsequentiality of the human body by describing it as a "velo",<sup>153</sup> thereby attributing to it a very frail, weak, transparent and almost intangible quality. It has already been seen in the ode Ad un usignuolo how the poet also referred to the human body as "vel", cf. pp.118-9. The consequences of this spiritual evaluation of man are far-reaching and, of course, completely in line with Zanella's Christian view of life.

153. Cf. Carducci: "... e di sè paga/L'alma raggiò desio fuor di suo velo:", ll.155,156 Poeti di parte bianca.



Thus, if a man is not responsible for his physical appearance, race, colour —these being characteristics connected with his body or "velo"—social class or the initial circumstances of his life, referred to as "vie diverse", ll.19, then these factors are not important in terms of the perspective of eternity.

After describing his youthful attitude of hope, enthusiasm and optimism, the poet depicts the sheltered, peaceful family life which Maria has led. Despite the differences in their circumstances, "Pur di concorde affetto/ A te mi sento stretto;" ll.27,28, he expresses his great affection for her.

In the short third "strofa", he describes the dark despair of his "three-winters' " crisis. The very brevity of the "strofa" brings into sharp relief the contrasting elements: the sweetness, tears, prayers and entreaties of his loved ones could not break through the "orrenda sera", which was enveloping him, bring peace to his heart filled with "assenzio", or penetrate the hostile silence of his "...pertinace/Labbro" ll.41,42. ll.40-42,

Al cor ebbro d'assenzio,  
O sciòr del pertinace  
Labbro l'ostil silenzio.

are particularly noteworthy in depicting the mental agony of Zanella's long ordeal. L.40 very effectively transmits the depth of bitterness felt by the poet, while his reference to his silence as "ostil" heightens the sense of isolation concomitant with the dark hopelessness of his depression. His helplessness is well brought out in the expression "pertinace/Labbro", where the poet almost implies that the stubbornness of his "Labbro" is beyond the control of his own volition.

In the penultimate "strofa", he gives a more detailed description of his plight, stressing the feeling of loneliness and unrelieved monotony. This is well brought out in ll.45,46: "Noiosamente eguali,/Amaramente eterni," where the very close similarity between the two lines—each consists of an adverb and a shorter adjective, the adverbs strongly reinforced by the Leopardian associations of bitterness and pessimism ("... Amaro e noia/ La vita, altro mai nulla; e fango è il mondo.", ll.9,10, A sè stesso),—reflects perfectly the static, unchanging nature of boredom, while the two long adverbs transmit the sheer length and never-ending nature of the slowness with which time passed for the poet during those three winters.

Zanella then turns to the bond of love between the living and the dead. How much his dead mother must have prayed for his recovery from his terrible crisis! ll.59-63. Zanella expresses his very great love for his mother in ll.63-66, where he refers to her in almost "Madonna-like" terms. He also seems to see his own relationship with his mother as reflecting that between Jesus and Mary,

... O cara  
 Anima, il dolce frutto  
 Del ventre tuo ripara,  
 Se uopo ancor sia, dal lutto! 11.63-66.

In the final "strofa", Zanella repaats his love for Maria and asks her not to forget him. If she should ever suffer great sorrow she should remember that

... appiè de' colli  
 Berici alcun le angosce  
 Intime tue conosce. 11.78-80.

There is a repetition of the view that the spiritual bond of love cannot be broken by physical distances, or death or any other type of barrier. In fact, in order to face the hardest misfortunes one needs the love and support of a friend or relation, 11.81-86. These final lines do not escape from seeming too trite and moralising.

The poem provides an interesting insight into the importance Zanella gave to the almost symmetrical construction of his works. Thus, there is not only an external framework—the calmer first, second and final "strofe" deal with Zanella's attachment to Maria, while the third and fourth verses describe, with great emotional intensity, the poet's crisis, as well as his love for his dead mother and the realisation that her prayers must have helped him to recover—but also a series of interwoven thematic strands, each of which constitutes a self-contained duality, such as spirituality and materialialism, body and soul, and the relationship between the living and the dead.

From the personal emphasis of A Maria Aganoor, Zanella turns to a much broader vision in Le palme fossili nella villa de' conti Piovene in Lonedo visitate con le alunne del Collegio Dame Inglesi di Vicenza nel novembre 1877. Here, death is viewed in the context of time, matter and the soul.

The Palladian villa of the Piovene family, about thirty kilometres north of Vicenza, housed a famous geological museum, of which "Le palme fossili", mentioned in the title of the ode, were the most important exhibit.<sup>154</sup>

Like the poem A Maria Aganoor 1876, this ode also has settenari, arranged in "strofe" of varying lengths, and frequent enjambement. All these characteristics, which tend to give an impression of briskness, help to convey more effectively the rapid passage of time with which the poem deals. A further similarity with A Maria Aganoor is the way in which the alternation between rime bacciate, incrociate and alternate seems to correspond to the changes of mood, theme and tempo in the poem. The ode, however, has a faster, more fluent pace and is free from the pessimism which pervaded A Maria

<sup>154</sup>. Poesie (1928), p.239.

Aganoor.

In considering time, matter and the soul in Le palme fossili, Zanella once again returned to the fundamental theme of spirituality and materialism. Time, which may seem to pass very slowly for the young, but in fact vanishes rapidly, ll.20-24, is closely associated with change, which is inevitable in life—Nature is continually renewing itself. After death and the dissolution of the body, which will be used "A tessere altre vite: "l.108, the soul will be reunited for ever with its loved ones, "Che lagrimò sepolti," l.112. In other words, time, this worldly life and matter will one day disappear and cease to exist; the only reality will be that of the soul in eternity reunited with its loved ones and God.

In the first "strofa", Zanella sets the scene with a description of the young girls enjoying the beauty of the countryside. Starting from the "occasional" circumstances mentioned in the title, the poet's description of these young girls reflects not merely the perennial youth of Nature and their appreciation of it, but also provides an effective contrast with the second "strofa", where the poet describes the girls' physical appearance in old age.

Calcaterra commented on ll.1,2, "... per la verde notte<sup>155</sup>/Di signoril foresta", as follows:

... nell'ombra fitta della verde selva. La fantasia va rapida  
alla sintesi delle immagini. Così siamo soliti dire nelle notti serene: Che notte azzurra! 156

The description "verde notte" is certainly unusual and effective in conveying an accurate and evocative image.

The phrase "templi e grotte" l.3, conveys the atmosphere of a classical, idyllic setting, which provides an excellent backdrop for the young girl's joy,

Fanciulle sciolte in festa,  
Che con accesa faccia  
Alle ultime farfalle  
Per la ventosa valle  
Date l'allegra caccia;                      ll.4-8.

The word "farfalle" conveys an image of beautiful colours, lightness, delicacy and speed. Lightness and speed are stressed by the adjective "ventosa", while "allegra caccia" emphasizes the thrill and speed of the chase combined with the joyful exuberance of youth.

155. Cf. the "chromatic impressionism" of Giovanni Camerana, as in ll.5,6: "Tanto azzurrino è il cielo e tanto limpido/Che lo diresti nero"; from "Sul cretoso declivio a piombo sfolgora" (Baldacci, p.932).

156. Poesie scelte (1957), p.107, note (1).



In the last four lines, 9-12, of the first "strofa", the pace changes to a much slower one which heightens the girls' deep appreciation of natural beauties as they slowly search, "... con lento passo/Spiate ...", ll.9,10, for the hidden flower,

... il porporino  
Nato tra sasso e sasso  
Furtivo ciclamino;                      ll.10-12.

The fact that the flower is hidden is stressed by separating "porporino" and "Furtivo ciclamino" with l.11, which itself describes where the flower is to be found. The pace is very well slowed down by the alliteration of double "s", "... passo/.../... sasso e sasso", ll.9-11, and the assonance in ll.10 and 12, "... porporino/.../Furtivo ciclamino;", as well as by the implicit delicacy of the episode, the search for the hidden flower, and the appropriate leziosaggine of ll.10-12.

This slower pace provides a very appropriate transition to the description of old age in the second "strofa", ll.13-24. The contrast between the joy and youth depicted in the first "strofa" and the physical changes of old age described in the second—apart from being so effective in itself—heightens what is a fundamental theme of the ode: how time rapidly passes.

It is interesting that the first of the physical changes due to old age, which Zanella refers to, is a woman's hair becoming white. He refers to the changes as if they were happening to the land. Thus, hair turning white is seen in terms of falling snow, ll.13-15, while lines and wrinkles are described as furrows in the soil, ll.16,17. This is a particularly striking image, "La guancia delicata/Solchin le rughe ..." ll.16,17, for it produces a marked contrast between the softness, delicacy and beauty of a young girl's unblemished complexion and the image of the same skin in old age, presented as having the characteristics of dark rough soil with deep furrows. These very marked changes in the girls' appearance will be a visible indication of the passage of time, even though it may seem to pass so slowly for them now, ll.20-24. But the poet adds that they should not be sorry if these changes occur and the years will have seemed to have passed so quickly. In fact, the poet concludes in the third "strofa", changes is inevitable in life. He then gives a series of examples of this. In ll.29,30: "Gira sleal fortuna/L'infaticabil rota;", there is a distinctive and striking image, whose impact is emphasised by the unusual adjective "sleal". This concise image conveys the irrevocable onward march of time which brings about enormous changes, such as those which will affect the young girls in old age, their unpleasant nature being very aptly conveyed by describing destiny, "fortuna", as disloyal, "sleal".

The passage from the particular circumstances of the young girls to the generalised, universal conclusion of the third "strofa" is followed by a return to a consideration of the villa and its grounds, the circumstances of the title of the ode. Once again the poet reaches a general, universal conclusion about the way Nature continually renews itself. This is summed up in ll.59,60: "Ché dalla morta foglia/Non pure il fior germoglià;", where the basic idea is heightened by the association with the biblical reference to the seed having to die before being reborn.

In ll.64,65, "... le ruine/D'un secol senza nome", there is a poetic vagueness in the reference to a century which is nameless precisely it lies so far back in the mists of antiquity. This sense of mystery associated with the distant past is heightened by the reference to the very remote age when palm trees flourished in the garden of the villa as they still do in North Africa and Egypt. The sense of antiquity is further accentuated by the reference to the ancient Egyptian city of "Sifene", l.68.

In the penultimate "strofa", there is a description of the cataclysmic upheavals which characterized the world's geological evolution. As in Sopra una conchiglia fossile 1864, Zanella here refers to the way in which the oceans swelled submerging land. In this ode, he evokes the frightening scale of these geological upheavals by describing how prehistoric monsters were so terrified that they rushed towards the sea, ll.73-76. Particularly striking are ll.71-73, "G onfiarono lontani/Indomiti oceàni/Per cieco moto ...", in which "Per cieco moto"—a force unknown to us—helps Zanella to poeticise these occurrences of Natural History. By referring to a blind force the poet makes it seem even more violent and purposeless, almost unbridled; whilst the unknown factor adds to the air of mystery and remoteness surrounding these events. This part of the ode, ll.71-80, dealing with the world's geological evolution is very reminiscent of Sopra una conchiglia fossile, although not as effective.

In ll.81-88, Zanella describes how a shepherd can learn of these cataclysms, "Nel sasso i truci eventi/Meravigliando legge" ll.83-84. Similarly, in Sopra una conchiglia fossile, Zanella had shown the markings of the fossil shell to be a record of these geological phenomena.

In the final "strofa", he addresses the young girls reiterating how quickly time passes. From a purely materialistic consideration of the way, after death, that a body decays and goes to make up the material of other bodies, the poet concludes on a note of spiritual triumph and exaltation,

Ma l'anima di morte  
Scampata alle ritorte,  
Congiunta a' cari volti  
Che lagrimò sepolti,  
Delle durate prove  
Còrrà la palma altrove.

ll.109-114.

The soul is immortal and will be reunited with its loved ones who have died. Once again, life, death and time are viewed in terms of spirituality and materialism. The use of "palma" in l.114—here referring to a heavenly crown or reward—is a play on words which leads one back to the title, Le palme fossili. Thus, from the material, fossilized palms the poet thinks of the spiritual "palma" or heavenly reward.

Although Le palme fossili is one of Zanella's best poems, and has certain thematic similarities with La veglia and Sopra una conchiglia fossile, it is inferior to both of them, and in particular lacks the vigour and optimism of the last mentioned.

In the sonnet, Ad Elisa De' Muri Grandesso durante un'ecclissi 1878, the poet returns to the theme of the sorrow and anguish caused by death separating us from our loved ones. He is particularly concerned with emphasizing that the pain of bereavement can continue for a very long time.

When Elisa is disturbed by an eclipse of the moon, is it because

Vedevi il volto de' tuoi cari morti  
 Discolorato nell'estrema sera,  
 Onde in cor la ferita eterna porti?                      11.12-14.

The sonnet gradually builds up to the final conclusion in this second terzina, although its presentation as a question contributes to the delicacy of the whole poem. It is superior to both A Carolina Tattini 1870 (cf. pp.110-112) and Alla memoria di John Malcolm 1870, cf. pp.110-112, which seem heavy-handed by comparison, and even to Materialismo 1876, cf. pp.120,121. Thus, the delicacy of expression and lightness of touch prevent the phrase "cari morti" from seeming trite. This is an example of Zanella's ability, as in Leopardi, to imbue words from everyday language with a poetic quality.

Once again, there is a connection between death and nightfall, "estrema sera", l.13, in the imagery of the poem.

In the two sonnets collectively entitled Ad un cardellino 1878, the poet broadens his range of vision. The link between life, death and eternity is established in terms of his religious and philosophical standpoint, through a comparison drawn from Nature: the life of the goldfinch.

The poet wishes he could emulate the goldfinch, for the bird does not complain about life, but trills with joy,<sup>145</sup> saying in effect that whatever one's circumstances, being able to accept them is real happiness: "... all'aria aperta o dentro un chiostro/Chi si sa rassegnar sempre è

157. Cf. Prati, Iside (1878), Ramuscello, ll.7-10, "o ramuscel, per magica/ arte io vorrei mutarmi/nell'augellin che dondola/su te, trillando carmi;"—cf. Baldacci, p.657: "il parallelo fra l'artista o cantore e l'uccello del bosco è frequentissimo nella poesia dell'Ottocento europeo, grazie all'iniziale esempio eminente dell'arpista goethiano nel Wilhelm Meister".



felice." ll.13,14. In other words, it is essential to see things in the perspective of eternity. In these terms, death should not be feared for it constitutes the link between life and eternity. Just as the goldfinch is anxious not to be asleep when the sun rises, so the poet hopes to go through life always anxiously awaiting the dawn of his eternal life, ll.19-28.

The ornithological vignettes, ll.8-11 and 15-18, in a way anticipate the greater detail of Pascoli's treatment of the same subject.

The phrase in l.4, "Sin dagli anni più verdi ...", already seen in similar variations in other poems by Zanella, is very reminiscent of Leopardi.

The moralising conclusion of ll.12-14 appears prosaic and is not so well integrated into sonnet I as is the case with the second terzina, ll.26-28, of sonnet II. In the latter, the moralism is well integrated with the description of nature and the personification of the goldfinch. Zanella once again returns to the image of dawn as the beginning of man's immortal destiny,

Io pur d'un giorno eterno i rai forieri  
Viva aspettando e sempre abbia rivolti  
Al verace Oriente i miei pensieri. ll.26-28.

The reference to "verace Oriente" has a double significance, for the East is not merely the birthplace of the dawn, seen here as representing eternity, but also of Christianity.

There is a certain pessimism about these sonnets, particularly ll.26-28, in the way Zanella refers to his attitude to eternal life, which contrasts sharply with the strength and conviction of, for example, La veglia, 1864. This is very evident in the almost despairing, prayer-like, pleading of the subjunctive ("Viva", "abbia", l.27) mood in ll. 26-28.

From this somewhat pessimistic, personal and distant anticipation of death and eternity, Zanella turns, in the quartine, In morte di Filomena Statella De Mari Duchessa di Castellaneta<sup>158</sup> 1879, to a much more optimistic consideration of the viewpoint of a person who is about to die. The poet is concerned with the spiritual reality of the separation of body and soul.

Death, or rather, its personification, "The Angel of Death," is presented in very delicate, consoling terms when it comes to summon Filomena. While her body remains earth-bound, her soul ascends to Heaven. The whole poem has a conciseness, brevity and fleeting quality which makes death itself seem very quick and painless. This overall impression is reinforced by the alternating settenari and endecasillabi, aBaB.

In the first quartina,

<sup>158</sup> Poesie (1928), p.510.

Nella stemmata sala  
 Romorosa di danze e d'armonia  
 Passò ventando un'ala  
 E bassa voce susurrò: ... 11.1-4,

the noise, music and dancing of 1.2 present a very effective contrast with the quietness and calmness of 11.3,4, where the repetition of double "s": "Passò", "bassa", gives a whisper-like quality which anticipates the Angel's words and the gentleness of his summons.

The gentle haste and urgency in the Angel's call to Filomena,

... 'La via  
 È lunga, O Filomena;  
 Lascia il tuo scanno: all'occidente inchina  
 La notte: il pianto frena,  
 E riprendi il mantel di pellegrina.' 11.4-8,

is reinforced by the enjambement in 11.4,5 and 6,7. This also contributes to the conciseness of the poem and therefore to the poet's intention of presenting death as something quick and painless which should not be feared.

It is interesting that Zanella does not actually refer to the "Angel of Death" directly but does so by inference: "Passò ventando un'ala", 1.3. This avoids conventionality and triteness, stimulates the reader's imagination and contributes to the general effect of conciseness.

Once again, death is associated with nightfall, "... all'occidente inchina/La notte ..." 11.6,7.

The assertion that "... 'La via/È lunga ...' " stresses that this earthly material existence and the spiritual afterlife are worlds apart. In addition, the fact that the Angel's "arcana voce" 1.9 is not heard by anyone else again reinforces the gulf separating the world of Matter from that of the Spirit. The final quartina expresses the fundamental distinction between spirituality and materialism in even more explicit terms. Thus, Filomena's material body, "la bella salma" 1.14, remains earth-bound, while her immortal soul wings its way to Heaven,

... intanto l'ale  
 Verso più chiaro Sole  
 Batte soletta l'anima immortale. 11.14-16.

Yet again, eternity is presented as an ascent towards the sun —cf. La veglia, 11.83,84—the dawn of man's immortal destiny.

Thus, while her husband and children have not heard the Angel's words or seen Filomena's soul ascending towards Heaven, but have merely seen her die and are confronted with her lifeless corpse, the poet shows how, behind the external, material earthly human façade, the reality of events at a spiritual level unfolds.

This poem is almost like a mirror-image of the sonnet Materialismo 1876, where the materialistic "squallide fole" of atheists were emphasized, with-

out any direct refernce to spirituality, the immortality of the soul. Here, instead, the spiritual dimension is emphasized and the materialistic aspect is played down.

The rapid transition from the original scene, the hall where there is music and dancing and the angel summons Filomena, to the room where her body is laid out emphasizes the poet's intention of presenting death as very quick and painless.

In contrast with the effectiveness of this work, Zanella's treatment of death and bereavement in Edvige 1881 is prosaic and uninspired. He concentrates on two particular aspects: the pain and anguish of being separated by death from our loved ones, and the desire to be reunited with them, ll.809-817.

Several important conclusions from this chapter—regarding the relationship between Zanella's poetry and poetica; the predominance of diachronic links, as opposed to synchronic; and the fundamental importance of the leitmotif of "spirituality and materialism"—will also emerge in subsequent ones.

To an amazing degree, Zanella's poetry corresponds with the basic outlines of his poetica. Thus, within a Classical, stylistic framework he deals with essentially "Romantic" themes—cf. the definition of this term, pp. 13, 14—in terms of the "passive" (objective portrayal of society) and "active" (didactic, moralising and reforming) rôles of literature.

In this regard there is an interesting parallel between Zanella's thematic "duality", as described above, and the nineteenth-century, Romantic memoirs, which were characterized by:

... da una parte ... l'assunto della documentazione oggettiva o della rievocazione commossa ... dall'altra ... come ammonimento e lezione di impegno umano e civile ... 159

These Romantic memoirs—

... molte di queste memorie, pur tanto attese a una funzione storiografica, serbano in sè una cert'aria domestica, si presentano, nel contempo, come una variegata descrizione degli ideali privati che albergavano nella società borghese dell'Ottocento: la presenza continua—alternantesi con quella del fatto storico—delle istituzioni familiari, degli affetti infantili o giovanili, la nostalgia della casa, il ricordo risentito o dolce degli anni di scuola, lo slancio sentimentale verso i parenti, i fratelli, le spose, i figli, gli amici, tendono a costruire l'immagine di una società nobile, nonostante tutto, di una comunità in ascesa, di una nazione che veniva



riconoscendo e riaffermando e attuando finalmente le proprie rinverdate virtù — 160

and many of the poems considered in this chapter also demonstrate an idyllic nostalgia for childhood memories, cf. also Leopardi and Pascoli, as well as a deep appreciation of the affection and unity of family life, cf. i carducciani.<sup>161</sup>

While stylistically, Zanella drew inspiration from the Classicism of Parini and Foscolo, as well as anticipating that of Carducci, thematically he reflected and foreshadowed many aspects of the two main currents of nineteenth-century Italian Romanticism—la linea del realismo from Manzoni to Verga, and la linea del pathos from Leopardi to Pascoli, which were, respectively, to culminate in Verismo and Decadentismo.

Thus, Zanella's social concern, reflected in his Parinian contrasts,<sup>162</sup> overlapped, to a certain extent, with his attempt to get closer to reality. In this regard, he was, of course, influenced by Manzoni, and his treatment of il mondo degli umili, while, apart from tracing the whole gamut of human existence from childhood to old age, like his co-regionist Nievo, Zanella's presentation of bucolic domesticity mixed with elements of realism, as in Domenico o le memorie della fanciullezza 1871, is reminiscent of the poetry of the Idillio borghese and certain features of the work of the verista, Ildefonso Nieri (1853-1920). Similarly, the second half of Due vite 1862 and sonnet LXVII, Astichello, with their almost idyllic tableaux of rural, bucolic charm and contentment, are not only typical of much poetry of the second half of the nineteenth century, but also represent a transitional stage between the idealised images of the Romantics and the simple directness of Verga's Verismo. In broad terms, there is also a "transitional" element in Sopra un anello portante incisi un cuore, un'ancora e una croce 1869, with its combination of Romantic sentimentality and a form of sombre, "pre-veristic", pessimistic realism.

The many similarities between Zanella and Leopardi include: nostalgia not only for a bygone, mythical Golden Age and its favole antiche, but also for the hopes and happiness of carefree childhood—(an attempt to escape from harsh reality in both poets?); concern with an adolescent's view of life and love; the ability to give everyday words a poetic quality (cf. pp. 78; 129); describing a woman's beauty or appearance in terms of the natural scene, cf. Silvia and Nerina merging with the countryside, and Zanella's Le palme fossili 1877, p. 127; the idyllic evocation of natu-

160. Ibid., p. 146.

161. "...[de] i casti e sèreni affetti familiari (tema caratteristico dell'ambiente carducciano, da Sogno d'estate del Carducci stesso al Chiarini ...) ..." (Cusatelli, p. 585).

162. Cf., for example, pp. 70-1.

re and the countryside; from a common human experience and the poet's own particular experience, drawing a universally applicable conclusion, cf. Il passero solitario and Zanella's Voci secrete, 1850, and La veglia, 1864.

Zanella's "links" with Pascoli include: an appreciation of family life and a simple domestic scene; the themes of death and separation from loved ones, with the desire to be reunited in the afterlife; descriptions of natural detail, greater in Pascoli; attributing an almost mystical (Pascoli) and religious (Zanella) value to sunsets, sunrises and the beauties of the countryside.<sup>163</sup>

In both Zanella and Pascoli, one finds Leopardian echoes from A Silvia, with its presentation of a woman happily working, sewing and singing at home, as well as the sense of mystery in front of the awesome majesty of the universe, which pervades Canto notturno di un pastore errante dell'Asia.

The prominence given to the theme of love by Zanella, in terms of "spirituality and materialism", demonstrates not only the basic importance of this antinomy, but also the way in which it is expressed relatively mildly in early poems and much more forcefully—one can virtually speak of a polarization between the two elements—in later ones. Thus, in Corrado 1885, Ippolito's love becomes a conflict between "spirit" and "senses", thereby echoing Tommaseo, Fede e bellezza, 1838, and Fogazzaro, Malombra 1881, and anticipating Remigio Zena's L'apostolo 1901.

The dominance of the "vertical" dimension, as opposed to the "horizontal", in attempting to place Zanella in his historical context, will be confirmed and amplified in later chapters.

163. Cf., for example, p. 115, n. 139.

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## CHAPTER (4) NATURE

It was seen in the preceding chapter that Zanella looks at a particular subject from different viewpoints. Thus it is not surprising that he paid a great deal of attention to several facets of the theme of Nature, including: his admiration for the beauty of the countryside; employing the latter as a framework, within which he drew comparisons between different aspects of life and the natural scene; his appreciation of the benevolence of Mother Nature; as well as Nature's relationships with Man, Art and Classicism.

It will emerge in the course of this chapter that Zanella's view of Nature, as expressed in his poetry, was not only influenced by Classical poets, such as Virgil and Horace; Leopardi's idyllic evocation of the countryside; and the "Romanticism" of Madame de Staël and Rousseau; but also displayed interesting parallels with Carducci and anticipated Pascoli, as well as, to a certain extent, the starkness of Verismo.

(I) THE COUNTRYSIDE

In the three poems of this section, L'arancio di Pegli 1869, Il mezzogiorno in campagna 1870, and Ora meridiana a Recoaro 1872, one finds that Zanella is primarily concerned with observing the countryside and marveling at its variety.

This is certainly the case with the sestine, L'arancio di Pegli (1869),<sup>1</sup> in which the orange-tree in the garden Pallavicini at Pegli describes itself, its surroundings and the wonderful fruit it produces.

Its picturesque position is not only presented in Classical terms,

Libero al Sol, fra pensili  
Orti e marmoree scale,

...

Io florido e sicuro  
le poma auree maturo.                      11.1-6,

but is also enhanced through a contrast with colder places, "...nevoso borea/Altrove i boschi assale," 11. 3,4.

The second sestina offers a panoramic view of the tree's surroundings, with the Tyrrhenian Sea stretching out in front of it, while there are mountains and pine-trees behind it.<sup>2</sup>

1. Poesie (1928), p.481: "Lo Zanella fu a Genova nel Settembre 1869, e il 28 visitò il giardino Pallavicini a Pegli".

2. Cf. Alceardi, Le città italiane marinare e commercianti, 11.222-225: "... il teatro de la sua pendice,/e le terrazze candide, e i giardini/pensili, e i cedri .../e ... una selva d'ondeggianti pini"; and Baldacci's comment, "222. 'il teatro': in quanto Genova si stende lungo l'anfiteatro delle pendici appenniniche ..." — (Baldacci, p. 551).

But the tree is not merely ornamental, its fruits bring consolation to the "industre Ligure" while he is in far-away places, "Al Gange e sotto il polo", l.17, and is feeling home-sick.

The Classical tone and mood of the poem are effectively stressed in ll.19,20: "Van carezzando i zefiri/Marini il mio riposo;", whose Classical sensuality is reminiscent of Psiche 1847 and Possagno 1849, for the tree seems to take on the identity of a sleeping nymph.

To the visual imagery of the tree and its surroundings is added the olfactory image of the delicious, fresh, thirst-quenching qualities of the fruit's juice,

... di fresca ambrosia  
 Nel meriggio focoso  
 A' reduci dal flutto  
 Insaporo il mio frutto.                      ll.21-24.

The choice of the sestina seems appropriate for a simple, unpretentious subject, while the poet avoids monotony in two ways: through the introduction of an unusual rhyme, ABCBDD, and the fact that the first and third lines of each sestina are non-rhyming settenari sdruccioli. The Classical tone, mood and vocabulary—"poma auree", "pini", "larici", "Me-co", "pelaghi", "frondi", "zefiri", "ambrosia", "reduci"—are effectively used in an unobtrusive and delicate way.

Since the poem may be said to succeed within the terms of the poet's limited aims, it is, perhaps, rather surprising that Zanella omitted it from the fourth (1885) edition of his verses.

In the following year, 1870, Zanella composed the sonnet, Il mezzogiorno in campagna, which may be considered a prelude to the sonnets of Astichello 1880-1887.<sup>3</sup> It is essentially a detailed observation of a country scene, which Calcaterra sees as anticipating the poetry of Pascoli:

Il Pascoli dirà queste lievi poesie, in cui il sentimento lirico è quasi posto nelle cose stesse, illuminate dall'animo delle creature, "humiles myricae": miriche, tamari-schi, erbe odorose ...<sup>4</sup>

There is an immediate and effective contrast in l.1, "È mezzodì. Sotto l'ombroso noce,", between the hot, midday sun and the cool, refreshing shade of the walnut-tree. L.2, with the link between the big tree-trunk and its "fight" against old age, is reminiscent of a similar link in sonnet II of Passeggio solitario (cf.Ch.3,p.107). The poet adds the other elements of the scene — the beggar sitting under the shade of the

3. Poesie (1928), p.154: "In questo sonetto, che preludia alla forma dell'Astichello, è ritratto un casolare di Polegge, luogo finitimo a quello dove diciott'anni più tardi il poeta si fabbricò la sua villetta".

4. Poesie scelte (1957), p. 73.

big tree raises his voice, to which the only answer is the barking of a dog, thus emphasizing the man's isolation—all of which give an impression of calm, stillness and peace, in the torpor of the midday sun. Even the beggar's voice seems subdued for it is described as "Querula" l.4. It is as if the poet has been able to capture or "freeze" a single instant of time.

ll.5-8, in which a woman brings food to her husband who has been working in the fields,

Dall'abituro, ove al marito cuoce  
 Le còlte erbette, attraversando l'aia,  
 Vien con un pane a lui, che della croce  
 Lento il segno si fa, la pia massaia.

anticipate the tone and mood of Astichello, as in sonnet LIII, ll.1-8,

A mezzo solco il vecchierel già stanco  
 L'aratro sospendea ...

...

...

Una riversa zolla era il suo banco;  
 E presso lui la giovinetta nuora  
 Attentamente avea disteso il bianco  
 Tovagliolin che di bucato odora.

In both instances one can see elements of realism in these vignettes, in which the vezzezziativi — "erbette", l.6, Il mezzogiorno in campagna; "giovinetta", l.6, and "Tovagliolin", l.8, Astichello, LIII—add to the homely tone and the pastoral, idyllic, bucolic, calm overtones present in both works. The word, "massaia", l.8, adds to the homely atmosphere (cf. Ch.3, pp. 71,72, the transitional stage between the idealised images of the Romantics and the simple directness of Verga's Verismo).

There is, as so often, in Zanella's poetry, a religious dimension—the husband makes the sign of the cross, ll.7,8, while the wife is described as "la pia massaia" l.8.

The fusion of the human beings with their natural setting is very effectively carried out in the first terzina, for while the man is eating his frugal meal, "Razzola intorno la gallina e crocchia;" l.11.

The final terzina expands the detail with very evocative imagery resulting in a scene which is both very realistic and which anticipates Pascoli:

Mentre, sostando ed allungando il collo,  
 Alla caduta briciola, che adocchia,  
 Tutto si stende e dà di becco il pollo. ll.12-14.

The verbal forms, "sostando" and "allungando", being longer than other alternative forms, tend to lengthen the line and slow down the action, intensifying its detailed representation; they also convey the impression



of describing the action while it is actually happening, as in a continuous, progressive tense. The introductory "Mentre" of l.12, often associated with the continuous, progressive tone of these verbal forms, tends to have a "freezing" effect upon the action, making the whole scene appear almost static and thus contributing to the "slow-motion" effect. The conjunction, "ed", between the two verbal forms, tends to combine and reinforce them, while it almost has the effect of a "pause" in the line, thus helping to "lengthen" it. The "splitting up" or "fragmentation" of ll.12, 13 by the three commas also contributes to the "lengthening", "slowing down" effect. The reference to the "briciola" intensifies the detail and "slowness" of the action.

With its emphasis on detail, l.14 is also a particularly striking example of a "lengthening", "slowing down", detailed description. It achieves its results through various features, including: the emphatic "Tutto", which intensifies the action; the use of the reflexive, "si stende", and the "long" form, "dà di becco", tend to "lengthen" and, therefore, "slow down" the line; and the conjunction, "e", has a similar effect to that of "ed" in l. 12.

In the poem, Ora meridiana a Recoaro 1872, Zanella was also concerned with merely observing and appreciating Nature and not drawing any comparisons, morals or conclusions.

The poet describes a country scene at midday; a spider advances towards a butterfly, there is no wind, the shepherd's flute is silent and there is only a solitary "merlo arguto" l.12, who sings without realizing he is alone.

Calcaterra rightly appreciated the delicacy of this composition, although his final conclusion regarding Zanella's poetry is probably too far-reaching and generalised:

Una delle liriche più tenui e una delle più terse dello Zanella. Si estasiava innanzi all'ora del tempo e al colore degli orizzonti, innanzi al perenne trascolorar della terra e del cielo. Questo è il suo senso lirico nativo e tutte le volte che lo ritrova in sè, tra la molta dottrina e i gravi pensieri, coglie un momento di poesia.<sup>5</sup>

Apart from its greater delicacy than Il mezzogiorno in campagna, this poem also has more variety, movement and life, partly due to the alternation of settenari and endecasillabi, aBbA.

The first quartina sets the scene,

Dalla fonda vallea  
D'arui castagni giovane foresta  
Al Sol drizza la testa  
Che d'una pioggia d'oro li ricrea.           ll.1-4.

5. Ibid., p. 94.

The height of the trees is not only stressed by the Classical adjective "arduì" (cf. "ardua/Torre", ll.97,98, Le ore della notte, p.153 ), but also by the fact that they are in a "deep" valley l.1, for, despite this, they still "raise their heads" towards the sun. The forest is imbued with a sense of nobility as it lifts its head high. The image of "pioggia d'oro" l.4 is effective and evocative.

In the second quartina, a spider advances towards a butterfly. Again there are Classical elements, as in l.7, "... dedalea rete"—"... è la ragnatela, fatta con la sapienza di un Dedalo".<sup>6</sup> The unusual adjective, "Gambuto", l.8, very efficaciously conveys the spider's main physical attribute and makes it appear even larger and more menacing. The reference to the spider as "ghermitor" l.8 is also unusual, but effectively stresses the spider's rapacious menace.

ll. 9-12 have a very Classical, idyllic, pastoral tone, particularly in ll.9,10, "Son mute l'aure; è muto/Il flauto del pastor ...". The reference to "i verdi colonnati" l.12, meaning "gli alberi in fila",<sup>7</sup> has obvious Classical overtones. This quartina restores a feeling of calm and peace after the "predatory" second verse.

The final verse ends the poem on a note of gentle ridicule at the seeming self-importance of the solitary "merlo arguto":

E fatuo re mi sembra  
Da tutti abbandonato, che passeggia  
Per l'immensa sua reggia  
E d'ascoltarlo alcun non si rimembra.      ll.13-16.

This adds variety and lightness to the poem, counterbalancing the realistic and "predatory" second verse.

Like the movements in a symphony, the four verses each convey a different mood, showing various facets of Nature's marvels and removing the idea that the contemplation of Nature need be "static" or boring. One can easily understand Calcaterra's enthusiastic appreciation of the final quartina: "Immagine stupenda. Qui lo Zanella raggiunge la perfezione".<sup>8</sup>

There are idyllic, pastoral, Classical elements in the poem which fuse with a "Romantic" involvement and appreciation of Nature, as well as greater realism.

## (II) COMPARISONS DRAWN FROM NATURE

Apart from merely admiring the beauty of the countryside, Zanella also saw it as reflecting various aspects of life. Thus, in Ad un ruscello 1850, the flowing of a stream reminds him of the transitoriness of his youth, while, in Passeggio solitario 1869, he turns to a consideration of universally important themes, including life and death, the immortality of

6. Ibid., p.94.

7. Ibid., p.95.

8. Ibid., p.95.

the soul and the relationship between Nature and Philosophy. This tendency to draw comparisons from Nature also finds expression in an occasional work, Per l'onomastico della contessa Carolina Colleoni in Costabissara 1878.

Arturo Graf<sup>9</sup> gives the date of composition of the sonnet Ad un ruscello as 1850, but the maturity of expression and the way it anticipates the style and tone of Astichello would tend to indicate a later date. Petronio, in fact, suggests 1865, adding his own typically disparaging comment on Zanella's tone and subject-matter,

Del 1865. Anticipa, nello stile e nell'intonazione, i sonetti dell'Astichello, con il loro facile allegorismo moralistico.<sup>10</sup>

This seems an unreasonable judgement when one bears in mind that, rather than indulging in "allegorismo moralistico", Zanella is merely drawing a comparison with Nature—the passing of his youth and the flowing of the stream—in a way which is very reminiscent of Leopardi.<sup>11</sup> Thus, Zanella shows that just as the swiftly-flowing waters of the stream pass from the "patrio colle" to the sea, so the years of one's youth ("verdi anni", cf. Leopardi) vanish on the swift, envious—"Invidi' ... perchè ci invidiano e sottraggono ciò che vi è di più bello"<sup>12</sup>—wings of time.

The first quartina effectively sets the scene and prepares for the enunciation of the sonnet's fundamental theme. The swiftness with which the stream flows is anticipated by "Precipiti" l.2 and "Ratto dilegui"<sup>1.4</sup>, while its freshness is stressed by "Fresco ruscel" and "muscoso sasso"<sup>13</sup>

l.1. In this quartina,

9. Poesie (1928), p. 458.

10. Petronio, p. 496.

11. Cf. Pasquazi's unfavourable comment on the sonnet's "... molteplici derivazioni e ... riecheggiamenti" (from Petrarch, Ariosto, Rolli and Monti) "... che lo Zanella non sempre riesce a trasformare ..." — (Pasquazi (1967), p.39).

This view should, perhaps, be considered in the overall context of another of his assessments (Pasquazi (1953), p.18)—"Ad alimentare il senso della natura nello Zanella, concorse il lungo studio dei lirici antichi e moderni, e lo stesso poeta sapeva di muoversi 'in un campo già mietuto con rigore' ... Se tutto ciò ha la sua parte di vero, è altrettanto vero che la poesia della natura trovò nello Zanella, quasi ovunque, un'espressione nuova in una ispirazione tutta personale; e l'amore dei campi ... in lui è sincera e serena contemplazione, sentimento delicato e ingegnoso della vita occulta profonda delle semplici e umili cose. E soprattutto questa poesia dello Zanella idillico non è senza patria, poichè porta con sè il calore dell'aria del cielo della campagna veneta".

12. Petronio, p. 496.

13. The alliteration of "sc", "s" and "ss" in l.1 almost onomatopoeically conveys the sound of the flowing stream, thus indirectly reinforcing the idea of its swiftness.



Fresco ruscel, che dal muscoso sasso  
 Precipiti tra i fiori e la verzura,  
 E mormorando tristamente al basso  
 Ratto dilegui per la valle oscura,      11.1-4

it is almost as though the joy of youth were represented by the initial part of the stream's "happy" journey 11.1,2, whilst later life, "la valle oscura", will be viewed with sadness, "... mormorando tristamente".

The second quartina,

Rammenti ancor, quando assetato e lasso  
 Del vagar lungo e dell'estiva arsura  
 Io giovinetto ratteneva il passo  
 Tacito a contemplar l'onda tua pura?      11.5-8,

also has Leopardian reminiscences, especially in 1.5, "Rammenti ancor, quando ...", which echoes "... rimembri ancora/.../Quando ...", 11.1-3, A Silvia. The way in which the brook provides a remedy, "l'onda tua pura", for the poet's thirst and the summer heat 11.5,6, reminds one of the water's wonderful freshness. The poet's stopping to watch the stream go by highlights its speed, by contrast, 11.7,8. Thus the two quartine complement each other in preparing for the full impact of the terzine,

Era quello l'april de' miei verdi anni,  
 Degli anni miei più belli, che fuggiro  
 Su veloci del tempo invidi vanni,  
 Al modo stesso, che le dolci e chiare  
 Tue linfe, amabil rio, di giro in giro  
 Dal patrio colle van fuggendo al mare.      11.9-14,

in which Zanella compares how rapidly his youth has vanished with the speed of the stream. The rhyme between "anni" 1.9 and "vanni", to stress the transience of youth, is also present in A Maria Aganodr nel suo giorno natalizio 24 settembre 1876 in Napoli, 11.1,2, "Come rapidi i vanni/Sono, Maria, degli anni!".

To reinforce the comparison between the vanishing of youth and the celerity of the flowing stream, Zanella uses the same verb, "fuggire" —"fuggiro" 1.10 for the former, "fuggendo" 1.14 for the latter.

The image of the brook descending from its source, "patrio colle", 1. 14, heightens the impression of its speed as it gathers momentum in its downward course towards the sea.

The slower, calmer pace of 11.9,10, which reflects the nostalgic re-evocation of the poet's vanished youth, helps to highlight, by contrast, how rapidly it has, in fact, passed, as is seen in 11.10,11, where the enjambement stresses the word, "fuggiro", and by linking the two lines gives an effect of cohesion and speed.

This contrast had been anticipated in 11.7,8, where the poet described how he had stood and watched while the waters of the stream, his youth,

were rapidly flowing by.

The pattern of the first terzina is repeated in the second, where 11.12,13 have a slower pace, while 11.13,14 have a faster one.

It is noteworthy that 11.12,13 "... le dolci e chiare/Tue linfe...", are reminiscent of the famous line, "Chiare, fresche, e dolci acque", from Petrarch's Canzoniere. This Petrarch link is unusual in Zanella's poetry, while Leopardian associations and overtones are very frequent. In particular, in this sonnet, the nostalgic re-evocation of youth, which passes so quickly and is the happiest time of one's life, as well as the "echoes" of Leopardian expressions, for example, 1.9 "... de' miei verdi anni" (cf. "de' ... verd'anni! ...", 1.50, Ultimo canto di Saffo), and 11.9,10, "... l'april .../degli anni miei più belli" (cf. "Aprile degli anni", 1.102, Al conte Carlo Pepoli, and "l'aprile/Degli anni miei", 11.75,76, Il risorgimento).

When one considers the effective simplicity of this sonnet, the development of the basic theme and the appropriateness of the vocabulary and imagery, it is rather surprising that Zanella did not include it in the fourth (1885) edition of his poetry.

In the sonnets of Passeggio solitario 1869, in which "... è ritratta una delle passeggiate che il poeta soleva fare lungo il vialone della villa Lampertico a Montegaldella",<sup>14</sup> Zanella uses the countryside as a framework, within which he draws comparisons from nature—cf. sonnet II, concerning old age and death; sonnet VI, with the images of sunset and sunrise symbolising respectively death and the dawn of Man's immortal destiny—considers the relationship between Nature and Philosophy, concluding that the former is superior, cf. sonnet I; praises a quiet, country life, cf. sonnet III; and, of course, observes nature, as in sonnet IV, 11.12,13: "Ond'io fuggendo i miei passi ho raccolti/Su questa falda ...", about which Calcaterra commented as follows: "In questa falda montana; su questo pendìo. Lo Zanella ha l'uso vivo della parola immaginosa, che condensa molti sensi".<sup>15</sup> These sonnets were considered in detail in Chapter 3, pp. 106-110.

The short, occasional poem, Per l'onomastico della contessa Carolina Colleoni in Costabissara 1878, is an inferior work, also consisting essentially of a comparison drawn from Nature. Just as a bird flying from the Alps towards a "distant shore" 1.6 is severely buffeted by the strong north wind, so the poet's greetings will reach Carolina, despite the terrible storm which stops the poet himself from leaving his home and going out.

14. Poesie (1928), p.150.

15. Poesie scelte (1957), p.67, note (2).

In the first sestina,

Stride rovaio: l'arbore si spoglia  
Dell'ingiallita foglia.  
Aggirato dal vento e turbinato  
Per l'aree annuvolato,  
Candido augel dall'alpe ov'ha suo nido,  
Scende a lontano lido.

Zanella sets the scene and describes what happens to the "candido augel", which, in the second half of the poem, symbolises how the poet's greetings will reach Carolina.

The reference to the wind making the leaf fall from the tree, ll.1,2, is reminiscent of a similar image in ll.13,14 of Passeggio solitario (I). L.3 is striking and unusual, particularly the evocative "turbinato" which has both Classical and scientific overtones.

The poem also has Leopardian overtones, "Candido augel" l.5, "lontano lido" l.6, and "bel colle" l.7.

In the second sestina,

Così sopra il bel colle, ove regina  
Incedi, o Carolina,  
Cala l'augurio mio, cui non arresta  
L'aquilonar tempesta  
Che me ritien di doppio manto avvolto  
Nel chiuso ostel sepolto.

l.10 is unusual and arresting, for it effectively and evocatively conveys the way in which the storm descends manacingly like an eagle. The intensity of the storm is stressed by its effect on the poet, ll.11,12. It is so severe that he has to wear "two cloaks" and remain "buried" at home, almost "besieged".

The alternating endecasillabi and settenari, AaBbCc, provide an element of variety and movement, which counteracts the inherent monotony of the rime bacciate.

Within the context of the poet's limited aims, this unpretentious poem has a certain originality and effectiveness, although it is not altogether surprising that Zanella omitted it from the fourth (1885) edition of his poetry.

### (III) THE BENEVOLENCE OF MOTHER NATURE:

Zanella's appreciation of Mother Nature's benevolence has strong undertones of the Rousseauistic clash between Nature and Society. For it is the charm and peace of the countryside, rather than medicines, that can bring one back to a true understanding of life and love, as the poet concludes in Il pettirosso 1879. The same basic idea informs Edvige 1881, in which Zanella deals with the interplay between a character's state of mind and the natural scene.



The idyll, Il pettirosso 1879, like Un pioppo, Edvige and Corrado, was based on a true story:

Il fondo dell'idillio è vero, come si può rilevare anche dalla dedica che il poeta vi prepose la prima volta che fu pubblicato. "All'ottima della (sic) madri—Contessa Arpalice Cittadella Vigodarzere—Nata Papafava—Nelle nozze della sua Giustina—Questi versi—Di cui ella indicò l'argomento—Dedica—Giacomo Zanella".<sup>16</sup>

In this idyll, Zanella seems to be suggesting that the beauties of Nature, rather than medicines, l.93, can lead one back to an appreciation of life and love. Through his song, the robin, who has befriended the unhappy Maria, tells her that he will lead her back, if she lets him, through the wonders of Nature, to the place where her brothers and sisters are waiting for her and where, "... de' promessi doni/Materno amor coronerà l'altare." ll.99,100.

The endecasillabi sciolti of the poem are divided into four "verses"; the first, ll.1-17, describes the entry of the robin into the girl's room; the second, ll.18-35, her condition as she lies on her bed; the third, ll.36-60, like a "flashback", describes the beginnings of her illness; and the final "verse", ll.61-100, deals with the relationship between the robin and Maria, as well as the poet's conclusion. Thus, these four "verses", with their respective changes in subject and tone, correspond to the movements of a symphony.

Several factors combine to contribute to the overall effectiveness of this idyll, including: the very detailed descriptions—of the robin, his movements and actions and the girl's room—which anticipate Pascoli's attention to detail; the vague, indefinite information about Maria herself, in terms of her illness and her family, tends to instil a certain air of mystery, which, together with the poem's Classical conciseness, enhances its delicacy; the Leopardian overtones in the general, Classical tone of the idyll (combination of Classical vocabulary and words from everyday language) and the appreciation of Nature; and the poet's "message" or conclusion, which comes at the end of the poem, but, despite its moralising tone, does not seem inappropriate.

The essential tone of the first "verse" is established in the opening lines,

Picchiò, picchiò col gentiletto rostro  
A' brinati cristalli,<sup>17</sup> e man cortese  
L'entrata gli assenti ... ll.1-3.

<sup>16</sup>. Poesie (1928), p. 257.

<sup>17</sup>. Cf. Carducci, Nevicata, l.7: "Picchiano uccelli raminghi a' vetri appannati ...".

The simple, onomatopoeic repetition of "Picchiò, picchiò..." effectively conveys the bird's gentle tapping with its beak, which is, of course, stressed by the vezzeffiativo, "gentiletto". The impersonal synecdoche, "... e man cortese/L'entrata gli assenti ...", is sufficiently unobtrusive not to distract the reader's attention from the robin. The reference to "brinati cristalli" is also unobtrusive, whilst it explains the robin's eagerness to enter the room, as well as anticipating "minuto nevischio" l.5 and the subsequent description of the severe weather.

The robin's small size, daintiness and quaintness, together with the repetition of vezzeffiativi, such as l.1, "gentiletto", and l.3 "uccellino", contribute to the poem's idyllic mood, which, in ll.1-5, provides a good contrast with the ensuing description of the terrible weather which forces the robin to seek shelter,

...           mentre rovaio  
Le robinie torceva e gli oleandri  
Nel domestico bosco e sulla trave  
Raccogliean l'atterita ala i pavoni.                   ll.6-9.

The references to "oleandri" and "pavoni" add an element of exoticism.

In ll.10-17 the mood returns to being "idyllic" as the robin investigates the room, which now appears even warmer and more inviting after the description of the cold weather in ll.6-9.

The "idyllic", "fairy-tale" atmosphere is maintained by the detailed description of the bird's actions and movements ("... poi lieve un salto/Spiccando .../Calò ... Vagando/A scosse, a voli .../.../.../Stette .../... il guardo spinse", ll.10-17) and the room itself ("... morbidi tappeti/... adorna camera .../... storiata/Mensola di cinesi anfore onusta/E di fiori al gelato euro contesi,/... nivei cortinaggi ombranti/Virgineo letticiuolo ...", ll.11-17), both of which are effectively intertwined.

This description of Maria's room is reminiscent, even though it is more detailed, of those of La vigilia delle nozze, Alla contessa Giuseppina Aganoor and other poems, in which Zanella had succeeded so well in conveying the peace and security of an unmarried girl's home environment.

It is, in fact, only in l.17 that we learn that it is a young girl's room, "... e fra nivei cortinaggi ombranti/Virgineo letticiuolo il guardo spinse." ll.16,17. This provides an excellent transition to ll.18-35, which deal with Maria herself.

The description of the girl has the voluptuous overtones of Classical Mythology. She is resting on her bed "... abbandonatamente/In serena stanchezza ..." ll.19,20. This rather unusual expression is effective in conveying this mood of voluptuousness which is reinforced by the luxurious overtones of "guanciali", "coltri" l.18, and "tenui lini" l.21. The

young countess has a "beltà sovrana" l.26, even though she is "scarna e mesta" l.27. It is interesting that in describing Maria's physical appearance Zanella stresses her hair, "... e della chioma/Il nerissimo flutto in doppia lista/Dagli omeri scorrente ..." ll.23-25, as has already been seen in other poems (cf. Chapter 3, p.96). He points out that her skin is very white, while her eyes are very dark, by comparing it with the colour of the "tenui lini" l.21. In describing how the young girl fell asleep with a book in her hands, Zanella uses two unusual and effective expressions: "Dall'obblïosa man" l.28 and "Prigione il dito..." l.30.<sup>18</sup> There is, as in Psiche 1847, the co-existence of Classical vocabulary ("omeri", l.25) and words from everyday language ("braccia", l.19).

ll. 36-60 are like a "flashback" describing the girl's illness. There is a hint of realism in the way Zanella refers to it as being due to "offesi nervi" l.36. However Zanella's overall tendency is to poeticise Maria's ailment as in the following description, "... Occulto/Spasimo la coglieva e tutto in arco/Le piegava il bel corpo irrigidito," ll.42-44, in which the cause of her suffering is made to seem even more remote and mysterious through the adjective, "Occulto". The absolute degree of silence in which Maria had to live is very well brought in ll. 58-60.

... solo in sul meriggio  
Contro i vetri battea l'ala sonora  
Inavveduta mosca e dileguava.

particularly in the arresting expression, "l'ala sonora", for to describe a fly's wing as "sonora", while it "beats" against a window, strikingly conveys the almost unbelievable silence there must have been, as well as the extreme sensitivity of Maria's hearing due to her highly-strung nerves.

At the end of the second "verse", Zanella had described how Maria and the robin were observing each other. After the "flashback" of the third "verse", Zanella begins the fourth and final one by asking her what she was thinking about as she gazed intently at the bird:

Che pensier fũro i tuoi? quali ricordi  
D'estive notti e d'autunnali aurore  
T'assalïro, o Maria? ... ll.61-63.

These lines are in a way reminiscent of the beginning of Leopardi's A Silvia, "Silvia, rimembri ancora/Quel tempo della tua vita mortale," ll.1,2. The bird's kindness, concern and sensitivity are stressed by the legend about the robin's red breast,

... gentil pennuto  
Cui l'antica leggenda il molle petto  
Imporporò per la pietà che il mosse  
Le spine a trar dal sanguinoso capo  
Del Nazareno ... ll.64-68.

18. Cf. Fogazzaro (Poesie), p. 211—La leggitrice, ll. 15,16: "Dalla man semichiusa e neglïgente/Uscì supino il libro lentamente".



Zanella very effectively conveys the warmth and friendliness of the relationship which develops between the young countess and the robin, ll. 68-85. Thus the bird spends the winter months with her and does not leave even when Spring arrives, nor does he miss his nest,

Visse con te; nē quando alle feconde  
Aure di marzo rinverdirò i salci,  
Più lo punse desio del nido antico;                    ll. 70-72.

There are Classical, Leopardian, idyllic overtones in these lines, which highlight the peace and appeal of Nature, particularly in Spring (cf. A Silvia). Zanella stresses the bird's "humanity" and goodness, for when it leaves Maria, even for "brevi voli" l. 73, it always returns "come un pentito" l. 74. The poet also shows the robin's "human" weakness and foibles. Thus, when Maria jokes with the robin it leaves in a "huff", "Ed ei fuggia precipitoso, e muto/Non ascondeva i suoi corrucci ..." ll. 81, 82. On returning from its "brevi voli", the robin would go straight to Maria's pillow bringing her comfort and solace from the wonders of Nature, "E l'ala ventilando all'arsa fronte/La frescura piovea delle foreste." ll. 75, 76.

In the final lines of the poem, Zanella explains the meaning of the bird's song, the poet's "message", ll. 87-97, and prepares for this in ll. 82-87 where he again stresses the robin's concern for Maria and maintains the idyllic tone of the poem through the detailed description of the robin singing, "... il roseo collo/Che si gonfiava e si abbassava..."<sup>19</sup> ll. 86, 87. The poet's "message" or conclusion, the robin's song—prepared for, as explained, by the poet's references to the splendours of Nature and the robin's concern for Maria—is that the charm and peace of Nature, rather than "artificial" medicines, l. 93, can lead one back to an appreciation of life and love.

The similarities with a Leopardian idyll become accentuated, as in ll. 89, 90:

Canta i liberi Soli, e le dolcezze  
Più non gustate de' silvestri amori;

and in ll. 91-97,

Canta la speme che agli aperti campi  
Lo tornerà se tu ...

...

...

Uscirai seco, ed ei sarà tua guida  
Lungo i gelidi fiumi e le campagne  
Auree di mēssi all'eleganti ville,

where the calm, peace and delicacy of nature are expressed in Classical terms.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Pascoli, L'usignolo e i suoi rivali, ll. 4, 5: "... E gorgheggiava in tanto/tutto il gran giorno ...".

The poem ends on a note of hope and love. If Maria lets herself be guided by the robin it will lead her back to the place where her brothers and sisters are waiting for her and where, "... de' promessi doni/Materno amor coronerà l'altare." ll.99,100. The ending is very strongly positive and optimistic, for Zanella is stressing two aspects of love which he regarded as being of paramount importance—maternal love and marriage.

Two years later, in 1881, in the tale, Edvige, Zanella also dealt with the benevolence of Mother Nature, stressing the importance of the peace of the countryside, "... sospirò la pace/Della campagna..." ll.381, 382. This was a theme which was very important for Zanella, as was seen in Chapter (2) (cf. p. 36), where it was noted that he thought highly of William Cowper because he was the poet of the countryside: "è suo il verso famoso, che Dio fece la campagna, l'uomo la città". It was also seen (cf. Chapter (2), p. 24) that Zanella had quoted the advice Madame de Staël had given to poets: "... 'cercate l'immortalità nell'amore e la divinità nella natura' ". Zanella certainly emphasized his favourable view of Nature in Edvige in ll. 911,912, describing it as, "... o madre/Divina delle cose, alma natura". Moreover, Nature's benevolence is not merely restricted to an emphatic response to the moods of individuals, but even extends to influencing them. Thus ll.212-214, "... Il lago, i monti, il cielo/Le si sciolsero intorno in un'oscura/Immensità ...", are very effective in conveying the way in which Edvige's state of mind is reflected in the scenery,<sup>20</sup> while, in ll.216-221,

Era in questa d'angoscia e di sgomento  
Dolorosa tenzon, quando la squilla  
Del mezzogiorno il lago e le colline  
Di festoso rimbombo empie repente, 21  
A cui di Bardolino e di Lazise  
A mano a mano rispondean le squille.

which provide an effective description of the countryside seeming to come alive—the repetition "squilla" and "squille" helps to reinforce the echoing onomatopoeia of "rimbombo" and the sense of "rispondean", while the three words, "squilla", "squille" and "rimbombo", all have Leopardian associations of a country scene coming to life—the gaiety of the scene, epitomised by the adjective "festoso", l.219, influences Edvige's state of mind, it is not reflection of it,

20. Cf. Fogazzaro's novels: "Anche nel Mistero del poeta il paesaggio ha un valore determinante e il racconto comincia in vista di uno di quei laghi che sono quasi sempre sullo sfondo delle storie del Fogazzaro". (Cattaneo, p.419).

21. Cf. Fogazzaro (Poesie), p.493—Ad una donna, ll.22-24, "... l'argentino/Squillar delle campane in ogni parte/Rimbombava festoso ...".

Scossa dal suo torpore e d'improvvisa  
 Ineffabil dolcezza intenerita  
 Dal balcon si levò la giovinetta, 11.222-224.

(IV) NATURE AND MAN

This section is characterised by two recurring features of Zanella's poetic output: his propensity to view many subjects as thematic dualities or antinomies and the way in which these "clashes" appear relatively mild in earlier works, such as Le ore della notte 1863, and much more marked in later ones, as in A un cespo di rose in Napoli 1878.

In the ode Le ore della notte 1863, dealing with the changes which occur at night and how they affect different people, Zanella has placed social comment, in the form of a series of episodes or vignettes, in the context of a "natural" setting: the descending darkness, the night-sky with the stars and constellations. In fact, he wrote this poem in the same year that he began to take an interest in astronomy.<sup>22</sup>

With respect to the first two quartine,

Con bruni sandali  
 E taciturne  
 Scendono, passano  
 L'ore notturne,  
 E nel lor transito  
 All'universo  
 Mobile imprimono  
 Volto diverso. 11.1-8,

Calcaterra has made some important observations, particularly regarding the very efficacious way in which Zanella has conveyed the swiftness<sup>23</sup> and delicacy of the Classical imagery:

Agilissima e vaga movenza fantastica, a cui qui giovano i brevi versi sdruciolli alternati a versi piani... A spiegar i primi versi, è superfluo ricordare che gli antichi personificarono le ore ... della notte ... brune, invisibili.<sup>24</sup>

Calcaterra has also pointed out the evocative conciseness of the adjective, "Mobile": "Indica con immagine sobria e potente l'universo che ruota. Una immagine scientifica è introdotta con un solo, felicissimo aggettivo nella figurazione mitica".<sup>25</sup>

This certainly corresponds very closely with Zanella's poetica, according to which scientific subjects should be dealt with within a Classical, stylistic framework. This was, of course, a feature of Parini's poetry, which Zanella greatly admired.

22. Poesie (1928), p. 28.

23. This is, of course, enhanced by the enjambement in these lines.

24. Poesie scelte (1957), p. 3.

25. Ibid., p. 3.



The strong Classical influence in this ode is also to be seen in the vocabulary: "coltrici", "auree", "Cerbero", "Mida", "aër", "nappi e cembali", "baccanti" and "ardua".

The third quartina has a faster pace than the fourth,

Tornano i vomeri;  
Fumano i tetti;  
L'Ave ripetono  
I pargoletti;

Appena è vespero,  
E già tranquilla  
In rozze coltrici  
Posa la villa. 26

11.9-16,

Partly because it is, in effect, divided into three "parts"—1.9, 1.10, and 11.11, 12—each portraying a different "episode". 11.13-16 deal with a single episode: a villa is enveloped in peace and calm as night falls. 11. 14-16 are closely linked by enjambement which stresses the word, "tranquilla", thereby indirectly enhancing the calmness of the scene.

The difference between the two rhyming lines in these two quartine is significant. For the double "t", "tetti", "pargoletti", 11.10, 12, produces a harder sound, which highlights the softer, gentler sound of double "l", "tranquilla", "villa" in 11.14, 16.

11. 17-20 provide a good introduction to the social comment of 11.21-32, for the gathering darkness, 1.17, produces an effective contrast with the glittering wealth and splendour of the rich, 11.18-20. As so often in his poetry, Zanella gives his themes an integrated development, whereby a particular image leads one back to earlier ones, so producing an effect of complementary and reciprocal enhancement. Thus, the fact that the rich are now about to enjoy themselves, reminds one, by contrast, that the peasants have come home to sleep, "Tornano i vomeri", 1.9—"La parte per il tutto. 'Vomere' è propriamente il ferro tagliente dell'aratro, con cui si rompe il terreno. Ma qui il poeta vuol dire in genere che i contadini riportano a casa gli strumenti agresti"<sup>27</sup>—while the children are saying their prayers, 11.11, 12.

All this naturally prepares for the more explicit and incisive Parinian contrast, 11. 21-32, between a spoiled, rich, young girl, impatiently waiting for her dress so that she can go to a ball, and an orphan girl, hurriedly trying to finish the dress even though she is very ill. Calcaterra puts this contrast into its historical context:

... Oggi l'antitesi sa di maniera. Ma nel secolo passato questa e consimili contrapposizioni rispondevano al giusto desiderio di un miglioramento sociale.<sup>28</sup>

26. Cf. Leopardi: "Posa la luna...", 1.3, La sera del dì di festa.

27. Poesie scelte (1957), p.3.

28. Ibid., p.4.

There are the usual Leopardian overtones, as in l.27, "egra", which occurs frequently in Leopardi's poetry, while ll.31,32, "...funereo/Morbo..." echo "chiuso morbo", l.41, A Silvia.

Zanella then returns to the natural, night-time setting to make a further social comment,

Pari la reggia  
Al casolare  
Nell'ampie tenebre  
Scende e scompare.

ll.37-40.

It is almost as though the poet were suggesting that Nature is completely oblivious to whatever differences or injustices society may impose.

The poet then continues to consider a series of different episodes, including the riotous behaviour of "Scinte baccanti" l.44—"allusione eufemistica a donne di mala vita"<sup>29</sup>—which he describes as taking place in "Remoto vicolo" l.41, "... quasi per dare risalto a qualcosa di vietato e appartato".<sup>30</sup>

The next very concise vignette, ll.45-48, concerns an anxious wife waiting for her husband to return. While a greedy, old miser counts his money he is unaware of the "... ilare/Ghigno ..." ll.55,56 of his heir, "il quale si prenderà beffe di quella sordidezza".<sup>31</sup> In ll.59,60: "Lo sguardo vitreo,/L'anima in foco,", there is an effective contrast between the external, shocked appearance of the nobleman, who has lost all his land gambling, and his internal anguish and turmoil.

In ll.65-68 one can see Zanella's interest in astronomy, while through the next quartina, ll.69-72, he anticipates the approach of dawn.

With Classical imagery, Zanella depicts the innocent dreams of children,

Con ala nivea  
Per l'aure brune  
I sogni or piovono  
Sovra le cune;

ll.73-76,

utilizing the contrast between "nivea" and "brune" to good effect.

As dawn breaks, Zanella shows how it awakens a young girl who has been dreaming of her beloved. What she had thought was a kiss had in fact been the sun's rays. The whole episode is conveyed with great delicacy and Classical conciseness:

Sommessa mormora  
Un caro nome;  
Scorrer d'un bacio  
Sulle sue chiome

29. Baldacci, p.694.

30. Poesie scelte (1957), p. 4.

31. Ibid., p. 4.

32. Ibid., p. 5.

Sente l'anelito  
 Vergin, che desta  
 Con alto tremito  
 Volge la testa:

Vede distendersi  
 Sulla cortina  
 Il raggio argenteo  
 Della mattina.

11.81-92.

The use of "Somnessa", l.81, is reminiscent of the expression "sommessi accenti", l.3, in Voci secrete, where the poet was also referring to gentle whispering.

The phrase "Il raggio argenteo", l.91, has Leopardian overtones, as does l. 82, "Un caro nome", in which Zanella, like Leopardi, shows he is able to imbue a word from everyday language with a poetic quality. While nature greets the new day,

Trilla sugli embrici  
 La rondinella;  
 Sull'aia crocita  
 La gallinella;

11. 93-96,

activity, hustle and bustle start again,

Scoppia dall'ardua  
 Torre la squilla;  
 Ridesta all'opere  
 Torna la villa.

11.97-100.

Calcaterra points out the Classical overtones of "ardua": "... alta, erta, di difficile accesso; come 'arduus' in latino. Lo Zanella è attentissimo, come i poeti classici, nel dare valore lirico a ogni parola, scelta con gusto e sobrietà".<sup>32</sup> Baldacci also comments on "ardua/Torre" ll. 97,98: "... è già nell'Elena del Tommaseo ...".<sup>33</sup>

It is noteworthy how Zanella deals with social comment—and even scientific concepts, such as "... universo/Mobile", ll.6,7, or astronomical references, "Iadi e Pleiadi", l.67—within a Classical, stylistic framework, with nature providing an appropriate background-setting against which the poet unfolds a variety of vignettes.

In 1878, he wrote the ode, A un cespo di rose in Napoli, in which he dealt with the theme of Man and Nature, as well as touching upon Nature and Art in the case of great artists, particularly Leopardi. The circumstances of the poem's composition are as follows,

Lo Zanella compose quest'ode a Napoli, mentre era ospite della famiglia Aganoor nel palazzo Lucchesi, dove la figliuola Maria coltivava sopra un balcone una pianta di rose, che aveva preso a Portici in una villa di amici. 34

There is an interesting sequence and development of themes in this ode, which may be divided into three parts.

32. Ibid., p.5.33. Baldacci, p.696.34. Ibid., p.115.



The first, ll.1-16, can be considered introductory, for the poet not only sets the scene, but introduces the various themes he will later develop. Thus, from the rose-plant of the title, he goes on to consider the splendour of the Bay of Naples and the menace of Vesuvius. He then indirectly attacks Leopardi's view of Nature, whilst also highlighting Nature's marvels. In the central part of the ode, ll.17-44, Zanella presents his own view of Evolution and the relationship between Man and Nature. In the final part of the poem, ll.45-68, he returns to an attack on Leopardi's view of Man and Nature, as expressed in La ginestra.

From the first lines there are signs of Classical influence, "marmoreo" l.1, "aure" l.3, and Leopardian overtones: l.1, "verone", cf. A Silvia, "i veroni" l. 19.

From the reference to the charm of the Bay of Naples and the menace of Vesuvius ll.5-8, Zanella passes to an attack on Leopardi's view of Man and Nature in La ginestra—where he had stated that Nature "... de' mortali/Madre è di parto e di voler matrigna", ll.124,125—

Cruda matrigna, che dell'uom non cura  
Le minute prosapie, e fato arcano  
Contro cui d'arte e di possanza è vano  
Ogni argomento, io non dirò natura,                      ll.9-12.

As a proof of the wonders of Nature, Zanella cites the example of the rose-plant itself, as well as the wonderful combination of sounds, colours, light and scenery in the zone of Naples, ll.13-16.

In the second part of the ode, ll.17-44, Zanella turns to a consideration of the relationship between Man and Nature in the context of Evolution and History. His treatment of this subject lacks the spirit and imagination of Sopra una conchiglia fossile and La veglia. In ll.17-44 of the ode, A un caspo di rose in Napoli, Zanella is attempting to demolish Leopardi's pessimistic view of Man and Nature by presenting his own more positive view—Providence has given Man the intelligence and ingenuity to dominate Nature, ll.17-28; it is not through inherited privilege, but through his "senno" and his efforts to overcome obstacles and adversities that Man proves his worth, ll.29-36; the hope of an afterlife and "virtù" spur Man on to overcome "codardi ozi" and life's misfortunes in order to strive towards "non venali palme" or worthwhile goals and imperishable spiritual achievements, ll.35-44.<sup>35</sup> Despite its logical pertinence in the context of the poem's thematic structure, it is not so much a poetic theme, but a theme which has been dealt with in poetry. One is tempted to suggest, in Crociani terms, that this section lacks a real impulso lirico and seems too prosaic.

<sup>35</sup>. Zanella also dealt with a similar theme (Man's ingenuity and his superiority over animals) in L'industria. Ad Alessandro Rossi membro del giuri internazionale dell'Esposizione di Parigi nel 1867 (1868).

Classical influence is evident, for example, in the use of the adjective, "arduì", to describe great height, and also in the personification of Nature as a beautiful woman, whom Man is able to dominate,

... nove leggi indice  
 Alla vetusta delle cose altrice  
 Che, qual doma beltà, si arrende a lui. 11.26-28.

In Microscopio e telescopio 1866, Zanella had compared Nature to a "ritrosà vergine", l.1, who was trying to hide her secrets from Man. Providence, in Classical terms, is referred to as "Provvido nume" l.23.

In 11.29-36, Zanella points out that Man is not worthy of gains or conquests unless he himself has earned them by overcoming difficulties and adversities through the exercise of his intelligence and common sense. The imagery refers to the conquest of empires, l.29, and seems rather inappropriate. 11.33-36, with their more generalised approach, seem more in line with the poet's vague reference to mankind overcoming obstacles. As these increase, they stimulate an appropriate, corresponding response or reaction. There is also the image of "ascent" l.36, which often occurs in Zanella poetry, as in La veglia. Here it is used to show Man's triumphant conquest of obstacles and difficulties.

In 11. 37-40,

Larva non è di fantolin che sogna,  
 Ma di patria miglior grido materno,  
 L'alta speme, onde l'uom si sente eterno  
 E sovra il Sole una dimora agogna;

there is another echo of La veglia, 11.79,80, "Ma ... io scòrsi/Una patria superba oltre le stelle".

The last part of the poem, 11.45-68, seems to come to life and re-connects with the first four introductory verses. However, despite the vigour which animates these lines, Zanella puts his case unconvincingly, as he addresses Leopardi directly and attacks his views in La ginestra,

Cantor della Ginestra! "E meno infermo"  
 E "più saggio dell'uom" l'umile arbusto  
 A te pareva, che sul fianco adusto  
 Del tonante Vesèvo non ha schermo,  
 E sotto l'ignea cenere che inonda  
 E del pio villanello arde la speme,  
 "Non renitente" al fato, che lo preme,  
 Tacito piega l'odorata fronda? 11.45-52.

At this point, it would be worth considering exactly what Leopardi had said,

... E piegherai  
 sotto il fascio mortal non renitente  
 il tuo capo innocente:  
 ma non piegato insino allora indarno  
 codardamente supplicando innanzi  
 al futuro oppressor; ma non eretto

con forsennato orgoglio inver le stelle,  
 nè sul deserto, dove  
 e la sede e i natali  
 non per voler ma per fortuna avesti;  
 ma più saggia, ma tanto  
 meno inferma dell'uom, quanto le frali  
 tue stirpi non credesti  
 o dal fato o da te fatte immortali. La ginestra, ll.304-317.

Zanella, in effect, seems to be offering a rather naïve interpretation —if the broom-plant is really wiser and stronger than Man why does it bow before fate? — of the lines quoted above.

It is surely obvious that Leopardi regarded the broom-plant as being wiser and stronger than Man, not only because it was able to accept the inevitable with equanimity and courage, but also because it had a firm grasp of objective reality and avoided humanity's pride and arrogance.

Zanella is, perhaps, on slightly firmer ground, despite the rather prosaic and stilted presentation, when he suggests that Nature cannot be said to have been unjust towards Leopardi, despite his physical deformities, when it gave him the talent to write such wonderful poetry and enabled him to discover all its (Nature's) marvels, "... e tutta la beltà ti schiuse/De' profondi suoi regni ..." ll.57,58.

Zanella goes on to show, concisely and effectively, that he thinks Leopardi had ungratefully used the gifts bestowed upon him by Nature to attack her, "... onde la mano/Di strali armavi a saëttarla invano;" ll.58, 59. Leopardi had referred to Nature as a stepmother and Zanella had already repudiated this view in the early part of the poem, "Cruda matrigna .../.../.../... io non dirò natura", ll.9-12. He now refers to Nature as a loyal mother who has not only forgiven Leopardi for his "indebito sogghigno" l.61, but has granted him a picturesque, final resting-place near to that of Virgil. In fact,

Di vfolette il suolo intorno è vario;  
 E le orme sue gentili il solitario  
 Passer vi segna col leggiro piede. ll.66-68.

Despite some evocative imagery and the effective development of the themes, the ode seems heavy and pedestrian compared to Zanella's best works.

#### (V) NATURE AND ART

Zanella's attitude towards Nature and Art, as expressed in his poetry, follows an interesting, if not unpredictable, course in its main outlines. In other words, while, in the earliest relevant composition, Alla stessa (31 Marzo 1869), one finds a simple juxtapositioning of Nature and Art, without any "clash" or "rivalry", this certainly becomes very marked in later works.



It is also noteworthy that Nature is first seen as superior to Art, as in Natura ed arte 1877 and Astichello, XVIII, whereas the opposite is found to be the case in Astichello, XXXIX, and A Raffaello 1883.

In the sonnet, Alla stessa (31 Marzo 1869), Zanella feels that since Nature works her marvels in a silent, hidden way, Art acts similarly. It is certainly true of the young Lucrezia Marzolo De' Fabi, to whom the sonnet is addressed, who, when asked to do so, reads the poetry she has composed with reluctance and shyness.

The first quartina effectively conveys the way the poet sees Nature working her marvels. The image in l.3, "Stringe in perla la goccia ...", is particularly striking.

In the second quartina,

Tal sognai l'Arte. Timida e ritrosa  
Tra chete ombre e volumi al Sol si fura,  
E la sudata nota armoniosa  
Fida a' silenzi di romite mura. ll.5-8,

where Zanella describes how he sees Art creating its masterpieces, there are Leopardian overtones in l.7, "la sudata nota", cf. "le sudate carte", l.16, A Silvia, which is very reminiscent of l. 36, "sudato verso", Pel taglio di un bosco 1869.

L.5, "... Timida e ritrosa", reminds one of the ode Microscopio e telescopio, originally entitled Natura e Scienza, in which Zanella referred to the "shyness" of Nature, "Come ritrosa vergine t'invola, / Discortese Natura, al guardo umano," Microscopio e telescopio, ll.1,2.

The two terzine are of an inferior standard compared to the quartine, for they are more hackneyed and commonplace, as in ll. 13,14: "... il volto ... / Tutto del fior della modestia asperso.". However, l.12, "Leggi esitando il tuo leggiadro verso," does stand out, for it appropriately illustrates the slow, hesitant reading of her poetry by the young poetess. Various features—the pause after "esitando", the repetition of double "g", the similarity between "Leggi" and "leggiadro", and the "lengthening" effect of "esitando"—tend to "slow down" the line making it seem longer and slower, thus emphasizing Lucrezia's hesitation.

The Classical influence in the sonnet can be seen in the personifications of Nature and Art and in l.13, "E sul sen palpitante il volto inchini", which is very close to the tone and mood of the strongly classical poem, Psiche 1847.

The theme of Nature and Art is taken up again in another sonnet, Natura ed arte 1877. Zanella is here concerned with showing that Art, at least with regard to his own verses, cannot equal Nature's harmoniously perfect results.

In his assessment of this sonnet, Calcaterra stresses the importance of the insight it gives of Zanella's approach to composing poetry:

Bel sonetto, in cui parla la profonda e incontentabile coscienza dell'artista, che sa quanto ardua sia la strada, che conduce alle pure altezze della poesia.

Diceva lo Zanella innanzi alla prima edizione de' suoi versi (Firenze, Barbèra, 1868): "Nelle cave di pietra, che sono in Chiampo, mio luogo natale, ho veduto che i primi strati non hanno valore, come quelli che facilmente si sfogliano e si sgretolano; solamente dopo il secondo e il terzo esce la lastra magnifica, che resiste alla forza dissolvente del fuoco e del ghiaccio". Per ottener una forma, che non si sgretolasse e potesse resistere al tempo, lo Zanella dedicò studio assiduo alla parola e ai ritmi.

Giovinetto, molto avea tradotto dai poeti latini, attentissimo a ottener poesia nella rispondenza dei sentimenti e delle immagini; e spesso, dopo molte ore di tentativi e rifacimenti, giungeva alla sera senza aver trovato il verso che rendesse con evidenza il pensiero latino. In questo geloso esercizio avea "logorato" i volumi di Orazio, di Virgilio e, dopo il 1853, quelli di Teocrito, Anacreonte e altri poeti greci. La forma, che nelle poesie originali dello Zanella appare spesso nitida e potente, è dunque una lunga e laboriosa conquista. Così è in tutti i poeti.<sup>36</sup>

The first quartina stresses the amount of time and effort expended by the poet, especially the unusual and striking use of the word, "Intarsiando" l.2. The reference to "l'ambita cima" l.3 shows that after so much effort the poet thought he had achieved a satisfactory result. The use of the image of having to scale a mountain and reach the peak ("cima") again stresses his strenuous efforts.

The second quartina shows how, on reflection, he finds his work lacking. l.5, "Come s'inganna chi sé stesso estima!", does not seem too trite or inappropriate, coming, as it does, after the self-satisfaction of ll.1-4. The poet has managed to imbue the line with convincing spontaneity. The repetition of "Non sempre" in ll.7,8 stresses the unevenness of Zanella's compositions, at least according to his own judgement. The reference to "la lima" l.7 echoes the use of the same expression in his prose works, as in the above extract. The lack of harmony between the different parts of Zanella's compositions, ll.6,7, contrasts with, and prepares for, the wonderful way in which Nature takes care of every detail, ll.9-11, harmonising the various parts simultaneously, ll.11,12. This is reinforced by contrasting the marvels of Nature with the poet's own poor works: "Io sovente al finir del mio costrutto/Contemplo un mostro.E d'agguagliarti ho speme!" ll.13,14. The gulf separating Nature's wonders and the poet's compositions is again stressed in Zanella's final self-deprecatory words.

We also find him exalting Nature above Art in sonnet XVIII of Astichello. For one can learn more about God and life through Nature than through

36. Poesie scelte (1957), p. 97.

Art or books, "Ed al cor tutto è lingua e tace l'arte;" Astichello, XVIII, l.12.

However, there are ways in which Art is superior to Nature. In sonnet XXXIX of Astichello, Nature claims to have created everything and challenges Art: "... temeraria ancella,/Di meco gareggiar t'arroggi il vanto?" ll.7,8. Art replies: "... Se tu crei, non curi" l.9, and continues: "Io colgo a volo un tuo fuggiasco lampo,/E con la rima o col pannel lo eterno." ll.13,14. In other words, whilst Nature is continually renewing itself, Art can capture and crystallise the splendour of a particular instant.

In fact, certain great artists are able to produce masterpieces which are superior to those of Nature. Thus, Zanella is so impressed by the paintings of Paolo Veronese, in the villa of the Caldogno family near Vicenza, that he exclaims,

... Non negar, Natura,  
Che tu d'ogni bellezza augusta madre,  
Dalla figlia sei vinta in queste mura.

Astichello, LXXXIII, ll.12-14.

Just as Nature revealed its secrets to Leopardi (cf. A un cespo di rose in Napoli, p.156 ), so it opened all its doors to Raffaello, whose work surpassed Nature:

A te Natura tutte quante aperse  
De' suoi regni le porte; e non ha l'Iri  
Così splendida zona e sì diverse  
Luci non han crisoliti e zaffiri,

Quanti rapiti del tuo dolce Urbino  
A' femminili volti, all'acque, ai fiori  
Delle scabrose balze d'Appennino

Nella tua fantasia piovean colori. A Raffaello, ll.1-8.

In the same poem—more important as an expression of Zanella's themes and ideas than for its stylistic features and qualities, he in fact omitted it from the fourth (1885) edition of his poetry—Zanella goes on to say that a divinely-inspired desire to penetrate the hidden realms of creation led Raffaello to emulate the Creator by creating works of art: "Tanto vestigio di Chi amando crea/Lasciasti, Raffael, nelle tue tele." ll.15,16. A similar idea—Art's justification is that through creative, artistic efforts, Man gets as near as possible to the Creator—is to be found in the poetry of Gabriele Rossetti.<sup>37</sup> The latter's treatment of the theme of Nature has a lot in common with Zanella's: a preference for the peace and innocence of solitude in the countryside, as opposed to the hustle and bustle of the city; Rossetti states that his artistic inspiration, stifled while he was living in a city, is revived by the wonders of Nature, which leave him "... commosso/in estasi

37. Baldacci, p.15 — Ingresso nella solitudine e proponimenti del solitario, VI, ll. 296,297.



d'amor";<sup>38</sup> as well as admiring and observing Nature, he also draws comparisons between it and various aspects of life—for example, he sees the moon's phases as symbolic of Man's life.<sup>39</sup> Like Rossetti, Zanella shared Rousseau's Romantic view of Nature as benign in contrast with human society. This had also been Leopardi's attitude, at least in his earliest poems, although he later became embittered and saw Nature as a cruel stepmother.

#### (IV) NATURE AND CLASSICISM

Zanella's view of Nature was also strongly influenced by Classicism. Cusatelli feels that Zanella achieved, in the sonnets of Astichello, a realism equally tending towards an elegiac evocation of the countryside and towards humanitarian considerations, expressed with sober Classicism, but open to modern problems and themes.<sup>40</sup>

It is interesting to note that Zanella himself refers to a similar combination in the poetry of Virgil,<sup>41</sup> whilst Galletti<sup>42</sup> points out that both Zanella and Virgil appreciated the relationship between the magnificence of Nature (infused by divinity) and the nature of Man.

In the Latin poem, Carmen alcaicum 1884, which came at the end of the first fifty sonnets of Astichello published by Hoepli in Milan in 1884, Zanella refers to the restful, consoling effect of the countryside, as well as his liking of, and reliance upon, the poetry of Virgil,<sup>43</sup>

O summe vatum, quo duce primitus  
Recentiorum monstra nefaria  
Fucumque verborum perosus  
Ingenuam colui Camaenam,

Sis mi levamen tempus in ultimum!                      ll.29-33.

The poem has very close links with the Astichello sonnets, as in ll.6-8, where Zanella compares the way his talent is fading with the manner in which the river "Astichello" flows with happy calmness.

In ll.21-24, there is an autobiographical reference to his living in a small villa in the country. This had been foreshadowed in the sonnets of Passeggio solitario and then stated, after being achieved, in the Astichello sonnets.

38. Ibid., p.17—Ingresso nella solitudine e proponimenti del solitario, VIII, ll.334,335.

39. Ibid., p.13—Ingresso nella solitudine e proponimenti del solitario, V, ll.242-247.

40. Cusatelli, p.559.

41. Paralleli letterari, p.134.

42. A.Galletti, Poeti, Poesia e Storia, Milano, 1926, p.205.

43. Cf. Carducci, Virgilio, ll.12-14: "Ridono in tanto i monti e il mar lontano, / Tra i grandi arbor la fresca aura sospira: / Tale il tuo verso a me, divin poeta".

Despite the poem's strong Classical imprint, it also has elements of Realism—the realization that talent tends to diminish with age; that with the passing of youth so hope tends to disappear; illness and old age make the prospect of death very real and very close; the reference to his sitting in the sun trying to keep warm; turning to simple, rustic consolations; the tiredness of the old poet and again his awareness of approaching death.

Apart from Virgil (and Horace), Zanella was also influenced by Aesop's fables, through which he gained a new appreciation of, and insight into, Nature and the world of the animals: "In ciò che stride, in ciò che ronzano canta, / Odo, savio gentil, la tua parola.", Astichello, LXXVIII, ll. 13, 14.

The two most striking conclusions to emerge from this chapter—the amazing degree of correspondence between Zanella's poetry and poetica, in terms of a Classical style and a "Romantic" content, and the predominance of the "vertical" dimension, with regard to his position in his historical context—overlap to a great extent.

Thus one finds that within a Classical, stylistic framework, influenced by Virgil and Horace, as well as Leopardi's idyllic evocation of the countryside, Zanella's view of Nature seems to be very much in tune with the fundamental outlook of Pre-Romantic writers such as Cowper, Madame de Staël and Rousseau, with his emphatic contrast between beneficent Nature and evil Society, and also of "Romantic" poets such as Rossetti, particularly with regard to his antinomy of town-country, and Leopardi, who, at least in his earliest poems, had echoed the basic, Rousseauistic clash between Nature and Society.

Particularly in the case of Astichello 1880-1887, one finds interesting links with Carducci's Rime nuove—"... il classicismo sereno e composto si fonde con una delicata temperie romantica e idilliaca ..."<sup>44</sup>—and Pascoli, as for example, in the case of the idyllic tone of La guazza, especially in ll. 5-8,

Nel cielo d'un languido azzurro,  
le stelle si sbiancano appena:  
si sente un confuso sussurro  
nell'aria serena.

<sup>44</sup> G. Carducci, Poesie, a cura di G. Barberi Squarotti, Milano, 1978, p. 256.

While the similarity between the appreciation of the countryside in Zanella and Carducci has been referred to in this chapter, the affinity between their views on the force and energy of Nature will be considered in Ch. 5, p. 205; (cf. also pp. 205-6: concerning a comparison with Prati's Canto d'Igea).

Similarities with Pascoli were also noted in Il mezzogiorno in campagna (cf. pp. 137, 138 ) and Il pettirosso (cf. 145, 146 ), in terms of the detailed observation of a country scene, in the former work, and of the bird's movements, in the latter poem.

If one regards Italian Romanticism in the nineteenth century as manifesting itself in two main currents, la linea del realismo, from Manzoni to Verga, and la linea del pathos, from Leopardi to Pascoli (ultimately leading to Decadentismo), then Zanella, in his treatment of the theme of Nature, has affinities with both.

Thus his social concern with the plight of the poor and the peasantry finds expression not only in Le ore della notte (cf. pp. 151-2 ), but also in what could be regarded as a "transitional" element coming between the idealised images of the Romantics and the austere directness of Verga's Verismo (cf. Il mezzogiorno in campagna, p. 138 ).

With regard to la linea del pathos, apart from Zanella's "intermediate" position between Leopardi and Pascoli, which will of course emerge more clearly in the course of the thesis,<sup>45</sup> his "links" with Decadentismo—for example, with Pascoli, Graf and Fogazzaro—in terms of his view of Nature, will be considered in Chapter (6) (cf. p. 280, n. 48; pp. 280-1; 257-8; p. 273, n. 36).

<sup>45</sup>. Cf. also Ch. 3, p. 134



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## CHAPTER (5): SOCIETY

After having examined those poems in which Zanella dealt with the various facets of the life of an individual and considered Nature from different standpoints, it would be appropriate at this stage to examine his treatment of a very wide range of themes, including: patriotism, socialism, history and civilization, which could be described as coming under the collective heading of "Society". From this study, Zanella's enthusiastic involvement and interest in many contemporary problems (the emigration of the Irish; Italy's struggle for independence and unity; the poverty of the peasants; and relations between Church and State) and historical events (the opening of the Suez Canal; the Franco-Prussian War of 1870) will emerge, as well as a clearer understanding of his spiritual view of the world's history. It will also be seen how Zanella's socialism was in the Christian, moralising tradition of Parini and Manzoni, while his patriotism was strongly influenced by the Romantic, "spiritualistic" ideals of Mazzini.

The most fundamental and important leitmotif of Zanella's poetic output will be found to be the theme of "spirituality and materialism",<sup>1</sup> since he stood for spiritual values in what was becoming an increasingly materialistic society (positivism, colonialism, socialism, scientific materialism, the Theory of Evolution, and, of course, what Zanella saw as their extreme, aberrant manifestations, which, for him, were threatening not only his own values, but the whole fabric of society).

In effect, the poems considered in this chapter constitute an expression of Zanella's love and concern for humanity at various levels, ranging from the regional, national and international to the cosmic.

### (I) PATRIOTISM

Zanella's patriotism, as expressed in his poetry, covers a wide range of different aspects, for, apart from dealing with so many of the events of the Risorgimento, it is intertwined with his civic and regional pride, as well as conveying the shifting emphasis of the national mood, the importance of Italy's literary tradition and Latin cultural heritage, compassion for all those who have fallen in battle, both Italian and foreign, allies and foes, and a desire to see a united, independent Italy taking her place, on equal terms, amongst the community of nations, while fulfilling her destiny through her civilizing influence.

Zanella's patriotism emerges in a relatively early poem, Ad un amico abile suonatore di pianoforte, novembre 1848, in which he addresses his

1. This has already been seen in preceding chapters, but will become clearer in this and the following chapter.

friend, Fedele Lampertico, and invites him to play patriotic Italian songs, which lead the poet to reflect on Italy's fate.

ll. 1-35 are happy and optimistic. Having asked Lampertico to play patriotic themes, Zanella dreams of Italy being united and independent within the context of friendship between priests and soldiers (Church and State), which the poet hopes for, l. 35.

In the central part of the poem, ll. 36-56, the tone changes to one of foreboding—there almost seems to be an evil spirit trying to separate Italy from her destiny, for so much blood has been shed. The poet asks his friend to play songs which will match his sorrowful mood.

In the final section of the poem, ll. 57-84, optimism returns as Zanella proclaims that the sacrifices of the martyrs will only serve to inflame others, for Italy, "Diletta al Signore", cannot die. Zanella then asks his friend to hit an optimistic, hopeful note which will raise Italian spirits,

The three "parts" of the poem, with their alternating optimism and pessimism, are unified by the poet's calling on his friend, three times, to play songs which will match his mood, and, of course, by the patriotic theme which informs the whole poem. Although these alternating optimistic and pessimistic moods are very true-to-life, the references to the poet's friend at the piano, despite their unifying influence, seem rather forced and artificial. In this context, some of the defects in Zanella's poetry, as expressed by Arturo Graf, come to mind, in particular the latter's references to: "... qualche stentata perifrasi; un po' di prosaismo e di convenzionalismo; alcuni ripieghi non dissimulati abbastanza ...".<sup>2</sup>

The theme, tone and metre, as well as the emotive vocabulary, are reminiscent of the patriotic poems of the period.<sup>3</sup> Baldacci's comment,<sup>4</sup> to the effect that so much Risorgimento poetry was more concerned with the ardent expression of patriotic themes than with technical or stylistic excellence, might almost seem to be applicable to this poem. This is all the more evident when one compares it with the ode, Sopra una conchiglia fossile, of 1864. For, while Zanella has used seven-line strofe of senari in both, the latter is far superior. The important difference being that in the later work of 1864 the "jauntiness" of the senari was a means of expressing the poet's optimism whilst not detracting from the gravity of the theme dealt with; in this earlier poem of 1848, however, the insistent rhythm of the senari was used in a more conventional way typical of popular compositions and patriotic poems.

2. Poesie (1928), p. XXVI.

3. There are also earlier influences—"...non è difficile rilevare derivazioni e riecheggiamenti da Parini, Alfieri, Monti, Pindemonte, Foscolo e Leopardi..." (Pasquazi (1967), p. 18).

4. Baldacci, pp. XI, XII.



A typical defect of the work is the rather pompous and long-winded reference to a piano as "... eburneo/Canoro strumento;" ll. 1,2. Nevertheless, in ll. 5-7, "Degl'inni che al Teutono/Imbiancan la gota,/Ride-sta la nota.", Zanella shows his appreciation of the propaganda value of patriotic songs as a weapon against the enemy and not merely as a means of raising morale.

Ll. 12-14, "Sia sogno: a quest'anima/Lo splendido sogno/È fiero bisogno.", echo the following, "Non sogno questa volta,/Non sogno liberta —", written by Metastasio on escaping from an amorous captivity, while Gabriele Rossetti improvised a patriotic composition on these lines.<sup>5</sup> In ll. 20,21: "Si asside regina/La Donna latina", there is an interesting Leopardian echo—"Che fosti donna, or sei povera ancella" l. 24, All'Italia; "Fu...donna e reina" l. 96, Sopra il monumento di Dante.

The jaunty and persistent rhythm of the senari is particularly effectively employed in ll. 22-25,

Festose, col sonito  
Di sciolti torrenti,  
Sul Tebro si accalcano  
L'italiche genti;

where it conveys both the imagery of the sound of rapidly flowing streams and the gathering of the Italian nation at the Tiber, like tributaries. This helps to convey that they are assembling at the most natural and appropriate place possible—Rome, which should be the capital of a united, free and independent Italy, while the accomplishment of this should be the final act and crowning glory of the Risorgimento. Connected with this is the question of Church-State relations, which, in the poet's reveries, will be very harmonious: "A lieti si accolgono/Fraterni conviti/Guerrieri e leviti." ll. 33-35. It is noteworthy that Zanella refers to priests with the biblical term, "leviti", thus stressing the religious and holy cause of Italy's redemption. This anticipates ll. 61-63: "Antica de' popoli,/Diletta al Signore,/Italia non muore".

The pessimism which seizes the poet is very well conveyed in ll. 36-42. The idea of some malevolent, sinister forces aiming at the disruption of Italy's Risorgimento is very effectively stressed by Zanella's posing a question. This adds to the air of mystery, uncertainty and consternation caused by an insidious, almost unseen enemy. For these grim, evil forces are pale, spectre-like and insubstantial<sup>6</sup> and are shown as whispering about mysterious conspiracies. The poet then answers his own question —there is an evil spirit trying to prevent Italy from accomplishing

5. Wilkins, p. 418.

6. Ll. 36,37: "...pallide/Scettrate figure," — Cf. Carducci: "spettri lividi" (Dopo Aspromonte, l. 85).

her destiny, ll. 40-42. Zanella goes on to lament the many martyrs of the Italian cause, ll. 50-56. But optimism returns as he points out: "Dall'urna de' forti, / Repente fiammeggiano / I brandi risorti:" ll. 58-60.<sup>7</sup> These lines are very reminiscent of the following: "A egregie cose il forte animo accendono / l'urne de' forti ..." I Sepolcri, ll. 151, 152.

Ll. 50-53,

D'un sangue magnanimo  
Indarno cruenta,  
Le fughe, i patiboli  
Italia lamenta;

and ll. 61-63, quoted above (cf. p. 166), are very Mazzinian in tone, as may be seen from the following extracts: "... the martyrs of the holy Italian cause", "... by our youth slain on the scaffold, in prison, in exile; by the misery of millions ...", from the translation of part of the formula of initiation into the society of "Giovine Italia" composed by Mazzini.<sup>8</sup>

The high hopes, which had been raised by the publication of Gioberti's Primato morale e civile degli Italiani 1843—avidly read in the Vicenza Seminary—and the first two years, 1846-1848, of Pio Nono's initially liberal pontificate, were, at the end of 1848 when the poem was composed, being undermined by the tragic succession of events in the First War of Independence, 1848-1849. It is this fundamental background which is reflected in the poem's mixture of optimism and pessimism.

Despite the fact that Zanella's own direct personal involvement in the Risorgimento was strictly limited<sup>9</sup> he deeply loved Italy and, with an almost religious fervour, wished to see her united, independent and free. Certainly "patriotism", an important theme in his poetry, dominates the ode, Per la morte di Daniele Manin avvenuta in Parigi il 22 settembre 1857 e passata in silenzio dai giornali austriaci.

The part played by Venice, both before and after Italy's unification, in the struggle for independence, figures prominently in Zanella's poetry. There is, in fact, in this ode, a hint of the theme which will be taken up in later poems—Il grido di Venezia and I cavalli di San Marco, both of 1877—namely, the contrast between the past glories of Venice and her present condition, as Leopardi had done with regard to Italy, in All'Italia.

The poet has employed the rhyme and metre very well in order to meet his ends. Thus, each nine-line stanza deals with a particular episode or

7. Cf. Luigi Mercantini, L'Inno di Garibaldi, ll. 1, 2: "Si scopron le tombe, si levano i morti; / i martiri nostri son tutti risorti!"

8. Wilkins, p. 422.

9. In the ode, Voci secrete, there is an indirect reference to Zanella's involvement with the Austrian police. Cf. Ch. 3, p. 78.

subject, which reinforces the fundamental theme of the poem, enshrined in the title. The repetition of "Trema, o stranier", as the last line of each verse, adds to the patriotic ardour which the poet is trying to arouse.<sup>10</sup> Various factors help to counteract the inherent tendency towards monotony of the nine-line stanza, including: the use of the short, five-syllable lines, the unusual rhyme—ABCBDDEEFF throughout the work, but ABCBCDDEE for the fourth verse, while ABABABCCB would be the usual one—and the fact that in each verse, apart from the fourth, there are non-rhyming quinari sdrucchioli, whilst the last two lines are rhyming quinari tronchi. Particularly striking is the way in which Zanella has utilized the quinario's essential delicacy, to convey the sadness inherent in the news of Manin's death and its consequences for Venice, as well as its rapid, agile pace to stimulate patriotic ardour and optimism for the future: "Trema, o stranier".

Venice has been so deeply affected by the news of Manin's death that even the dead have been stirred by it. Thus, Zanella points out, in the third verse, how Foscari and Zeno await Manin in their grave, ll. 19-27. In the fourth verse,

Freme Vinegia  
E si risente  
Al noto anelito  
Dell'Oriente;  
Vivido anelito  
Vien di Crimea,  
Alla galea  
Noto sentier:  
Trema, o stranier. ll. 28-36,

the poet stresses patriotic ardour and optimism for the future—Venice will be roused by memories of her glorious past and by the achievements of Piedmontese troops who had fought in the Crimea in 1855. The change of rhyme in this verse, ABCBCDDEE—with the repetition of "anelito" in the rima univoca of the quinari sdrucchioli, ll. 30 and 32—tends to reinforce the briskness of the stanza and so intensify the inspirational force of the memories from the past and the resulting patriotic ardour and longing, "anelito", for the future accomplishment of Italy's redemption.

In the final (sixth) verse,

Sotterra al Martire  
Poser vicino  
Bordone e sandalo  
Di pellegrino. ll  
L'aura d'Italia  
Passa sulle ossa;  
Della riscossa  
Arde il pensier:  
Trema, o stranier. ll. 46-54,

10. Although written in 1857, the poem was not published until 1867 due to censorship reasons. Cf. Poesie (1928), p.18.

11. Cf. Aleardi, I tre fiumi, 1.52, "...il borbon del pellegrino" (Baldacci, p.571).



Zanella returns to the ode's fundamental, unifying theme, the death of Manin. By referring to the latter as a martyr and a pilgrim, he highlights the holiness of Italy's cause. Calcaterra has commented on these lines as follows:

Coloro che hanno sepolto a Parigi Daniele Manin gli han  
posto vicino bordone e sandali da pellegrino, affinché,  
destandosi, ritrovi la via d'Italia. Bellissima immagine,  
ispirata al poeta dall'usanza antica di porre nella tomba  
gli oggetti più cari al defunto. 12

The poem is effective within the context of the poet's aims—to produce a patriotic ode which paid tribute to Manin; showed how Venice reacted to the news; and, at the same time, had an air of optimism for the future.

Patriotism also figures prominently in the quartine entitled, Brindisi. A Teresa Fogazzaro (15 Ottobre 1861),<sup>13</sup> for, whilst Zanella pays tribute to the Fogazzaro family, who preferred exile to "mirar volto nemico"<sup>14</sup>, even though they missed their beloved city, Vicenza, it is the strength of feeling of the poet's own patriotism which is striking, as in his reference to ["Dal"] l'ancor serva Italia" 1. 10.

The poem does not successfully fuse its various elements. Thus, there is the original, "occasional" nature of the poem, the poet's own patriotism, the exile and patriotism of the Fogazzaro family and a more generalised viewpoint, which is an attempt to get away from the "occasional" nature of the work, as can be seen from the change in the title (cf. note 13). This is rather surprising in terms of Zanella's poetica, according to which there should be harmony and balance between the different parts of a composition. The overall mediocrity of the poem may be gauged from the rather confusing imagery of ll. 21-24:

Quando dal trionfato Etna torrenti  
Precipitaro di guerriera lava,  
Le braccia apersi, ma confusa a' venti  
L'altera vision si dileguava.

The following quartina does, however, present an effective simile of the way memories seem to come to life and then fade away equally quickly,

Sogno d'infranti cori ognor distrutto  
E rinascente ognor, come d'arena  
Mucchio leggiere che scherzoso flutto  
Scioglie e rifà colla tornante piena, 11. 25-28.

Apart from the wistful nostalgia for a happy past, there are also Leopardian overtones in ll. 5,6: "Sonar l'intima stanza odo di liete/Voci ...", (cf. A Silvia, ll. 7-9: "Sonavan le quiete/stanze .../al tuo

12. Poesie scelte (1957), p.7, note (5).

13. Poesie (1928), p.463: "Il titolo di Brindisi fu dato a questi versi nella terza edizione delle Poesie. Prima erano intitolati: A Teresa Barrera-Fogazzaro di Vicenza, nel suo giorno onomastico, in Oria sul lago di Como. Moglie di Mariano Fogazzaro ... questa egregia gentil-donna fu madre di Antonio, l'illustre romanziere...".

perpetuo canto,"), and in the use of "affanno", l. 43.

In ll. 45-48, as in so much of Zanella's patriotic poetry, there is an optimistic note about the future. There is also an indication of the almost religious fervour of his patriotism: "... la santa italica bandiera" l. 46.

From a consideration of the Fogazzaros one day being able to return home to Vicenza, Zanella turns to a general consideration of the plight of the city and of all those of her sons who will also one day be able to see it again.

On the whole it is not a very effective work, having too many different strands not harmoniously fused, and, in fact, it was omitted by Zanella from the fourth (1885) edition of his poems.

In paying tribute to Italy's greatest poet, on the sixth centenary of his birth, in the verses entitled A Dante Alighieri 1865, Zanella showed that he fully realized the important impact on Italy's national consciousness and sense of cultural identity of its literary heritage, particularly with regard to Dante.

Nevertheless, A Dante Alighieri seems mechanical, slow and uninspired, like an occasional poem. It lacks the apparent spontaneity, enthusiasm and sense of urgency of, for example, Il lavoro, written in the same year. This is surprising when one considers how greatly Zanella admired Dante. In fact, he points out that the Divine Comedy will always be a source of Christian inspiration and guidance, ll. 76-80. Although human knowledge has vastly increased since Dante's time, ll. 16-20, the present age still pays tribute to him because: "... dalla tua favella/Sentì l'aura spirar d'alba novella." ll. 44-45. Zanella goes so far as to say that the nineteenth century's renewed interest in Dante helped to accelerate the progress of the Risorgimento: "O padre, cui risorto/Risorse alfin l'italica fortuna," ll. 71,72.

It has already been pointed out that Zanella's interest was frequently aroused by contemporary events, so that it is not surprising to find him being deeply affected when Venice was united to the rest of Italy in 1866. In the quartine, Venezia a Daniele Manin, nel 1866, Zanella has successfully harmonised his joy at the accomplishment of a further stage in Italy's Risorgimento, as well as the underlying sadness because Daniele Manin has not lived to see Venice's liberation.

The use of short, four-line verses, the simplicity and reassuring regularity of the two pairs of rime baciata (AABb) and the insistent, uniform rhythm of the parisyllabic decasillabi are all features which give the poem its qualities of lightness, joy and optimism, as in ll. 25-

Del Canal Grande libero è 'l varco;  
 Il mio Leone veglia in San Marco;  
 Plaudono i morti da San Michele,  
 O Daniele.

Ancor de' dogi siedo sul trono,  
 Come il mio mare libera io sono;  
 Sposa a Vittorio ti son fedele,  
 O Daniele.

On the other hand, the personification of Venice addressing Manin directly, the way in which her sorrow is compared to that of a widow, the plaintive repetition, "O Daniele", with which each strofa ends, and the long account of Venice's past misfortunes, ll. 1-16, very effectively convey the element of sadness implicit in the whole situation, as can be seen in ll. 5-8:

Vedova piansi, piansi i miei figli,  
 Piansi i flagelli, piansi gli esigli;  
 Vuoti i miei porti, frante le vele  
 O Daniele.

As so often in his patriotic poetry, Zanella sees Italy's cause as a holy one,

Dall'Occidente venne un Guerriero;  
 Era la Croce sul suo cimiero;  
 Era il suo nome l'Emmanuele,  
 O Daniele.

ll. 17-20.

King Victor Emanuel's role as Italy's saviour is stressed when the poet refers to him as "l'Emmanuele" l. 19.

The quinario, "O Daniele", helps to counteract the inherent monotony of the ten-syllable lines and the rime bacciate.

In attempting to justify her union with Italy, Venice refers to the threat to her artistic and cultural heritage from her enemies,

Voller da' sassi rader la storia;  
 Pegni immortali della mia gloria,  
 Voller rapirmi volumi e tele,  
 O Daniele.

ll. 9-12.

By not naming them directly, the poet makes their menace seem more insidious.

Whilst this poem is certainly not amongst his best works, it is perhaps surprising that he did not include it in the fourth (1885) edition of his verses, for it can be said to be effective within the context of the poet's limited aims, as a popular patriotic poem.

The balance and harmony with which Zanella has expressed his joy and sadness are particularly striking.

Zanella was not only concerned with contemporary historical events or the various stages of the Risorgimento, but also with the national mood. Inevitably, there was a sense of anticlimax following Italy's unification in 1861. Naturally, this feeling was aggravated by the untimely loss of



Cavour. Both these themes are dealt with in the quartine entitled A Camillo Cavour 1867, which were written "... mentre avvenimenti politici e gravi disordini scoppiati qua e là facevan temere tristi giorni per l'Italia".<sup>14</sup>

Zanella's tribute to the great statesman's contribution to Italian unity is, perhaps, exaggerated with regard to the latter's part in Garibaldi's expedition of "I Mille". The poet also refers to the rôle of Rome as the capital—yet to be accomplished, when the poem was written—as well as to the traumatic defeats of Lissa and Custoza in 1866,<sup>15</sup> although, he points out, "i giovani guerrieri", l.14, had fought very bravely.

The overall mood of danger and foreboding, which imbues the whole poem, is established in the opening lines:

O nell'ora del nembo e del periglio  
 Sempre invocato, che più grande apparì  
 Quanto più gonfi il trepido naviglio  
 Battono i mari; ll. 1-4,

which also show Italy's reliance upon Cavour. Zanella then tries to illustrate the magnitude of Cavour's achievement by presenting him as a larger-than-life figure who was almost able to manipulate people and control events. This prepares for the description of him as a Titan fallen from Olympus, just at the time when he was concerning himself with attempting to make Rome the capital. The final lines convey very appropriately how greatly he would be missed by Italy:

... Orfana ancora  
 Sull'orma tua, cui pari non vede,  
 Italia plora.  
 Plora il negletto altare ed i consigli  
 Per basse voglie sul fiorir recisi:  
 D'altre barriere, che di monti, i figli  
 Plora divisi. ll. 46-52.

But rather than for its stylistic features, the poem is significant thematically. It shows Zanella to be deeply concerned with what was taking place and to be far more "a poet of his time" than has, perhaps, been appreciated. It is rather surprising that this work should have been included in the fourth (1885) edition when a superior poem, such as Venezia a Daniele Manin, nel 1866 should not.

14. Ibid., p. 86.

15. The impact of these battles on the national psyche was reflected in contemporary literature: "Di Custoza e del quadrato di Villafranca l'autore della Vita militare si ricordò anche nel Cuore; di Lissa si parla nel Malavoglia e il conflitto del '66 è lo sfondo di Senso, un racconto di Camillo Boito; Custoza fu rievocata da Fattori in un quadro freddo e minuzioso" (Cattaneo, p.269). Carducci also refers to Lissa in Le nozze del mare 1869 .

Zanella's evaluation of Italy's historical rôle and her future destiny finds expression in the verses A Lodovico Pasini, senatore del Regno 1868, which were not included in the fourth edition of Zanella's poetry. This is understandable, despite the elegance of the Classical vocabulary and the inherent qualities—including, rhythmic harmony and conciseness—of the very traditional terzine. It is a further example of Zanella's poetica in practice, for it has a "Classical", stylistic framework and a "Romantic" content, in both its "passive" and "active" aspects.<sup>16</sup> Thus Zanella does not merely refer to recent historical events, he also shows how he views Italy's past, present and future and how he hopes she will fulfil her destiny, in terms of the "spiritualistic" philosophical back-cloth of the Risorgimento. The poem is, therefore, "active", in that it represents the poet's ardent hopes and desire for Italy. It could be described as being "propagandist" in the broadest possible sense of the word. Its greatest significance lies in the fact that it virtually encapsulates Zanella's view of Italy.

Not surprisingly, the sequence and development of the themes are very effectively carried out. The poet begins by referring to Italy's long geological evolution, which would be well-known to Lodovico Pasini, to whom the poem was addressed, who was a famous geologist. The very great natural beauty of Italy is seen as having required such a long "preparation" or geological evolution, "Remotissimi giorni", l. 9,

Stanza invero superba apparecchiava  
Tra le chiostre de' monti<sup>17</sup> e la marina  
Che accarezzando la circonda e lava,

Alla fatata sobole latina  
Favorevole Iddio che il portentoso  
Albergo le munìa come a regina.                      ll. 10-15.

In these lines, Zanella introduces the theme of Italy having a far-reaching, God-given destiny ("portentoso"). The verb, "apparecchiava" l. 10, stresses the careful, detailed "preparation" lavished on Italy's "Stanza invero superba", l.10. The Classical tone of these lines is evident, not only in terms of the vocabulary, such as, "fatata sobole latina", l.13, but also in the gentle, sensual elegance of ll.11,12: "... e la marina/Che accarezzando la circonda e lava",<sup>18</sup> in which the lingering "caress" of the waves is highlighted by the double "z" which tends to lengthen the line and so make the action seem more persistent.

16. Cf. p. 14.

17. Cf. Carducci, "...questa chiostra di bei monti" Alle fonti del Clitumno, l.70.

18. Cf. Carducci's reference to Italy (as a beautiful woman surrounded by the sea): "Forse, Italia, è la tua chioma fragrante/Nel talamo, tra' due mari, seren," Il canto dell'Amore, ll. 45,46.

The reference to Italy as "regina" in l.15 is reminiscent of Leopardi—"Fu ... donna e reina", Sopra il monumento di Dante, l.96—and prepares for the poet's appreciation of Italy's newly-won freedom, "Surta pur ora da servil riposo;" l.18, and the glory of Ancient Rome's conquests.

Zanella then returns to the theme of Pasini's knowledge of geology in order to show the relevance of Roman ruins for modern Italy. If the great geologist can learn so much about the past from underground rocks, he will also find that the sight of Rome's magnificent ruins will not only bear witness to Italy's great heritage, but will also be a reminder of her "eccelso compito" l.38. That Italy should draw inspiration from her history, and the contrast between her past and present condition,<sup>19</sup>

Ma le virtù che agli avi il petto armâro,  
 Ferreo voler, sublimità di core,  
 All'Italia or contende il fato avaro.            ll.43-45,

are also reminiscent of Leopardi (cf. All'Italia).

The references to Pasini's brother, Valentino,<sup>20</sup> and the latter's contributions to modern Italy seem incongruous and too "occasional".

The final terzine return to the basic theme of Italy's destiny, as the poet felicitously combines a realistic appraisal of recent events with his idealistic vision of the future:

...                    o che segreta  
 Vitalità possente in noi si cela,  
 Se per tanto inattesa e poco lieta  
 Di battaglie vicenda e di sventure  
 Pur tocca abbiamo gloriosa mèta.  
 Sempre fauste cosl l'ore future  
 Ne rideranno? De' felici allori  
 In eterno godrem l'ombre secure?  
 Genti men fortunate a cui minori  
 Or di stûdi pur siam, d'armi e d'impero,  
 Pônno acquetarsi de' secondi onori.  
 Ma questa regal madre, a cui già diêro  
 Provvidi i cieli esser lucerna al mondo,  
 A mezza via non resta; o nel primiero  
 Lustrò risorge, o dee tornarsi al fondo.            ll.83-97.

The unpleasant truth of ll. 85,86 and the uncomfortable uncertainty of ll.88-90 are sufficiently realistic and objective to lend authority to the poet's noble, idealistic view of Italy's pre-ordained rôle.

19. Italy's relationship with her Roman heritage is a recurring theme in Carducci's poetry, whether in terms of Rome's virtues and the faults of modern times (e.g. Agl'Italiani, Dinanzi alle Terme di Caracalla), or, in seeing Rome as an inspiration for Italy's present (e.g. Alla Vittoria, Alle fonti del Clitumno).

20. Poesie (1928), p.476: "Valentino Pasini, Profondo scrittore di discipline legali ed economiche. Deputato al primo Parlamento italiano, morì a Torino nel 1864".



The references to "regal madre" 1.94 and "Provvidi i cieli" 1.95 are reinforced by having been anticipated in 11.10-15. In essence, Zanella was suggesting that, in contrast to the wealth and imperial grandeur of England and France, or the Prussian militaristic arrogance of (Bismarck's) Germany, Italy's claim to greatness and the impetus for her future destiny were to be found in her great contribution to civilization<sup>21</sup> and her cultural heritage. Was this nineteenth-century appreciation of Italian civilization exaggerated? It would not seem so, at least according to modern historians, such as Denis Mack Smith— "... on the whole this country [Italy] has been the greatest civilizing influence of all"—<sup>22</sup> or A.J. Whyte, who produced a very eloquent presentation of "... the debt which the world owes to Italy, for her contribution to civilization has been incalculable".<sup>23</sup> Certainly, the desire to achieve excellence was widespread, as expressed, for example, by De Sanctis:

Il grande lavoro del secolo decimonono è al suo termine...  
Già vediamo in questo secolo disegnarsi il nuovo secolo. E  
questa volta non dobbiamo trovarci alla coda, non a' secondi posti.<sup>24</sup>

Undoubtedly Zanella was not merely expressing his own views, but was also in tune with the true spirit of the philosophy of the Risorgimento at its best, as in Gioberti's Primato morale e civile degli Italiani and the writings of Foscolo and Mazzini.

Zanella's concern with attempting to evaluate the results of the Risorgimento and looking forward to the problems which still confronted the young kingdom are evident in another poem of 1868, Alla memoria di Guglielmo Toaldi (cf. Chapter 3, p. 101).

By 1870, in the ode Per gli ossari in San Martino e Solferino, more noteworthy for Zanella's nobility and breadth of vision than for its stylistic qualities, his views on Italy's relationship with other nations had crystallized more clearly, while his patriotism is transcended by universal, humanitarian considerations.

An indication of the importance he attached to the themes he was

21. This theme of Italy having a civilizing rôle to play will be taken up by Carducci: Nell'annuale della fondazione di Roma, 11.37-44: "gli archi che nuovi trionfi aspettano/non più di regi, non più di cesari,/e non di catene attorcenti/braccia umane su gli eburnei carri;/ma il tuo trionfo, popol d'Italia,/su l'età nera, su l'età barbara,/su i mostri onde tu con serena/giustizia farai franche le genti."

22. M. Gendel (ed.), An Illustrated History of Italy, Introduction by Denis Mack Smith, London, 1966, p.8.

23. A.J. Whyte, The Evolution of Modern Italy, Oxford, 1959, p.1.

24. F. De Sanctis, Storia della letteratura italiana, a cura di Benedetto Croce, Bari, 1964, Vol. II, p.424.

dealing with, as well as the difficulty he experienced in expressing them to his own satisfaction, may be found in the poet's own words:

Nel giugno del 1870 lo Zanella scriveva a Fedele Lampertico:  
 "Ho finito un'ode per la festa del 24 corrente:l'inaugurazione degli ossari di San Martino e Solferino. Mi costò cinque giorni di fatica e d'insonnie.Spero che l'Italia parli in essa un linguaggio nè superbo nè vile;ma quale le sue <sup>passate</sup> glorie e sventure colle speranze dell'avvenire domandano". 25

Although, as usual, one can admire the arrangement and sequence of the themes, as well as the ode's dignity and Classical elegance, there is nevertheless an overall impression that the poem never really comes to life. The tone and mood of the work are established in the opening lines,

Come in un sonno i prodi  
 Dormono appiè dell'italo cipresso,  
 Tutte un fraterno amplesso  
 Oggi le schiatte de' caduti annodi;  
 Italia delle genti, a cui fu ancella,  
 Se non regina ancor, torni sorella.                      11.1-6,

in which Zanella has successfully intertwined different themes: the soldiers who were adversaries in life, are united, as brothers, in death, while, through these battles of San Martino and Solferino, Italy regained her freedom. Ll.5 and 6, which have Leopardian overtones (cf. "che fosti donna, or sei povera ancella", *All'Italia*, 1.24), encapsulate Italy's historical relationship with the countries of the foreign soldiery who fought and died in these two battles, namely, French allies and enemy troops from so many of the different lands of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. While Rome had conquered these nations, they, in turn, were later to dominate Italy.

In the next two sestine Zanella develops these themes through a striking contrast. While foreign troops had come to fight on Italian soil, their relatives now come to visit their graves as humble pilgrims. The poet goes on to show that if death has united those who were slain in war, the living are united in their sorrow. According to the poet, the tears of these foreign mourners are mixed with contrition at the thought of the suffering their ancestors have inflicted on Italy, 11.19-24. This sestina acts as an introduction to the central part of the poem, 11.25-54, in which Zanella develops the basic theme of 11.5,6.

Whilst he condemns Rome's conquests, 11.31-36, he eloquently and concisely presents the benefits of her civilization,

Ma dal ferino vitto  
 Noi vi togliemmo: se la dolce vigna  
 Su' vostri fiumi alligna;  
 Se fulse egual de' cittadini il dritto;  
 Marmoree vie, templi, ginnasi e suono  
 Di più leggiadre muse, è nostro dono.                      11.37-42,

adding that the "revenge" which brought about Rome's downfall was too destructive. The high regard which Zanella had for a lasting, constructive heritage of civilization is effectively conveyed in ll.43-48,

Umili i flutti or volve  
 Il vecchio Tebro. Ahi, di cotanto impero  
 Il vostro acciar, severo  
 Troppo con Roma, non lasciò che polve  
 E sotto ruinosi archi, faconda  
 Di lei, di voi fuggiascha immago, un'onda!

where the destructive power of the barbarians is spoken of as a fleeting image, in terms of its impact on posterity, compared with the powerful testimony of Rome's enduring civilization through her ruins.

Against the background of this historical review of the relationship between Italy and her neighbours, Zanella returns to the other theme which had been introduced in the opening lines of the ode, namely, the blood which has been shed, by foreign troops, at the battles of San Martino and Solferino. The poet sees it as an expiation for the "... lutti/ Immensurati", ll.49,50, of the past and as a sacrifice which will bring peace in the future. In other words, this sestina, ll.49-54, completes and complements the central part of the poem, ll.25-54, reconnects with the initial section, ll.1-24, and prepares the reader for the final part of the ode, ll.55-72, dealing with Italy's present condition and her immediate future.

In the last three sestine, Zanella exhorts Italy not to jeopardise her newly-won freedom through internal dissension, but to be worthy of the sacrifices of her martyrs,

... bella qual'eri  
 Negli ultimi pensieri  
 Di lor che fêr questi monti vermigli,  
 Regna ... 11.68-71.

The concluding lines are an echo of ll.5,6, "... e se il mondo a te più non si prostra,/Che sai regger te stessa almen dimostra." ll.71,72.<sup>26</sup>

As has already been mentioned, the arrangement, sequence and inter-connections of the themes are particularly noteworthy in this ode. In addition, despite the overall stylistic deficiencies, as compared to Zanella's best works, one is forcibly struck by the way in which the poet's

26. The basic theme, in Zanella's letter to Fedele Lamperticò and in ll.5-6 (cf.p.176) and ll.71,72 (as above), that Italy should be worthy of her great past and also be prepared to defend herself, echoes Leopardi (All'Italia, l.24) and anticipates Carducci, Bicocca di San Giacomo, ll.153-160: "Noi non vogliamo, o Re, predar le belle/rive straniera e spingere vagante/l'aquila nostra a gli ampi voli avvezza:/ma, se la guerra/l'Alpe minacci e su' due mari tuoni,/alto, o fratelli, i cuori! alto le insegne/e le memorie! avanti, avanti, o Italia/nuova ed antica".



love for his country is transcended by his love for humanity,<sup>27</sup> against the back-cloth of a sweeping, historical vision.

An interesting and unusual instance of Zanella's own personal patriotic involvement emerges in the sestine entitled Per il monumento dei caduti nella battaglia di Monte Berico il 10 giugno 1848 of 1871:

Lo Zanella, a ventotto anni, aveva assistito con ansia alla battaglia, aiutando, insieme con tutta la popolazione, l'eroica difesa vicentina. 28

This ode is of a higher standard than many of Zanella's patriotic poems, not merely because he avoids "propagandistic" patriotic rhetoric, but also because he shows a greater concern with stylistic excellence. Here, Zanella maintains a historical perspective, as he pays tribute to the sacrifices of Italy's martyrs and assesses their significance as an example for the future.

The opening lines set the scene by describing, in a calm, idyllic tone, the view from Monte Berico in 1871, when the monument, mentioned in the title, had been erected. Zanella goes on to describe the wonder, compassion and admiration which the sight of the monument would evoke.

These two sestine heighten, by contrast, the impact of the physical reality expressed in ll.13-24:

Più morbidi i giacinti  
Vide aprile sbocciar sulla pendice;  
E de' gentili estinti  
Negli squarciati petti la radice  
Abbeverata, più brune le rose  
Il sen fregiar dell'eretiche spose.

L'erba i vestigi asconde  
Dell'umano furor: la pia frescura  
Delle serpenti fronde  
L'ellera stende sull'infrante mura;  
E dove arse maggior l'ira nemica  
Più folta al vento tremola la spica.

for, apart from the testimony of the monument, whose necessity is stressed in ll.25-28, the only visible reminders of the dead heroes are the roses and the ears of wheat, nourished by the blood which has been shed. This whole contrast is highlighted by the "gentleness" of the

27. The combination of patriotism and universal, humanitarian sentiments, as well as compassion towards both friend and foe, will later also find expression in the novel, Il mondo di Dolcetta (1895), by Mario Pratesi (1842-1921)—"L'autore è patriota ... ma ha anche inclinazioni da socialista umanitario ... Le due diverse passioni si incontrano nel capitolo 'Alla Certosa' dove la consapevolezza della guerra giusta contro 'l'Impero maledetto che si reputa il proprietario d'Italia' si unisce all'accorata considerazione delle 'spoglie dei tre eserciti combattenti' confuse 'nel medesimo sangue umano' " (Cattaneo, p.384).

28. Poesie scelte (1957), p.88.

vocabulary—"mobidi", "giacinti", "aprile", "sbocciar", "gentili esinti", "L'erba", "La pia frescura", "L'ellera"—and the dignity and elegance of the Classical style.

In ll.31-42, Zanella once again stresses the difference between the almost bucolic, pastoral scene of 1871 and the noise and clamour of the battle of 1848. Up to this point in the ode one can see how Zanella has effectively intertwined these two "strands"—the idyllic, peaceful present-day scene and the stark horror and bloodshed of the battle—so that they complement and highlight each other. In addition, his ability to adapt the settenari and endecasillabi to appropriately convey both moods is an obvious reason for the poem's effectiveness. As on other occasions, Zanella attenuates the gravity of the subject and the sombre mood, which pervades the whole work, by using the sestina—more usually associated with lighter or satirical themes—and by combining settenari and endecasillabi. To have used only the former might possibly have undermined the poet's earnestness and the seriousness of the subject, while employing the latter could, just conceivably, have tended towards the opposite effect. Moreover, the exclusive use of either metrical form could have detracted from the ode's subtle nuances, such as the sense of urgency and tension, which the poet so ably injects into the description of the battle and its aftermath, ll.43-96, mainly through the alternation of settenari and endecasillabi, aBaBCC.

Virtually half the poem, ll.43-96, is a description of the battle. Ll.49-54,

O qual di schiera in schiera  
Grido trascorse allor che dalle valli,  
Che il Sol riscalda a sera,  
Il tuon si udì de' barbari metalli  
Approssimarsi; e manifesto al guardo  
Sulle vette spuntò l'ostil standardo!

are an appropriate example of how effectively Zanella depicts it. In this sestina, the approach of the enemy forces is very forcefully and vividly conveyed in two main ways: through auditory and visual imagery. The former is heightened by the repetition of "schiera in schiera", the alliteration of "ll", the rhyming of "valli" and "metalli", the quasi-onomatopoeic overtones of "metalli" and the way in which this noun, coming at the end of the line, is stressed by enjambement. The clamour produced by the enemy troops is also amplified by being referred to as "tuon", while "metalli" is given a rough and strident nuance through the adjective "barbari". The visual imagery in ll.53,54 is underlined by the emphasis on the word, "guardo", through enjambement and through its rhyme with "standardo", which not only symbolises the enemy forces and what

they stand for, but is also the first thing which the Italian troops will see of their Austrian foes. Another noteworthy feature of this strofa is the position of l.51 with its pastoral tranquillity. Coming, as it does, between "Grido" and "tuon" this line enhances, by contrast, the effect of both nouns. It is almost as though the beauty and peace of Nature, heightened by the majestic warmth and radiance of the sun, were being compared with Man's cruelty and stupidity, as exemplified, at their worst, in warfare.

The importance of the battle and the determination and heroism of the Italian forces are all concisely conveyed through a comparison with the Greeks at Thermopylae<sup>29</sup> ll.55-60, while the numerical superiority of the Austrians ("... il nemico ... a flutto a flutto ascende;", l.64) and the insidiousness of their attack are effectively depicted by being compared with a "... smisurato/Serpe ..." ll.61,62.

Calcaterra has indicated the Petrarchan reminiscence of l.69 "Virtù contro furore":

È verso celebre della canzone Italia mia di Francesco Petrarca, qui ripetuto dallo Zanella come per ribadire che il valore non era affatto morto e che nella battaglia del Monte Berico gli Italiani ne avevano dato fulgida prova:

"Vertù contra furore  
Prenderà l'arme, e fia 'l combatter corto,  
Chè l'antiquo valore  
Ne l'italici cor non è ancor morto".<sup>30</sup>

While ll.94-96,

... e l'ululato  
Dalle tue vie deserte e taciturne  
Ripetean ... l'aure notturne.

are very Virgilian—in fact, the Classicism of the whole ode is very striking, both in terms of style and vocabulary—ll.97-99,

L'are de' nostri eroi  
Qui stanno, o giovanetti. A' forti esempi  
L'alma infiammate ...

are reminiscent of Foscolo, I Sepolcri, ll.151-2, "A egregie cose il forte animo accendono/l'urne de' forti ...".

Zanella concludes the poem by exhorting the youth of Italy to be worthy of the sacrifices of her martyrs, such as those whose heroism is commemorated by the monument which inspired the poem.

Patriotism and regional pride merge in the simple, unpretentious sonnet, Per le lapidi poste in Parigi sulle case già abitate da Goldoni e

29. Cf. Fogazzaro (Poesie), p.506—Per la esumazione dei Caduti nella battaglia di Vicenza sul Monte Berico il 10 giugno 1848, ll.25-30, in which Fogazzaro also compares the valour of the Italians to that of the Greeks at Thermopylae.

30. Poesie scelte (1957), p. 90 note (5).



da Manin 1877, in which Zanella thanks Paris for paying tribute to two great Venetians: Goldoni, "... sulle scene con leggier flagello/Lepido castigò le colpe umane;", ll.3,4, and Manin, "... in toga al Leon franse l'estrane/Catene e ricompose artigli e vello;" ll.5,6. The poet adds that this gesture, explained in the title, will serve to increase the gratitude Italy feels towards France, for the latter's help at Magenta and Solferino. The undistinguished nature of this sonnet is, perhaps, partly due to the fact that it is, in effect, an occasional poem.<sup>31</sup>

In the following year, 1878, Zanella was virtually forced to deal with a matter of national importance, the death of King Victor Emanuel, in the quartine, In morte del Re d'Italia. That Zanella did not include this work in the fourth (1885) edition of his poetry is not surprising when one bears in mind that it was, in effect, an occasional poem composed at very short notice:

"Poche ore dopo la tua partenza—scriveva lo Zanella al Lampertico il 14 gennaio 1878—un telegramma di Protonotari mi chiedeva qualche verso sulla morte del re d'Italia per l'Antologia. Nella notte scrissi queste strofe, che usciranno domani nel fascicolo di quel periodico." 32

The most effective part of the poem is in the first two quartine,

"Lanciai la nave all'onda:  
Spirar da tutti i lidi  
Alle sue vele io vidi  
Aura seconda;

Più giovin mano al porto  
Ora la scorga". All'acque  
Vorse ancor l'occhio e giacque  
Il nocchier morto.

ll. 1-8,

where the important rôle of Victor Emanuel in Italy's Risorgimento is very aptly compared to that of a helmsman. Having been the first King of Italy, he had indeed launched the ship of state.

Zanella's tribute to Victor Emanuel continues with an appreciation of the freedom now enjoyed by all Italians, ll.9-16, as well as anxiety about the future, now that he will no longer be there to guide the nation, ll. 17-24.

The poet concludes by expressing the hope that Pio Nono's blessing to the dying King may herald a true reconciliation between Church and State.

Once the immediate political aims of the Risorgimento had been achieved, Zanella was not only concerned with Church-State relations,

31. Poesie (1928), p.497: "Promosse da Antonio Toffoli, compagno d'esilio del Manin e scopritore dell'atto di morte a Parigi del Goldoni, le lapidi furono inaugurate il 22 marzo 1877. Il sonetto fu per la circostanza tradotto in francese da E.Parodi".

32. Ibid., p.502.

but also with Italy's "civilizing influence" and a due reverence for her great heritage. It is understandable, therefore, that in the poem, Per certi filologi tedeschi 1878,<sup>33</sup> he should express his disapproval of, what he saw as, undue, pernicious, German influence on the study of the Classics, as he himself explained in writing to a friend:

"Vedrà ... certa mia tirata contro certi filologi tedeschi, che ridussero lo studio dei classici antichi ad una noiosa anatomia di parole con danno immenso della nostra gioventù, che in altri tempi attingeva da quelle pagine nobiltà di sentimenti e robustezza di pensieri". 34

From a consideration of the first three sestine—aptly referred to, by Arturo Graf, as "Le dispettose sestine Per certi filologi tedeschi ... almeno in parte, un risentimento d'italianità impermalita"<sup>35</sup>—

Sciogliea la vela in un mattin di maggio  
Dalle rive del Baltico un vascello  
Che portava per classico viaggio  
Di tedeschi filologi un drappello,  
Di que' saputi che cotanto strazio  
Fan degli autori dell'antico Lazio.

Gli adoratori dell'inconscia Idea,  
Figli di Barbarossa e di Lutero,  
Alle ninfe dell'Elba e della Sprea  
Allegramente il bacio ultimo diêro.  
Ma pria d'entrar negli alti equorei flutti  
Fêr di caci provvista e di presciutti,

D'uova, d'acciughe e di biscotti a iosa  
Con più botti di birra e d'acquarzente;  
Indi d'Hegel ai mani e di Spinosa  
Raccomandata l'anima, a ponente  
Drizzarono la prora, ove li chiama  
Di non volgar scienza immensa brama. ll.1-18,

it will be obvious that Zanella, without any hint of malice, has given felicitous expression to a rarely-displayed facet of his poetic repertoire, that of humour, wit and irony. These characteristics become accentuated, by contrast, by his usual stylistic perfectionism, Classical elegance and conciseness.

33. Zardo, pp.18,19: "... Per certi filologi tedeschi ... ricordano ... le ottave dei Paralipomeni del Leopardi ...". This is true not only since both compositions are humorous and satirical, but because Leopardi's also contains a patriotic attack on German philology, as Zanella himself pointed out—"... l'amore d'Italia e l'ira contro lo straniero scoppiano frequentemente da' suoi versi, dal primo canto de' Paralipomeni specialmente, ne' quali anche si ride della filologia tedesca ..." (Della lett. italiana, p.204).

34. Poesie (1928), p.252.

35. Ibid., p.X.

Although, as has already been seen in La religione materna 1865, and Per gli ossari in San Martino e Solferino 1870, Zanella had, like Parini, used the sestina in composing odes of high moral content, here he employs it equally effectively for its more usual use in a satirical vein. He does, however, exploit its homely and almost provincial tone, the reassuring "monotony" of its most typical rhyme-scheme, ABABCC—particularly striking is the echoing repetitiveness of the rima baciata, CC, as in ll.5,6, "... strazio/ ... Lazio", where the poet combines conciseness of meaning in the key-words at the end of the line with good-natured humour—and, the broad sweep of the endecasillabo (a shorter metrical form might have been too incisive and mordant), in order to attenuate the irony and avoid malice.

Zanella shows what these German philologists decide to do: "... e concludean che i fatti/Eran maturi; e del valor latino/Spegnere ogn'orma alfin dovea Berlino." ll.28-30, for they realize the inspirational value, through the ages, which the Latin Classics have had, as in the case of the Battle of Legnano:

"Da questi impuri e torbidi ruscelli  
L'itala gioventù troppo ha bevuto;  
E que' nomi de' Scipi e de' Marcelli,  
Di Catone, di Cesare, di Bruto  
Nutrir l'odio immortal donde percossa  
Fu la gloria a Legnan di Barbarossa.

"Benchè Legnano in grazia d'un industriale  
Storico di laggiù nostro seguace  
Più non è grido di vittoria illustre,  
E nelle scole per rossor si tace:  
Più non hassi a temer che di Legnano  
Al nome avvampi un core italiano."

ll.49-60.

The reference in ll.55,56—"Si accenna al prof. Francesco Bertolini che in un lavoro storico sminuì l'importanza della battaglia di Legnano."<sup>36</sup>—serves two important functions: it adds a note of realism, which, by counterbalancing the humorous, fictitious account of the German philologists' journey,<sup>37</sup> reminds the reader of Zanella's serious intention in writing the poem, and, it lends an element of veracity and authenticity to the danger which the poet wishes to highlight.

Zanella then reinforces his argument by pointing out—through the disparaging comments of his fictitious German creations—that the Latin Classics do not merely have their own inherent, patriotic, civic and

36. Ibid., p.252.

37. This finally takes them to an island—inhabited by the poets and heroic characters, both Greek and Roman, of Classical Mythology—which, according to Irene Sanesi (Rumor (1928), p.88), "... sembra, quasi preannunziare la più splendida isola carducciana delle belle, degli eroi e dei poeti".



inspirational value, but have also helped to fertilize the best fruits of Italian literature:

"Sappiam che quelle carte all'Alighieri,  
Al Petrarca al Parini, al Leopardi,  
A quel selvaggio Foscolo, all'Alfieri  
Fonte fûr di pensieri alti e gagliardi;  
Sappiam come riscossa al suon de' carmi  
L'Italia gioventù corresse all'armi. ll.67-72.

Apart from the stylistic qualities already referred to, the poem is very effective in the balanced way in which Zanella presents his case. His ridicule of the "German" view of philology is sufficiently pointed to discredit it, his reference to the specific Italian historian in ll.55,56 (quoted above) helps to show the reality of the threat to Italian patriotism, and finally, the light-heartedness of his whole approach, not only helps to avoid malice, but does not betray any defeatist or alarmist feelings in the poet. In other words, he shows the danger to the study of the Classics as being real enough, but certainly not insurmountable.

In the following year, Zanella wrote the undistinguished verses, Pel busto di Alfonso La Marmora in Padova, 1879, which constitute, in effect, an occasional poem.<sup>38</sup> In paying tribute to General La Marmora, Zanella refers to various events in the former's life which have affected Italy. The General commanded the Italian expeditionary force sent to fight in the Crimea, ll.7-12, and was responsible for negotiating the Italo-Prussian alliance of 1866, which resulted in the union of Venetia to Italy, ll.13-18.

Zanella does not mention the fact that La Marmora was defeated at the battle of Custoza, 1866, but merely states that, although the General had been unlucky in war, he still deserved the nation's gratitude and not the bitterness and rancour which had haunted his last years.

These sestine are among Zanella's most uninspired and prosaic works. They are, in effect, a versification of a short summary of Alfonso La Marmora's life.

Zanella's patriotism emerges strongly in the ode, A Pietro Metastasio 1882, which was also, in effect, an occasional poem.<sup>39</sup>

In these quartine, Zanella praises Metastasio "... perchè non si adorna di 'barbara fronda', ma è tutto italiano"<sup>40</sup> — "Nè di barbara

38. "Compresa nei Discorsi e scritti vari per la inaugurazione del busto del generale Alfonso Lamarmora sotto la loggia Amulea in Padova il 1° giugno 1879, festa dello Statuto". (Poesie (1928), p.259).

39. Poesie (1928), p.268: "Quest'ode fu scritta nella ricorrenza del centenario della morte del poeta melodrammatico".

40. Ibid., p.X.

fronda ombrasti il crine, / Italo cigno." 11.19, 20<sup>41</sup>—and also, because his works were a credit to Italy:

Allor Italo il canto ed il pensiero!  
 Nò, delirando, la corona antica  
 Sfrondava Italia, ancilla allo straniero,  
 A' suoi nemica; 11.45-48.

These lines constitute, in essence, a restatement of Zanella's adherence to the "spiritualistic", Risorgimento ideal that Italy's destiny is to contribute to civilization. For Zanella is saying that, even when under foreign domination, Italy was fulfilling her rôle as a civilizing influence through her artistic achievements, in this case specifically those of Metastasio.

Although included by Zanella in the fourth (1885) edition of his poetry, and, displaying his usual Classical elegance, this ode is certainly not among his best works, not only because it lacks the "compressed vitality", identified by Momigliano as the hallmark of Zanella's art at its peak (cf. p. 215, n. 116), but also because it has a strained, "stilted" and almost tired quality.

## (II) SOCIAL CONCERN

Not surprisingly, once the immediate political goals of the Risorgimento had been attained, Zanella turned his attention increasingly toward Italy's internal social problems, although his concern was not confined to a purely regional or national context, as may be evidenced by his compassion for the plight of Irish emigrants, cf. Il lavoro.

In line with the dual rôles (cf. p. 14) which he ascribed to literature, Zanella "passively" conveyed the reality of the poverty and hardship of the peasants' lives, while the affection and sympathy with which he enveloped his depiction of this rustic world were not merely a sincere expression of his own feelings, but also, together with the favourable light in which the poor were presented, a deliberate, "active" attempt to influence politicians, the bourgeois establishment and the poetry-reading public to deal with the social injustice of the age.

It could be said that Zanella's socialism, in the Christian, moralising tradition of Parini and Manzoni, fused with his progressively insistent desire to portray contemporary reality.

From the endecasillabi sciolti entitled Possagno 1849—

41. These lines have been regarded as constituting an attack on Carducci's Odi barbare—cf. Zardo, p. 39: "Come protesta all'innovazione carducciana, egli scrisse un'ode A Pietro Metastasio, il più ligio alle forme tradizionali e il più armonioso de' nostri poeti ...".

Publicata nel 1854, ma composta nel 1849, dopo una gita fatta, insieme con Fedele Lampertico, a Bassano e Possagno. Nella edizione del 1868 comparve rinnovata in gran parte nella forma ed in un passo anche nel contenuto, là dove ai versi su Napoleone ne furono sostituiti altri suggeriti al poeta dai grandi fatti avvenuti dopo che la poesia era stata pubblicata la prima volta. 42

one can see how Zanella was influenced by, and interested in, contemporary events. This corresponds with the "passive" rôle of literature—to reflect contemporary society and historical reality—in terms of the "Romantic" ethos as described in Chapter 2.<sup>43</sup> The more "active" aspect of literature, its didactic, reforming and moralising function, is also present in Possagno, but to a lesser extent.

Thus, for example, Zanella's concern for the poor and the oppressed is obvious, but his socialism emerges with patronising, paternalistic overtones.<sup>44</sup> He tells the poor workers and artisans of the locality of Possagno to be proud of Canova,<sup>45</sup> who was born there and came from an equally humble and poor background as themselves. He also exhorts them not to be bitter about their deprivations, for their inherent dignity and nobility derive from their hard work and the fact that their hands are not soiled with blood, ll.7-13. Although Zanella values work very highly, one is tempted to ask why, as a priest and a sincere, committed Christian, he did not stress that all men are equal in the eyes of God.

In the second "verse", ll.17-33, there is a theme to which Zanella will return when referring to Leopardi (A un cespo di rose in Napoli, 1878) and Raffaello (A Raffaello, 1883), namely, that Nature reveals her secrets to a truly great artist. The imagery is very hackneyed and mediocre in the case of Canova:

... Fanciullo  
Al cupo rezzo de' castagni antichi  
Qui s'assidea Canova, alla natura  
Le man tendendo desioso ... ll.19-22.

In the third "verse" Zanella points out that "L'innovatrice età" is leading Art away from its usual themes, but he adds:

42. Poesie (1928), p.10.

43. Cf. Ch.2, p. 14.

44. Nevertheless, there is an important difference between the attitudes of Parini and Zanella—"...nel Parini, di fronte al 'giovin signore', improduttivo e vano, c'è un 'terzo stato' nel quale sono ancora confuse quelle categorie sociali che soltanto più tardi si distingueranno in borghesia e proletariato. Nello Zanella del Possagno appare, invece, oggetto di sentimento sociale propriamente il proletariato, poichè le due classi...si erano già differenziate" (Pasquazi (1967), p.28).

45. Ibid., p.22: "Siamo in pieno clima canoviano, cioè in un clima artistico tipicamente veneto, e ... non a caso il poeta sentirà sacre la terra, l'aria e le 'petrose balze' di Possagno, dove appare evidente quanto il Foscolo avesse reso per lui più suggestivo quel mito".



Pur di natura all'inesausto grembo  
 Vergini fantasie chiede l'ingegno,  
 Che de' suoi tempi agli ultimi nepoti  
 Schietta l'immagine tramandar desìa. 11.39-42.

This is, in effect, virtually a restatement of the essence of Zanella's poetica. Namely, that Art should deal with modern themes and subjects, whilst expressing itself in Classical terms<sup>46</sup> and being inspired by Nature. He goes on to pay tribute to Canova's Classical statues, 11.58-79, and it is in these descriptions that the poem really seems to come to life with some very effective and evocative images, as in the following lines:

... carezzevol aura  
 La veste addietro le respinge e mostra  
 Agile nella pietra il passo alato.  
 Vedi la Ninfa che sorpresa al bagno  
 I bei veli raccoglie e si ritira  
 Pauraosa guatando ... 11.63-68.

The delicacy, Classical restraint and sensuality of these lines—which would seem to find an echo in Carducci: "Ove spirava l'aùra gentile", Poeti di parte bianca, 1.105; "... l'agil piede a volo", Primavere elleniche, II Dorica, 1.31; "... il piede/agile ...", Presso l'urna di Percy Bysshe Shelley, 11.5,6; "Visser le ninfe, vissero .../.../Emergean lunghe ne' fluenti veli/naiadi azzurre ...", Alle fonti del Clitumno, 11.91-94—are typified by the phrase "carezzevol aura" 1.63, in which the lingering "caress" of the gentle breeze is stressed by the double "z" which tends to lengthen the line and so make the action seem more persistent.

Similarly in 11.71-75:

Su' nivei lini Citerea riposa  
 Velando gli occhi: Amor tocca la cetra  
 Sòavemente e le lusinga i sonni.  
 In altra parte il disarmo braccio  
 Cinge al collo di Psiche ... 47

the lazy, languorous sensuality of 11.71,72 is well conveyed by the luxury and softness of "nivei lini" and the slowness of the lines, accentuated by the enjambement which stresses the key-word, "riposa".

46. Ibid., pp.24-27. In referring to Zanella's "esigenza di concretezza, di realismo" and to the (stylistic) "imitazioni e riecheggiamenti" (from Dante, Parini, Monti, Foscolo, Leopardi and Manzoni) in Possagno, Pasquazi concludes "Ma dentro questa cornice di classicità il poeta tende a dar vita a un sentimento nuovo".

47. With regard to Prati's collection of sonnets, Psiche (1876), it has been noted that "Il nome e il mito stesso di 'Psiche' predilesse l'arte classica tutte le volte che tentò il sentimento: il gruppo di Amore e Psiche rappresenta un particolare momento dell'arte canoviana e si comprende come attraesse l'elegiaco Pindemonte e lo Zanella stesso" (Pasquazi (1953), p.11).

The gentle tone of ll.72,73—which also seems to be echoed by Carducci: "Lunghi, soavi, profondi: eolia/Cetra non rese più dolci gemiti", Primavera elleniche, III Alessandrina, ll.25,26—enhances the image of the goddess being softly and gradually lulled to sleep by the music of Cupid. Once again enjambement stresses the key-word, "cetra". The long adverb, "Söavemente", does not merely lengthen the line, thereby reinforcing its slowness, but also contributes to the sweetness, delicacy and restraint of the whole scene. The reference to Cupid's "free" arm as "il disarmato braccio", l.74, is unusual and striking.

Once senses that Zanella himself rejoiced in these lines dealing with Classical and mythological allusions and episodes. The final part of this section,

... In alto scote  
La Danzatrice i crotali sonanti,  
E chiama a pace ed a letizia il mondo. ll.77-79,

shows how he viewed this whole world of Classical Mythology as a pleasant escape from the harsh realities of his age—yet again, there is here an interesting "anticipation" of Carducci, for this theme recurs in his poetry, as in the following lines: "Fuggiam le occidue macchiate rive,/ Dimentichiamo", Primavera elleniche, I Eolia, ll.39,40.

This contrast is stressed as Zanella immediately turns to a consideration of a bust of Napoleon:

E tu l'ardor delle battaglie ancora  
Spiri dal guardo e dall'eglogica fronte,  
Vincitor di Marengo ... ll.80-82.

In other words, in l.79 Zanella referred to the "pace" and "letizia" of a bygone Golden Age of Classical Mythology, which he contrasted, in l.80, with Napoleon's "ardor delle battaglie". The poet then plunges deeply into the details of contemporary historical reality. He refers to Magenta and Solferino and says that through these battles Napoleon's nephew has made "Tarda ammenda", for Italy still remembers Campoformio,<sup>48</sup> and grieves for all those soldiers who had died so uselessly in Russia<sup>49</sup> instead of being able to fight for Italian freedom.

Not surprisingly, there are Leopardian overtones as in the expression "bello immaginar", l.103.

The final "verse", ll.103-122, is yet another appeal to the poor of

48. Zanella, like his co-regionists, Foscolo (Le ultime lettere di Jacopo Ortis) and Nievo (Le Confessioni d'un Italiano), naturally felt very strongly about this Napoleonic betrayal of Venice.

49. It is interesting that here Zanella echoes Leopardi's view (as in All'Italia, ll.41-60 and Sopra il monumento di Dante, ll.139-153), whereas his attitude in Domenico o le memorie della fanciullezza, 1871, was seen to be completely different (cf. Ch.3, p.53, n.8).

Possagno to be proud of Canova, who made their birthplace famous for ever with his masterpieces.

The work has an inherent weakness inasmuch as it deals with so many themes—Zanella's paternalistic socialism, Canova, Nature and Art, the Arts and the themes of the new age, Classicism, Mythology and contemporary historical events—which are never fully integrated and almost make the poem seem like a series of reflections.

Whilst being a part of what could be described as the **Classical** trend in his poetry, it provides a strange example of Zanella being torn between his love of the Classical world of Mythology and his own age with all its problems and difficulties. In the broader context of his whole poetic output, it constitutes one of the earliest manifestations of the clash between Classicism and Realism.

Zanella's compassion for the poor emerges with greater urgency and insistence in the ode, Il lavoro 1865, in which he deals with the plight of the Irish immigrants to America. This was a topic of considerable interest throughout Europe and shows, once again, how much Zanella's imagination was stirred by contemporary events.

Calcaterra very aptly identified the fundamental mood and the basic themes of the poem, as follows:

Lo Zanella guardava con ammirazione il miglioramento delle condizioni umane, ottenuto con l'ingegno e col lavoro sulle vie della pace. In quest'ode egli esalta l'uomo che col pensiero e col braccio doma la materia e con l'opera produttiva asseconda ne' secoli la mano di Dio creatore.

L'ode è dunque un inno al lavoro, strumento di progresso e fonte di civiltà. Dinanzi ad esso arretra la barbarie. Sulle terre, lasciate incolte dai selvaggi, scendono i bianchi coloni. Tra essi il poeta celebra con profonda simpatia umana gli Irlandesi, profughi dalla loro isola per la persecuzione religiosa e l'oppressione politica.

Il canto ha intonazione didascalica ed esortativa; ma in più luoghi si apre a vivide immagini. Composto da prima nel 1865 in quartine di senari doppi, tutti piani, fu rifatto in strofette geminate di senari sdruccioli e piani, nel 1885.<sup>50</sup>

In comparing the opening lines of the poem in their earlier form,

Col sole che al monte le cime colora,  
Si leva l'artiere che all'opra ritorna.  
Il mantice stride; l'incude sonora  
A' torpidi intona: Sorgete, che aggiorna.      ll.1-4,<sup>51</sup>

with the final version of 1885,

Nell'ora che roseo  
Il cielo raggiorna,  
L'artiere sollecito  
All'opra rotorna:  
Il mantice soffia;  
L'incude sonora

50. Poesie scelte (1957), pp.18,19.

51. G.Zanella, Versi, seconda edizione, Firenze, Barbèra, 1868, p.84.



A' torpidi annunzia  
Ch'è sorta l'aurora. ll.1-8,

one can see the superiority of the latter, for the brisker pace of the rapid, agile, short senari conveys more effectively the brisk activity which is beginning as the world and Nature come to life after the night. In addition, the insistent rhythm of the six-syllable line and the alternating rhyme (...B...B...E...E) help to reinforce the imagery of the hammer beating on the anvil, l.6. It is interesting that the enjambement between ll.6,7 puts an added emphasis on the epithet, "sonora", due to its position at the end of the line. The word itself, implying a persistent and almost resonant sound—with its slight suggestion of onomatopoeia—also stresses the whole effect. The reference to the fact that this hammer beat awakens people, rather than the more usual cock crowing, helps to highlight the poet's insistence on human industriousness and work. Nevertheless, he also uses these first lines of the poem to introduce the themes of Man ("L'artiere sollecito", l.3) and Nature (the dawn in ll.1,2) and to prepare for his later reference to their cooperation.

Calcaterra has very aptly commented on the second strofa, ll.9-16,

Ne' germi s'insinua  
La luce feconda;  
S'imorpora il grappolo,<sup>52</sup>  
La spiga s'imbionda;  
Di pronuba polvere  
S'impregnano i venti;  
Natura il convivio  
Prepara a' viventi.

as follows: "Il poeta delinea in breve il prodigio della vita. È questa nell'ode la strofa più lirica".<sup>53</sup>

The description of the sun's rays providing energy for growth,<sup>54</sup> ll.9,10, and the effective visual imagery of the grapes turning red and the wheat yellow are an almost "slow-motion" presentation of the way Nature works as she provides Man not merely with sustenance, but a veritable feast. The quasi-sacramental connotation of the wheat and the wine enhance Nature's gifts.

Having dealt with human industriousness in verse one and Nature's life-giving force in verse two, Zanella refers to both<sup>55</sup> in verse three

52. Cf. Pascoli, Myricae, La vite e il cavolo, ll.5,6: "...Aureo s'accoglie/il sol nel lungo tuo grappolo mite:".

53. Poesie scelte (1957), p.19, note (1).

54. Cf. similar imagery in Costantino Nigra's Idilli — Settembre, ll.1-5: "Salve, o sol glorioso! Il grappol biondo/del moscatello pendere/mi fai sul capo. Il raggio tuo fecondo/.../scalda e distilla..." (Baldacci, p.758).

55. The twin themes of the sanctity of work and the products of the cooperation between Man and Nature will also figure in Pascoli's poetry: "E il grano è bello. Ma non fu soltanto/la terra e il cielo, fu la nostra mano./Chi prega è santo, ma chi fa, più santo." LA MIETITURA: E lavoro, ll.1-3).

and then compares them in the fourth and fifth, or rather he views Man's work and art in terms of comparisons with Nature. Just as the sun's rays give life, so Man—"Industre rivale", l.18—transforms "La rude materia", l.19. But the verse degenerate into a proverbial, maxim-like cliché: "La mano che docile/Consente all'idea,/Seconda ne' secoli/La man di Chi crea.", ll.21-24. This is a theme which recurs in Zanella's poetry—cf. Possagno 1849, A Raffaello 1883—through his creativity Man emulates the Creator and so draws closer to Him.<sup>56</sup>

The next four verses are of very mixed quality. Thus, the exhortations of ll.27,28: "Compagni nell'opera/Leviamo la fronte;", and of ll.41,42: "Compagni! Spontanei/Voliamo al lavoro:", are rather naïve and hackneyed, whilst the imagery of ll.37-40,

Tagliata nell'acero  
Sorridente la rosa;  
Serpeggia nel porfido  
La vite frondosa.

is, however, effective in stressing Man's ingenuity as he produces works of art which reflect the beauties of Nature.<sup>57</sup> As Calcaterra has pointed out, these lines also show "... nella pura loro sobrietà ... il gusto della contemplazione zanelliana".<sup>58</sup>

In ll.41-44,

Compagni! Spontanei  
Voliamo al lavoro:  
Il tempo precipita,  
Il tempo è tesoro;

one can see yet again how Zanella has exploited the rapid, agile pace of the senari to convey a sense of urgency, which is here reinforced by the repetition of "Il tempo" and the verbs "Voliamo" and "precipita", while the exclamation, "Compagni!", adds a note of exhortation. The second half of the strofa does not rise above the level of a cliché.

In the seventh verse, ll.49-56, the tone of exhortation is resumed very effectively,

I colpi rimbombino:  
La vita, com'onda  
Battuta dal turbine,  
Più fervida abbonda;  
Se taccia l'incudine;  
Se taccia la sega,  
Il campo rinselvasi  
E pane ci nega.

56. Cf. Ch.4, p.159, regarding the presence of an analogous idea in the verses of Gabriele Rossetti.

57. This is, of course, a theme which recurs in Zanella's writings, cf. Ch.2, pp.32,33.

58. Poesie scelte (1957), p.19, note (3).

as Zanella stresses the vital necessity of work to provide food and maintain the momentum of progress and civilization. Ll. 49 and 53 lead one back to the first verse and especially l. 6, "L'incude sonora"—"rimbombino", apart from its Leopardian associations, is also reminiscent of "sonora" in that it implies an echoing, resonant, persistent sound and also has an onomatopoeic quality—while ll. 53-56 are a very good preparation and transition for the poet's justification of colonialism, as expressed in ll. 57-80.

Calcaterra has shown the significance of Zanella's choice of the word "turbine", l. 51:

"Turbine" ha qui il significato di macchina idraulica. È voce schietta italiana, dal latino "turbinem, turbine" (sogg. "turbo"; rimasto letterario). Nel senso di macchina idraulica è segnalata anche nei lessici storici della nostra lingua. Ma oggi prevale la voce "turbina", dal francese "turbine". Lo Zanella ama qui adoperare il vocabolo italiano... 59

This is an example of Zanella's poetica put into practice, for he refers to a hydraulic machine using a classical word, sanctined by tradition, and not technical jargon, and is glad to employ an Italian word and not the form, "turbina", which derives from the French.

The imagery of ll. 53-56 is taken up, although in a slightly different way, when Zanella describes how the Red Indians retreat from the virgin forest as the European settlers colonise their lands and cultivate them. Once again the rapid, agile pace of the senari is very appropriate to the theme dealt with. In this case it conveys very well the speed and virtual panic with which the Red Indians retreat before the approaching European settlers.

In these lines, 57-80:

Fuggiasco da' margini  
Del verde Missouri,  
Da' boschi, ove suonano  
D'Europa le scuri,

Più degna progenie  
Nel patrio retaggio  
Contempla succedere  
L'ignaro Selvaggio.

Con fumidi aneliti,  
Con ala di drago  
Rompendo la cerula  
Quiete del lago,  
Ascendere orribile  
Con folgori e tuoni  
Contempla il navigio  
De' Bianchi coloni.

Dell'arco, che agli omeri  
Costante gli pende,  
Superbo col vomere  
La terra non fende;



Non tonde la pecora,  
 Non getta la spola;  
 Da' campi, che il videro  
 Già sire, s'invola.

Zanella very ably presents the Red Indian in an unfavourable light. He is shown, by inference, to be cowardly for he does not fight for his land, "Da' campi, che il videro/Già sire, s'invola" ll.79-80, but flees, "Fuggiasco", l.57, before the advancing European immigrants. He is not only unworthy to have the fertile land, "... verde Missouri", l.58, because he does not make good use of it—this apathy is stressed by the repetition of "non" in ll.76-78—but also because he does not fight for what was once his. The fact that he does not seem to love his fertile fields is heightened by the contrast, ll.89,90, with the great sorrow of the Irish peasants on having to leave their land which cannot sustain them, ll.118-120. The inferiority of the Red Indian is encapsulated in ll.65-72,<sup>60</sup> for he is so backward that he is frightened by the smoke, noise and appearance of the European ships.

The last part of the ode, almost half the work, shows Zanella's compassion for the plight of the Irish emigrants. He highlights their desperation, their sorrow at leaving their homes and their courage in crossing the ocean. His ability to concisely portray a situation can be effectively seen, despite its triteness, in ll.91,92: "Nel core la patria,/ Negli occhi il futuro,". Zanella's device of using an "antico vicario" as a mouth-piece has certain advantages. It makes the misfortunes of the emigrants seem more poignant and more vivid, while the maxim-like triteness of these lines is made to seem less obvious and more plausible coming from someone who is offering hope and consolation. Not surprisingly, the importance of Faith, ll.101-104, and the beneficent functioning of Providence, ll.129-136, are stressed. The religious overtones of the almost biblical transmigration of the Irish peasants are also obvious.<sup>61</sup>

As so often in Zanella's poetry, one is forcibly struck by the way in which he develops and combines the various themes. Thus, having first established Man's quasi-religious obligation to make the best possible use of time and the earth's resources, through work, Zanella also points out that mankind's very survival depends upon this:

<sup>60</sup>.Petronio commented on these lines as follows:"Allude ai piroscafi che, simili a draghi,rompendo la pace dei grandi laghi d'America,passano rumorosi e fumosi.La trasfigurazione del vapore—lì del treno—in mostro e drago sarà poi del Carducci in strofe notissime di Alla stazione in un mattino d'autunno;ma anche altrove,nell'Inno a Satana,e poi più tardi in Alle fonti del Clitunno,il Carducci impersonerà nel vapore il progresso industriale e civile del secolo.E cfr....di Praga La strada ferrata".(Petronio, p.478).

<sup>61</sup>.Ibid., p.480.

I colpi rimbombino:  
 La vita, com'onda  
 Battuta dal turbine,  
 Più fervida abbonda;  
 Se taccia l'incudine,  
 Se taccia la sega,  
 Il campo rinselvasi  
 E pane ci nega.

ll. 49-56,

so providing the basis for his condemnation of the red Indians for not fully exploiting their land. This naturally enables the poet to justify the expropriation of the Red Indians by the industrious Irish peasants, for whom he elicits the reader's compassion by highlighting their misfortunes. In other words, the three main parts of the ode—ll.1-56, a tribute to the work ethic; ll.57-80, the justification for colonialism; and ll.81-156, dealing with the Irish emigrants—are well developed and fused.

In Il lavoro one finds an important example, albeit singular and uncharacteristic in Zanella, of the link between socialism, emigration and colonialism which was to figure so prominently in Pascoli.

Paradoxically, Zanella seems to regard European immigrants as having more right to America than the original Red Indian inhabitants, as was seen in ll.61-64:

Più degna progenie  
 Nel patrio retaggio  
 Contempla succedere  
 L'ignaro Selvaggio.

This is the essence of the apologia for colonialism: if the Irish, being more advanced and, therefore, "superior", would be able to make better use of the natural resources of the less-advanced and therefore "inferior" Red Indians, the latter would lose their moral right to their own land. It is a very practical, pragmatic, "materialistic" viewpoint and represents the triumph of "positivism" over the moral values of the "spiritualistic" philosophy of the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>62</sup>

62. A condemnation of colonialism and a belief in the moral right to independence of all peoples were in line with the spiritualistic, idealistic, philosophical back-cloth of the Risorgimento (cf. pp. 243, 244), while a point of view, which ignored moral, spiritual values, such as the moral right to independence of all peoples, and was concerned with the best way of exploiting natural resources, could certainly be considered more practical and "materialistic", and therefore closer to the pragmatic ethos of positivism. Zanella used the term, "positivism", to cover various "materialistic" (and, for him, erroneous) ideas and concepts, which were, implicitly or explicitly, hostile to God, religion, spiritual and moral values (cf. pp. 164; 323, 324).

Cf. p. 250, n. 209 regarding an analogous encapsulation of the basic moral dilemma between the Risorgimento ideal of every nation's inviolable right to independence and the pragmatic, "materialistic" advantages of colonial exploitation.

It has already been pointed out that the recurring theme of Zanella's poetic output is that of "spirituality and materialism". It reappears here, although, for once, Zanella seems to adopt the standpoint of the latter.

It is obvious, of course, that Zanella is indulging in an untenable double standard. Whilst condemning the British occupation of Ireland, he heartily approves of the Irish supplanting the Red Indians in America. Zanella was also probably favourably inclined towards the Irish Catholics by a religious bias.

His attitude, as expressed in ll.61-64 quoted above, is unjust, inconsistent, un-Christian and completely contrary to the best traditions of the Risorgimento, as exemplified by Foscolo and Mazzini.

In Zanella's defence it should be pointed out that this is the only example, throughout his poetry, of such a viewpoint. It will be seen in Il taglio dell'istmo di Suez 1866 how Zanella hoped that the Suez Canal would facilitate and encourage communication between the West and the East, so that the latter would become the recipient of the fruits of the more advanced civilization of the West, thus reinforcing the brotherhood of Man. As a priest and a sincere, committed Christian, Zanella believed that all men are equal in the eyes of God. In addition, in the poem Il sonno, published in 1866, the poet expressed his ardent desire that there should be racial harmony in the world.

It is also important to note that this single instance of Zanella's favouring colonialism was not motivated by dreams of imperial grandeur—Zanella wished Italy to fulfil her destiny through her contribution to civilization and progress, and in this case, he was, of course, referring to Ireland and not Italy—but by his compassion for the Irish who were bearing the twin yokes of a foreign occupation and harsh poverty.

A very similar attitude—viewing colonialism as a lesser evil than the inevitable, unpleasant, concomitant results of mass European emigration to distant foreign lands and alien cultures—was later to be found in Pascoli, who combined socialism and colonialism.

In the endecasillabi sciolti, A Fedele Lampertico 1867, there is a further example of Zanella's interest in the contemporary state of society. The poem is, in effect, a social and political comment on Italian society in the 1860s, as may be seen from Zanella's correspondence with Lampertico:

Sino dal 1864—dice il Lampertico nei Ricordi—lo Zanella mi scriveva: "Se potessi fare sull'economia pubblica e dedicarti una poesia che non ti dispiacesse! Mi proverò con tutte le forze; già qualche pensiero mi va balenando in capo". Quando vi si acciungesse non so. Nel 22 dicembre 1867 mi scrisse: "Ho anche racconciato quell'epistola sull'economia che aveva abbozzato: vedrai se possa stamparsi colle altre."



L'abbozzo della poesia parve al Lampertico lo spunto  
di un'elegia intorno ai mali della società presente. 63

The poem consists of five "verses" which complement each other like the movements in a symphony.

The choice of the endecasillabo sciolto was very appropriate, since it enabled the poet to exploit its great versatility to express different moods and themes. Thus, Zanella begins by stressing how quickly time passes and how rapidly changes are occurring—"... Or son fecondi, /Come secoli, gli anni ..." ll.6,7—whilst through the use of the adjective, "fecondi", he is able to show how favourably he views them. He then describes, with a wistfully nostalgic mixture of joy and sadness, his departure from Chiampo at the age of nine:

... Il giorno  
Era de' morti. I flebili rintocchi  
Della campana all'attristato core  
Crescean tristezza. Mal celando il pianto,  
Nell'usato cortil co' vecchi amici  
Sull'imbrunir venuti a salutarmi  
Giocai l'ultima volta. Un cardellino,  
Mio compagno d'esilio, innanzi all'alba  
Cantarellando mi desto: del mondo  
Al paro conoscenti entrammo in via. ll.14-23,

thus establishing that changes can be a tremendous upheaval. This provides an appropriate introduction for the second "verse", ll.24-68, which gives an overall, panoramic view of the nineteenth century, the beginning of which the poet sees as being dominated by Napoleon and Volta. Zanella then refers to the French Revolution, the Napoleonic Wars and the incredible changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution,

... Su poderose  
Ale di foco continenti e mari  
Corse cupida industria: alla parola  
Dièssi il volo del lampo; e convenuti  
A banchetto comun da tutti i venti  
Varî di volto e d'abito i mortali  
La prima volta si gridâr fratelli. ll.62-68.

In these lines one finds Zanella's approval of the benefits which could accrue to mankind from scientific discoveries, an element of wishful thinking with regard to universal brotherhood—this was after all the age of social upheavals in Europe and colonialism in the Third World—and the very slightest hint of doubt and misgivings which Zanella felt about the very rapid, incipient industrialization. This is summed up in his reference to "cupida industria", l.64. It is interesting that in his later works, for example, the sonnets of Astichello 1880-1887, he would in fact question the benefits of industrialization.

The tone and mood of ll.32-36,

... Sovra le piazze,  
 Di strana arbore all'ombra e fra le danze  
 Della folla beffarda, arser gli stemmi  
 Che d'infiniti spazi il titolato  
 Sir dalla gente divideano ...

which Zanella uses to illustrate the way in which the social structure of the ancien régime was crumbling, seem to anticipate the dramatic realism of Verga, as in his description of a Sicilian peasant revolt:

... La folla spumeggiava e ondeggiava davanti al casino dei "galantuomini", davanti al Municipio, sugli scalini della chiesa: un mare di berette bianche; le scuri e le falci che luccicavano. 64

The three remaining "verses" constitute variations on the same basic theme—Zanella's abhorrence of poverty and injustice.

In the central part of the work, ll.69-101, he states that he does not wish to be like a "Barbogio vate" who condemns the present age, yearns for the bygone age of Saturn—precisely what Zanella himself will do in the Astichello sonnets, when the optimism and enthusiasm of the 1860s will have turned to disillusionment—and "Dell'arcadiche selve e di Fileno/Per la bella Amarilli i lai ricanta," ll.70,71. With bitter irony Zanella puts into a realistic perspective the hardships of the peasants, which he associates with the backwardness of the past:

... Che se la fame,  
 Quando l'angusto campicel negava  
 L'annua raccolta ...

...  
 I coloni nel verno a centinaia  
 Implacata mietea ...

ll.84-89,

and concludes,

Pianga gli agi cresciuti: de' misfatti,  
 Onde il secolo è reo, ricchezza incolpi;  
 E madre di virtù, sola maestra  
 D'aureo costume povertà saluti.

ll.98-101.

In the penultimate "verse", ll.102-138, a strong moralising tone emphasizes the strength of feeling behind the poet's pronouncements:

Sommo de' guai che attristano la vita,  
 E povertà che con ferro e con foco,  
 Come sozzo mortifero serpente,  
 Fugar conviene ...

ll.116-119.

The moralising tone gains the ascendancy as Zanella stresses the link between material and spiritual welfare, ll.134-138. There are also paternalistic overtones as the poet fervently hopes that the "umil volgo" will be taught to avoid gambling and drinking.

64. G.Verga, Novelle rusticane, Libertà, p.332 from the collection Tutte le novelle, Milano, Mondadori, 1971.

The final part of the poem, ll.139-170, continues in the same vein. The most noteworthy part, where Zanella makes a stinging attack on hypocrisy,

... A me sgomento  
Opulenza non dà, che guiderdone  
È d'industria e saper: l'invida io temo  
Losca ignoranza che squallore ed ozio  
Copre col manto di virtù celeste; 11.162-166,

is followed by the closing lines which degenerate to the level of an occasional poem,

Tetro, deforme, sciaurato mostro,  
Contro cui colla penna e più coll'opra  
Tu, generoso delle plebi amico,  
Sì frequenti e gagliardi i colpi assesti. 11.167-170.

Although, as so often in Zanella's poetry, the overall organisation of the poem and the development of the themes are noteworthy, as is the way in which Zanella adapts the endecasillabo sciolto to deal with different themes and moods, it must be admitted that the uneven quality of the work, its length, its repetitiveness and the poet's tendency to descend to the level of sententious, moralising platitudes weaken the poem's effectiveness.

The themes touched upon in this poem and in A Camillo Cavour, also of 1867, were of central importance in the context of the contemporary, political, social, cultural and philosophical forces, which were to have such an important impact on the differing attitudes to "reality" of the various writers, poets and literary currents of Italian Literature in the second half of the nineteenth century.

The feeling of anticlimax after Italian unification in 1861, followed soon afterwards by the death of Cavour, the humiliation and wounding of Garibaldi at Aspromonte in 1862 and the high expectations of 1866—"La guerra del '66 avrebbe dovuto affermare il prestigio militare del Regno d'Italia tanto che l'ipotesi di un compromesso, con l'acquisto del Veneto in cambio della neutralità, dopo qualche trattativa finì per essere respinta."<sup>65</sup> —which were to be so cruelly dashed (Custoza, Lissa), were all factors which were to have a profound, albeit different, effect on, for example, Carducci—"Il suo classicismo esce dal generico e si va determinando, specialmente dopo i fatti di Aspromonte e sotto la spinta dell'insorto furioso anticlericalismo, come materialismo e antimisticismo sul piano ideologico e sul piano letterario come realismo, se non addirittura verismo."<sup>66</sup> —and the Scapigliati:

65. Cattaneo, p.269.

66. Salinari, p.682.



Praga, nella sua prima raccolta, Tavolozza, del '62, ha due poesie d'ispirazione patriottica ... e invoca la prossima liberazione di Venezia e di Roma; ma, dopo aver preso parte con Boito e il musicista Faccio alla campagna del '66, respingerà sdegnosamente qualsiasi impegno ideologico della sua poesia ... 67

In addition, the many problems facing the young kingdom and the very rapid changes taking place in society were to result in the "withdrawal" of the Scapigliati and their "rejection of reality":

Alla tensione degli anni eroici, finalmente cacciato lo straniero, subentrava la piccola politica quotidiana, la gestione noiosa degli affari. Tanti, troppi problemi erano ancora da risolvere! ... In queste condizioni, di fronte ad una società in fase di rapidissima e drastica evoluzione, è evidente che gli intellettuali si trovarono a disporre di un'area sociale molto limitata ... la sensazione acuta e angosciata del loro isolamento e della loro impotenza, li portarono spontaneamente alla ribellione contro i poteri sociali costituiti e contro gli idoli della tradizione culturale, nel tentativo di formulazione di un'arte di rottura e di avanguardia. 68

In effect, it may be concluded that:

... questa lotta contro il potere ufficiale e contro la normalità, è anche la costante del costume della Scapigliatura, quale si espresse, con drammatica coerenza, in una serie di personaggi autentici: il disprezzo della morale corrente, l'anticlericalismo e l'irreligiosità blasfema, l'erotismo ribelle, le pratiche "maledette" dell'alcool e della droga; infine, contestazione estrema, il suicidio, perpetrato deliberatamente ... 69

The philosophical back-cloth of the second half of the nineteenth century was dominated by positivism, which was introduced into Italian culture by Pasquale Villari's article, "La filosofia positiva e il metodo storico", in the Politecnico (January, 1866). The real "Age of Positivism" in Italy was, in effect, to coincide with the reign of King Umberto, 1878-1900.

Nevertheless, positivism was beginning to assert itself and almost seemed to be fusing with more traditional Risorgimento values to inform the national mood or, more accurately, the fundamental, mainstream, "official", cultural background:

Nel quadro della "rigenerazione nazionale" ebbe naturalmente molto rilievo il compito educativo affidato alla letteratura della nuova Italia. Si trattava di "fare" gli Italiani; di qui il tono moralistico, pedagogico, divulgativo della cultura letteraria e scientifica. Al di sopra di tutto era la patria ("L'Italia avanti tutto! L'Italia sopra tutto!"); seguiva la monarchia che l'aveva unificata e l'esercito che era stato il suo strumento. Si vagheggiava da parte degli spiriti illuminati le più seducenti conciliazioni: della religione con la patria e della religione con la scienza. Il paese era povero e gli Italiani dovevano essere educati alla morale del sacrificio e all'obbedienza; l'unità non era del tutto compiuta e all'esercito erano quindi riservate

cure particolari. La famiglia rappresentava una patria in miniatura e al centro della famiglia era la figura della madre adoratissima: la letteratura ottocentesca è gremita di madri sante, votate esclusivamente al sacrificio. Tutti gli scrittori italiani furono più o meno consapevoli di questi principi da affermare ma il loro assertore più convinto e di maggiore successo e popolarità fu Edmondo De Amicis.<sup>70</sup>

From Zanella's view of the reforming, didactic, moralising, "active" rôle of literature (in line with the definition of "Romanticism" given in Chapter 2), his insistence upon the value of family life and his exaltation of womanhood and motherhood (cf. Chapter 3), as well as his great eagerness to promote conciliations between Science and Faith, as in Sopra una conchiglia fossile 1864, and Church and State—as in Ad un amico abile suonatore di pianoforte, novembre 1848, La pace di Venezia fra Papa Alessandro III e l'Imperatore Barbarossa 1878, In morte del Re d'Italia 1878, and, A Leone XIII 1887—it is obvious that he was very much in line with the "official", cultural background and diametrically opposed, in almost every sense, to the Scapigliati. Although he and Carducci were both concerned with dealing with "reality" and socio-political events in their poetry, they had very different ideological and philosophical viewpoints, while even their adherence to a Classical, stylistic framework was based upon differing motivations.<sup>71</sup>

Guido Mazzoni points out that Zanella's Versi 1868 were so well received that he was "... acclamato della nuova Italia poeta principe". The reasons he gives for this include the following "... i sentimenti religiosi e politici, cattolici senza superstizione, liberali dentro il cerchio delle opinioni moderate, pei quali lo Zanella si presentava cantore della desiderata conciliazione fra fede e scienze, tra Chiesa e Stato ...".<sup>72</sup>

Elizabeth Greenwood<sup>73</sup> has very aptly shown Zanella to have been part of the moderate, liberal, Catholic, Neo-Guelph current, while Baldacci, in his survey of nineteenth-century Italian poetry, places Zanella amongst those poets who dealt with "La poesia della 'nuova Italia'", including, for example, Costantino Nigra, Felice Cavallotti, Mario Rapisardi, Olindo Guerrini and Giuseppe Aurelio Costanzo. These poets, who were very concerned with Italy's post-unification social problems and injustices,

70. Cattaneo, p.427.

71. Cusatelli, p.560: "... bisogna ricordare che le istituzioni classicistiche non erano per lo Zanella una piattaforma polemica, come per Carducci e i suoi 'Amici pedanti', ma poggiavano saldamente sull'ideologia cattolica, anzi, facevano tutt'uno con essa; l'essere classicista non implicava necessariamente, per lui, il proposito di una restaurazione".

72. Mazzoni, p.1381.

73. Greenwood, pp.213-244.

were aware of "... l'insufficienza degli ideali romantici pratiani" and "la recondita tara della scienza positivistica ...".<sup>74</sup> The social concern of these poets had been anticipated by the Romantic letteratura domestica e rusticale of the first half of the century. Drawing its initial inspiration from Manzoni's concern with il mondo degli umili, the works of Grossi and Manzoni's followers, it included the contributors to Rivista Europea, such as Tenca, Correnti and Carcano, as well as other writers forming part of the Venetian tradition—a priest, named Lorenzo Crico, Francesco Dall'Ongaro, Caterina Percoto, Nievo and Luigia Codèmo.

In fact, it could be said that "... la Percoto ... il Carcano ... il Nievo ... il Dall'Ongaro ... dal 1840 al 1860,—sino, cioè, agli scritti della trevigiana Luigia Codèmo ... preannunciano, attraverso l'ammirazione iniziale per George Sand e la soggezione finale verso la grande arte del Balzac, il più tardo ingresso in Italia della letteratura naturalistica".<sup>75</sup>

Just as Verismo was to manifest itself in such strongly regional terms, it would not be unreasonable to assume that Zanella would not have remained untouched by the impact of the above-mentioned, pre-veristic Venetian tradition.<sup>76</sup>

Zanella's increasing concern with social and political problems, in the poems yet to be dealt with in this chapter, as well as his dismay at the erosion of Risorgimento values, matched by the gradual ascendancy of positivism and scientific materialism, were all factors contributing to the sense of disillusionment, evident in the poems written towards the end of his life, which was, in many ways, an anticipation of the Mal du siècle, the crisis of confidence in Western Man, at the end of the nineteenth century.

One of the most important problems confronting not only Italy, but the whole of humanity, was that of social inequality and injustice, which Zanella dealt with in two odes of 1869.

In Alle acque minerali di Recoaro, he points out that the spring at Recoaro, which provides the mineral water, does so equally for everyone without making the unfair distinction between rich and poor which human beings make:

Dalla vegliata grotta  
Sgorghi, o pia linfa, eguale,  
Quando bolle il meriggio e quando annotta;  
Nè, come crudel rito è del mortale,  
Il refrigerio amico  
Che al potente abbondò, neghi al mendico.      11.1-6.

74. Baldacci, p. XXXV.

76. Carcano was, of course, from Lombardy.

75. Romagnoli, p. 99.



The impact of the poet's outrage at human injustice, l.4, is heightened by the contrast with the much lighter tone of ll.1-3. By inference, the poet indicates the vital, life-giving qualities of the water, "linfa", which is, after all, a God-given ("pia") gift to Man, provided by beneficent Nature at all times, l.3.

In considering this work, one is forcibly struck by the paramount importance Zanella gave to the overall balance, harmony, unity and structure of a poem, as well as to his choice of the most appropriate rhyme and metre.

Thus, the symmetry of the ode—the first two strofe are repeated so that they constitute the central and final parts of the work—is not merely superficial, but is an integral factor in the poem's effectiveness. The repetition of ll.1-6 is important for several reasons. These lines contain the poet's main theme, which is, of course, reinforced by being repeated. In addition, their recurrence shows their importance for the poet and they are reminiscent of a chorus in a play and even of a liturgical response. The contrast between "potente" and "mendico", l.6, is expanded in a stark, illustrative, Parinian contrast between the rich, ll. 7-18, and the poor, ll. 25-36.

While a "rustico sedile"<sup>77</sup> bears silent testimony to the carefree, happy, relaxed attitude of the former:

Sotto il marmoreo chiostro,  
Sovra l'aperto spazio  
Striscian faldiglie di velluto e d'ostro;  
  
Di rubino a vedersi e di topazio  
A donne e cavalieri  
Splendono in pugno i roridi bicchieri.  
  
Il cicallò gentile  
De' placidi drappelli  
Ode fra l'ombra il rustico sedile;  
  
Mentre al suon della frusta i somarelli  
Stendon le groppe al corso  
Con la più balda gioventù sul dorso.      11.7-18,

the Moon watches as the poor stealthily go and drink at night,

Quando i comuni balli  
Fervon nei chiusi tetti  
E maligna la brezza è delle valli,  
  
Di timide villane emunti aspetti,  
Ch'egual miseria aduna,  
Per la selva passar vede la Luna.  
  
Han l'opra in man: bisbiglia  
Le preci giornaliere  
Coll'egra madre la robusta figlia;  
  
Alla sfinita suocera il bicchiere  
Empie la nuora al fonte  
E le rasciuga col grembiul la fronte.      11.25-36.

77. Cf. Carducci: "rustico sedile", Idillio maremmano, l.48.

The wealthy seem almost **faceless** as Zanella stresses their materialism by concentrating on their rich clothes 1.9, jewellery, 1.10, and luxurious surroundings, 11.7,8. This visual imagery, which the poet uses to convey the materialism of the rich, is complemented by the auditory imagery of 11.7-9, where the onomatopoeia of "Striscian" is reinforced by the alliteration of "s" and the repetition of "st".

As a very effective contrast, Zanella refers to the wretched appearance, stealth, prayers, work, exhaustion and illness of the poor, as well as to their mutual concern for each other and the strength of their family ties, highlighted by the solicitude of the "nuora" for her mother-in-law.

The personification of the Moon, 1.30, which merely observes without intervening in the affairs of mankind, serves to remind one of Nature's beauty and indiscriminate generosity as against men's cruelty and indifference towards each other, which are even more reprehensible when set against the implicit background of Man's free will, stressed by Nature's non-intervention and mute testimony.

Also contributing to the poem's effectiveness is the way in which the lighter tone of 11.1-3 counterbalances the righteous indignation of 11.4-6 and attenuates the gravity of the fundamental theme, without trivialising it. Thus, since the first two strofe, through their repetition, provide the "skeletal" framework of the composition, their balance and harmony become a recurring counterpoint, heightening the impact of the Parinian contrast. Within this "rigid" framework, any inherent tendency towards monotony is counteracted by the unusual rhyme-scheme, abA,BC, and the combination of settenari and endecasillabi, which also helps to moderate the gravity of the subject.

This ode is undoubtedly one Zanella's most underrated poems, not merely on account of its qualities, as outlined above, or the way in which they all combine and complement each other to enhance the total effect of the work, but also because they constitute an excellent example of Zanella's technical craftsmanship, attention to detail and stylistic perfectionism at their best.

The other ode of 1869, Gli ospizi marini, in which Zanella also deals with social injustice, is of a lower standard. This may be partly due to the fact that, as Calcaterra has pointed out, this work is, in effect, an occasional poem:

Nelle prime strofe il lettore avverte oggi che il poeta cerca l'ispirazione: e questa ricerca è in certo modo spiegabile, giacchè egli compose l'ode con rapida penna, quando fu sollecitato a collaborare all'opera provvida degli "Ospizi marini", fondati per la cura dei bambini scrofolosi poveri ... e lo Zanella, che mai non si negava a opere generose, sentendo l'altezza del fine, aveva accolto l'invito. Da que-

sta contingenza deriva quel che l'ode ha di quasi estemporaneo nell'intonazione e nelle connessioni, specialmente nelle prime strofe, esteriormente sonanti, cioè retoriche.<sup>78</sup>

The fundamental theme of the poem is that these "bambini scrofolosi poveri" are asking for health from the sea.

Zanella begins by trying to highlight the plight of these poor, unfortunate children through a negation,

All'onda, che blanda  
 Gli mormora al piede,  
 Disutil ghirlanda  
 Di perle non chiede;  
 Non chiede di porpore  
 Inane tributo  
 Il bimbo sparuto.

ll.1-7.

By showing that the children are not asking for jewels or riches, the poet predisposes the reader to see their later request for health as reasonable. The choice of the adjective, "sparuto",<sup>79</sup> is particularly effective. It conveys with concise, stark realism the very thin, frail condition of these children. The reference to a single child makes the image more evocative, for it, as it were, seems to focus and concentrate the reader's attention on a particular individual, supplied by the reader's imagination, rather than presenting the picture of a horde of anonymous children who would merely merge into an amorphous, collective mass in the mind's eye. The presentation of a single, desolate, solitary figure is more effective in stimulating compassion—"La poetessa Erminia Fuà-Fusinato, pregandolo di scrivere per quell'opera benefica, gli aveva detto che 'Orfeo avrebbe mosso uomini e pietre', che, cioè, la poesia avrebbe indotto all'aiuto anche le anime sasse, i cuori duri come pietre;"<sup>80</sup>

Zanella then indirectly attacks the callousness of mankind, for the merchant ships bring back jewellery, fabrics and exotic perfumes to satisfy the greed of "Avari mercanti", l.14, and gratify rich young girls, who are only concerned with enjoying themselves and going to dances.

In the next three strofe, Zanella presents the poem's fundamental theme—"Ma questi tapini" l.22, "Domandan salute" l.42—but increases its effectiveness by "splitting" it. In the intervening lines, the poet contrasts the mothers' despair at the state of their children with an idyllically happy, calm scene: "... la brezza/De' rosei mattini/I prati carezza," ll.23-25; he then shows the terrible and pitiful condition of these children, ll.29-35, before finally "completing" their request for health from the sea, ll.36-42.

78. Poesie scelte (1957), pp.55,56.

79. Cf. Pascoli, Il giorno dei morti, l.11: "... per mia madre gracile e sparuta,".

80. Poesie scelte (1957), p.55.



As if to justify this, Zanella describes the ever-renewing, vital impulse of Nature:<sup>81</sup>

Si mesce co' venti;  
Perenne, fecondo  
Per l'ampie correnti  
Che fasciano il mondo,  
Si volve lo spirito  
Che innova il creato  
Col pronubo fiato.

Dagli antri sonori  
Che il musco riveste, 82  
Tra viscidì fiori  
E frali foreste, 83  
Si vibra, si turbina,  
Anela all'uscita  
Gigante la vita.

ll.43-56,

and the agile pace of the senari helps to convey the life-giving force and energy and reinforces all the verbs which describe rapid movement.

It has already been seen (Chapter 3, p. 84) that Calcaterra regards the theme of Nature, life and the universe continually renewing themselves as being of central importance in terms of Zanella's poetic vision. With regard to Sopra una conchiglia fossile, Calcaterra expresses his appreciation of it as follows: "La bellezza dell'ode sta nella splendente fusione fantastica delle immagini, con cui è rievocato il mattino della Terra; sta nel senso di giovinezza perenne, con cui è sentita la vita..."<sup>84</sup>

It is interesting, therefore, to find that Giambattista Salinari considers analogous themes to have been of fundamental importance for Carducci:

Il cosiddetto paesaggio carducciano o la sua lirica naturalistica non è che un modo diverso di rappresentare quello che era uno dei suoi più profondi sentimenti, il senso della vita al suo primo sorgere, quando appare in tutta la sua forza espansiva, in tutta la sua purezza e tutt'una col ritmo vero e normale dell'esistenza universale. 85

Momigliano in referring to Gli ospizi marini, feels that Zanella's evocation of Nature, precisely in terms of its vitality and healing qualities, constitutes the most noteworthy feature of the poem, when compared to Prati's Canto d'Igea:

81. Cf. Prati, Neve (Psiche, 1876), l.11, "... Iside ...", defined as "la potenza creatrice della natura ..." (Baldacci, p.656), and Quando (Iside, 1878), ll.31,32: "... l'anima/d'Azzarelina", which symbolises "la vita cosmica di tutta la creazione" (Baldacci, p.674).

82. Cf. Manzoni, Adelchi, (primo Coro), "Dagli atrii muscosi ...".

83. Ll. 52,53 ("Tra viscidì fiori/E frali foreste,")—cf. Janni, Vol.II, p.464: "La vegetazione degli 'antri sonori' sottomarini. Ricordare del Carducci, nell'ode Alle fonti del Clitunno: 'Ride sepolta all'imo una foresta—breve e rameggia immobile'".

84. Poesie scelte (1957), pp.7,8.

85. Salinari, pp.701,702.

Gli ospizi marini cantano il mare che risana; e, per qualche motivo, ricordano il Canto d'Igea del Prati, a cui rimangono inferiori per originalità d'impostazione e vivacità di complesso: ma nel ritrarre le forze rigeneratrici della natura trovano accenti netti e gagliardi [there is a footnote referring specifically to the strofa beginning "Da gli antri sonori" che mancano al romantico Prati anche nel momento più classico della sua attività poetica. 86

In order to highlight Nature's energy and vitality, Zanella contrasts it with the ills of humanity:

Noi, pallide schiatte  
 Che affanna il pensiero, 87  
 Che assidua combatte  
 La sete del vero, 88  
 Noi frante nell'ansia  
 D'ecclse riscosse  
 Abbiamo le posse.

Varchiamo con foco  
 Deserti e procelle;  
 Pesiamo per gioco  
 I mari e le stelle;  
 Più ratta del folgore  
 Gli spazi trasvola  
 La nostra parola; 89

Ma sotto gli allori  
 Che velan la fronte,  
 D'edaci malori  
 Traspaiò l'impronte;  
 Con mani, che tremano,  
 Stringiamo il bicchiere  
 Che ha colmo il piacere.

ll.57-77.

Once again, the brisk, jaunty pace of the senari is well adapted by Zanella to effectively convey and reinforce different themes, including the frenetic way in which Man searches for truth, ll.59,60, and is haunted by anxiety, ll.58 and 61, as well as the speed of modern travel, ll.64,65, and communication, ll.68-70. The great strides made by science are very well summed up in ll.66,67, where the expression "per gioco" emphasizes the ease with which unheard of and incredible feats are being accomplished. But, continues the poet, mankind does not seem to be benefitting from

86. Momigliano, p.510.

87. Cf. Baldacci, p.717: "58. 'che...pensiero': cfr., di Keats, Ode to a nightingale, ben nota allo Zanella: 'where but to think is to be full of sorrow'".

88. Cf. Prati, Canto d'Igea, ll.73,74: "Salvate oimè! le membra/dal tarlo del pensiero!", (Baldacci, p.630), and ll.93,94: "Progenie impoverita,/che cerchi un ben lontano," as well as Baldacci's comment, "93. 'impoverita': sminuita, resa arida e debole dal 'tarlo del pensiero', alla ricerca d'una chimerica e misteriosa felicità. Perciò il Canto d'Igea è anche, storicamente, appello e preludio al 'realismo' " (Baldacci, p.631).

89. Ll.68-70 are reminiscent of the following from Carducci, Agli Italiani, ll.11,12: "Fulminea voli elettrica scintilla/Per gli oceani".

its newly-acquired scientific knowledge,<sup>90</sup> on the contrary, despite his anxiety and weakness Man is consumed by his thirst for pleasure.

In the last four strofe, Zanella addressess the sea calling upon it to renew mankind and restore it to health. Particularly noteworthy are ll.78-84,

Tu, mare, disserra  
 Il grembo materno;  
 Tu svecchia la terra,  
 Tu, giovane eterno;  
 Sommergi, ritempera  
 Nell'onde lustrali  
 Le razze mortali.

in which "Ritorna ... lo spirito lirico della vita che sempre si rinnova".<sup>91</sup> Here, the poet's presentation of the gentle, beneficent, maternal nature of the sea is stressed by his repeatedly and confidently addressing it with the familiar "tu". In the following strofa,

Dal fondo ruggendo,  
 O mare, sovente  
 Con vortice orrendo  
 Opprimi la gente,  
 Che credula al placido  
 Tuo volto mal fido  
 Discioglie dal lido. ll.85-91,

Zanella adopts a more aloof tone, "O mare", as he describes the dark, destructive, malevolent face of the sea. In both these strofe, he very ably adapts the rapidity of the senari to convey both the energy and pulsating vibrancy of Nature, as well as its destructive power.

The poet adds a further argument to strengthen his appeal to the sea to help the deprived children. He states that their health should be restored to compensate for the cruel deaths of those who have drowned.

Despite the effectiveness displayed by Zanella in his arrangement of the themes and his exploitation of the senari, this poem is not among his very best works. This becomes clearer if one compares it with Sopra una conchiglia fossile. Although both odes have the same rhyme and metre, the qualitative gulf separating them is considerable.

However, if one bears in mind that the poem was composed at very short

90. Cf. Baldacci, p.679, regarding Prati's Incantesimo (Isida, 1878): "Motivi leopardiani (il tedio derivante dalla scienza moderna) si accompagnano a una vivace sensibilità del momento contemporaneo, nel quale il positivismo aveva condotto all'estremo limite di esclusività le ambizioni e le pretese della scienza. La maga, Azzarelina, riesce a rendere all'uomo la possibilità di rivivere la vita della natura e di attingere alla sua unica vera sapienza".

91. Poesie scelte (1957), p.57, note (3).



notice to assist in fund-raising for charity, then the dramatically oversimplified, stark, Rousseauistic clash between the goodness of Nature and the evils of human society<sup>92</sup> is more understandable and justifiable.

This ode is also important for two reasons: firstly, it helps to establish Zanella as an "intermediary link" between Leopardi and Prati, on the one hand, and the views of Carducci<sup>93</sup> and Pascoli, on the other; secondly, bearing in mind its thematic affinities with Prati's Canto d'Igea—defined by Baldacci as "... storicamente, appello e preludio al 'realismo'" (cf. footnote 88, p. 206)—Gli ospizi marini can also be viewed as a subsequent "evolutionary" stage in la via del realismo, between Manzoni and Verga.

Zanella's concern for the suffering of children is also at the heart of the long tale, Il Piccolo Calabrese, written in 1871, for, apart from dealing with a wide variety of themes, such as patriotism, Italy's past, her heritage, her destiny and her rôle in the future, this work was obviously written with a social, reforming purpose in mind. Its main object was to bring to the notice of the public the terrible traffic in children which was taking place at the time. Although this had already been done, as Zanella himself points out,<sup>94</sup> through a novel by Guerzoni, Zanella nevertheless felt the need to make his contribution through this poem. Like so many of the subjects in his poetry, this too may be said to have a certain relevance even today.<sup>95</sup>

The poet's compassion for the plight of the peasants led him to touch upon the Italian problem of emigration, ll. 765-768, 773-780, which he was later to develop more fully, and also to give the clearest indication of his views on the rôle of the nobility in society. The rich, aristocratic, land-owning family of Sir Arturo, his daughter, Elena, and his son, Al-lano, would seem to represent the ideal prototype of the way such a family should behave, according to Zanella.

92. This fundamental contrast between the benevolence of Nature and the evils of human society was present in Leopardi's earliest poems and will recur in Pascoli (e.g. I due fanciulli, and also cf. the preface to Myricae).

93. Cf. Baldacci's view of Prati's Canto d'Igea: "Come ragione remota di questo canto del Prati ... si può pensare al Leopardi e al ricorrente rimpianto per la perdita di ogni possibilità, da parte dell'uomo moderno, di vivere secondo natura. Il motivo è ripreso anche dal Carducci: si veda l'Idillio maremmano. Igea, figlia d'Esculapio, è la dea della salute". (Baldacci, p. 628).

94. Poesie (1928), p. 404.

95. I. Mather, "The misery of the shepherd boy slaves", The Observer, 19th. December, 1976, p. 7.

Thus, although they were rich,<sup>96</sup> they were also generous and, therefore, willing to help the poor, ll.329-336; Zanella hints at a connection between Sir Arturo and Agrarian Reform, ll.351,352; Allano provided instruction for the poor, ll.357-360; whilst, in winter, Elena would provide clothing for the old and the children, ll.361-364, in summer, she would join in the singing after the crops had been gathered, ll.365-368.

It is clear, therefore, that Zanella, like Parini, wanted the reform, not the destruction of the aristocracy. This is, of course, a perfectly justifiable and tenable standpoint, completely in line with Zanella's moderate, liberal views, although the above description of Sir Arturo and his family shows the patronising, paternalistic overtones of Zanella's socialism. While, according to Elizabeth Greenwood,<sup>97</sup> Edvige 1881 and Corrado 1885 were aimed at a wide public and are more distinguished by their length than by their merit, it certainly has to be admitted that because of its sheer length and the monotonous rhyming of the ottave, Il Piccolo Calabrese is inferior to the endecasillabi sciolti of these two shorter poems. Zanella does not succeed in conveying the terrible hardships of Cirillo and other boys in his situation. Despite the sincerity of the poet's intentions, the story seems to lack commitment and has neither the stark realism of Corrado nor the dramatic urgency of Edvige.

And yet it is tempting to conclude, in Crocian terms, that the didactic, moralising, reforming zeal of Zanella's motivation in writing this tale, however praiseworthy it might have been, blighted his impulso lirico and so contributed towards diminishing the poetical value of the work.

The patronising, paternalistic overtones of Zanella's socialism have been evident in several poems. In the sestine entitled Un mattino d'inverno sui colli Berici 1871, however, one can see the spontaneous deep compassion he had for the poor. And yet it is precisely this feeling which some critics have found fault with in this short poem:

Vittorioso il Sol spezza le nebbie,  
 Che sgominate in lieve  
 Falange si dileguano  
 Dietro le selve ancor vacue di neve;  
 E paiono velate monacelle  
 Che in lenta fila tornino alle celle.

Laggiù nella pianura escon dal candido  
 Mar palagi e tuguri;  
 Ritti, come fantasime,

96. The benevolence of the rich landowners towards poor peasants, apart from the illustrious precedent in I promessi sposi, had also featured in Nievo's novel, Il Conte Pecoraio (1857)—"Natale e Maria si sposano e Valeriano Del Campo, ricco proprietario di molte terre, nel prendere possesso anche del castello di Torlano, sarà il benefattore della nuova famiglia e di tutto il popolo contadino del comune" (Romagnolo, p.120).

97. Greenwood, p.336.

Giganteggian dell'alpe i conì oscuri  
 In lontananza; e luccica ad immago  
 D'argentea benda appiè de' boschi il lago.

Tutti gli augelli o valicar l'oceano  
 O nelle grotte occulti  
 Il grigio ciel sogguardano;  
 Tu sol, crollando la brina a' virgulti,  
 Saltelli, o re delle siepi piccino,  
 E conforti di canto il mio cammino.

Picciolo alato alla natura in lagrime  
 Fedel solo rimasto!  
 Così le spalle volgere  
 Suole sovente alla sventura il fasto;  
 E nel tetto dei ricchi, or senza pane,  
 Ultimo amico il povero rimane.

Petronio not only views Zanella's compassion for the poor in negative terms as "facile moralismo"—"Lo scricciolo, che solo rallegra la squalida campagna invernale, lo fa pensare al povero che solo è pietoso al povero. Può essere un esempio di tanta lirica dello Zanella ... in cui l'elaboratissima forma veste un facile moralismo"<sup>98</sup>—but also disapproves of the style and of what he regards as the dissonance between form and content.

His assessment, as expressed above, seems a rather unfair, sweeping statement, especially when one considers that Zanella's socialism (even though in the moralising tradition of Parini and Manzoni—although less patronising than the latter—and primarily inspired by Christianity rather than a purely "political" standpoint) was certainly far more heart-felt and sincere than that of the Scapigliati, as has been shown by Giorgio Cusatelli.<sup>99</sup>

It seems as though the twentieth-century Marxist critic is not making sufficient allowances for the different mentality and approach of a nineteenth-century<sup>100</sup> priest, according to whose poetica poetry should have a reforming, morally-elevating, Christian content expressed within a dignified, elegant, Classical, stylistic framework. Calcaterra makes a more relevant and objective comment on the last strofa (and the poem as a whole):

Artisticamente la parte più debole della lirica è questa strofe, in cui il poeta vuol trarre dalla contemplazione della natura una morale, che è forzata. La poesia si apre come un fiore ne le prime tre strofe. 101

98. Petronio, p.506.

99. Cusatelli, p.508, note (3).

100. A combination of moderate social concern and a moralising attitude characterised the Romantic letteratura domestica e rusticale, as well as the works of Nievo (cf. Romagnoli, pp.121.125), De Amicis, the "official" cultural background (cf. pp.199-201) and the works of later writers (e.g. Enrico Castelnuovo (1839-1915), whose Racconti e bozzetti (1872) had "inclinationi moralistiche" and "tesi sociali di un fautore del progresso ragionevole"—cf. Cattaneo, p.399).

101. Poesie scelte (1957), p.93, note (1).



And yet it is not surprising, since Zanella was a priest and a sincere, committed Christian, that religion and moral considerations should figure very prominently in his poetry, as will be seen in the following chapter. It is interesting in this regard, for example, to consider how Zanella sees the group of clouds, ll.1-6, in terms of a religious connotation, for it reminds him of a procession of nuns. It is, therefore, perfectly understandable, and consonant with his poetica, that Zanella should draw a moral conclusion from his contemplation of the natural scene.

The effectiveness of Zanella's evocation of the winter scene in the first three strofe is not in dispute. Thus, the gracefulness and composure with which the nuns return to their cells are highlighted by the preponderance of the soft consonants, particularly the alliteration of "l" and "ll", ll.5,6.

On the whole, this is probably one of Zanella's most underrated works, when one bears in mind, apart from its other qualities—such as the unusual rhyme-scheme, AbcBDD, which avoids the inherent tendency towards monotony and trivialisation of the more usual, ABABCC, and also gives the work a more "open" and unobtrusively "expansive" and "unrestricted" framework, within which the poet can so effectively portray a vast panorama stretching to the Alps—the way in which he uses the first two sestine to set the tranquil, peaceful, natural scene which heightens, by contrast, the impact of the moral conclusion, prepared for by the "transitional" third sestina.

Among the first poems written by Zanella after the terrible ordeal of his "three-winters'" crisis, is the sonnet, Per laurea in giurisprudenza 1875, in which his social concern is also evident.

The nature of the subject—the real value of a degree—and the fact that it is, in effect, an occasional poem<sup>102</sup> contributed towards the didactic, moralising tone of the work.

The poet, addressing the young graduate, tells him that although gaining the degree has cost him a great deal of time and effort, its real value will depend on what use he makes of it, merely having obtained his degree cannot be an end in itself. He must not use his knowledge merely to make money or seek fame by helping the rich and the powerful, but he should help the poor and widows and then he will find real joy.

It is true that the concentration on the young man's "laurels"—"al-loro", l.2; "l'inclita fronda", l.5; "santo/Serto", ll.10,11—provides a unifying link for the sonnet, but in the last terzina the imagery is rather hackneyed and strained:

102. Poesie (1928), p.486: "Scritto a preghiera del padre Angelo Savignago, che lo pubblicò anonimo per la laurea di suo nipote Pietro Guadagnini".

Se di pupillo dall'inopia affranto,  
 O d'angosciata vedova romita  
 Lo bagnerà riconoscente il pianto.                    11.12-14.

Despite the poet's limited aims in composing this occasional sonnet, it is certainly mediocre in terms of purely technical or stylistic considerations and is more important as an expression of Zanella's views—his compassion for the poor—than for its stylistic features.

Zanella's intolerance of social injustices and his pride in Venice's glorious past found expression in his condemnation of the apathy of the Venetians in the quartine entitled Il grido di Venezia 1877, as is evident from his letter to Alessandro Rossi,<sup>103</sup> to whom the work is dedicated:

"Pensando alla tua portentosa attività, per la legge de' contrarii mi si svegliarono in mente certi pensieri che mi sforzarono a scrivere questi versi. Potesse l'esempio tuo vincere l'altrui torpore." 104

In other words, as far as Zanella was concerned, having attained the immediate political aims of the Risorgimento was not enough for Venice (or Italy), she had to be spurred on by a comparison with her great heritage to strive once more to achieve greatness.<sup>105</sup>

As will be seen, the poem may be said to convey effectively Zanella's underlying feelings in various ways, including the appropriate choice of rhyme and metre and the arrangement and distribution of the themes.

In the first three quartine,

Monta la sabbia al Lido;  
 L'alga nel fondo appare;  
 Alla sua Donna il mare  
 È fatto infido.

Dal dì che la mia mano  
 L'anello non gli dona,  
 Irato m'abbandona  
 E va lontano.

Ad altre rive apporta  
 La carezzevol onda;  
 Lascia a me l'erba immonda  
 E l'acqua morta.                    11.1-12,

103. Ibid., p.97: "Alessandro Rossi, il grande industriale di Schio, uomo di larga coltura e di portentosa attività, fu condiscipolo e cugino del poeta per parte di madre. Nacque a Schio il 21 novembre 1819 ed ivi morì, senatore del Regno, il 28 febbraio 1898".

104. Ibid., p.223.

105. Although Nievo was writing before Italy had been united (1861) or Venice liberated (1866), an important theme in the works of his last decade—"... il tramonto della civiltà veneziana e la nostalgia che ne derivava in chi nelle antiche glorie italiane ricercava le ragioni di una coscienza nazionale ..." (Romagnoli, p.103)—depended upon turning to the glories of Venice's past as a source of inspiration for the future.

the poet establishes the overriding mood of discontent as Venice laments<sup>106</sup> being abandoned by her unfaithful "spouse", the Sea.<sup>107</sup> This shows very clearly the extent of the beautiful city's sense of rejection. There is a gradual crescendo in these opening lines which reaches a climax in the striking contrast of ll.9-12. The Sea's former love and solicitude are concisely and effectively conveyed through the delicate sensuality of its lingering "caress", l.10, which is heightened by the double "z" of "carez-zevol" and the "liaison" with "onda"—both features which tend to "lengthen" the line making the action seem more persistent. The palpable, striking, visual imagery of "l'erba immonda/E l'acqua morta", ll.11,12, shows how the Sea now behaves towards Venice. The stark simplicity of the contrast between ll.9,10 and ll.11,12 increases its dramatic impact, while the fact that it is being presented in the context of a first-person narrative enhances its emotional force and verisimilitude.

This ode is essentially constructed on a series of contrasts. The next one, ll.13-28, shows how much importance Zanella attached to the symmetrical construction of his poems. The fourth and fifth strofe describe, almost idyllically, and without any hint of condemnation, how the young people and nobility spend their evenings in a state of enchanted bliss. This very mildness helps to heighten, by contrast, the impact in the sixth and seventh quartine of the poet's disapproval, with its Parinian undertones of moral indignation, of the way Venetian society, particularly the aristocracy, wastes its time in idleness and the pursuit of pleasure:<sup>108</sup>

Vanno alle danze, al gioco;  
Sonnecchian ne' ridotti,  
Finchè l'eterne notti  
Al Sol dian loco;

Nè veggono da' flutti  
Umili de' cadenti  
Palagi i fondamenti  
Uscire asciutti.

ll.21-28.

ll.25-28 refer to the fact that the Venetians seem to be oblivious of their sinking, structural foundations, which are a symbolic, visual indication of the erosion of their moral fibre,<sup>109</sup> of which they are also unaware.

There then follows yet another contrast between past and present, as

106. Zanella had also used the personification of Venice as his mouthpiece in Venezia a Daniele Manin, nel 1866.

107. These twin themes (the contrast between Venice's past and her present condition, and her "marriage" to the Sea) will be taken up by Carducci in Le nozze del mare. Cf. also Aleardi, Le città italiane marinare e commercianti, ll.307-317—(Baldacci, p.555).

108. Cf. Aleardi, Le città italiane marinare e commercianti, ll.185-188. (Baldacci, p.550).

109. Cf. p.60, n.23.



Venice compares the idle, leisure-loving inhabitants of today with their tough, hardy ancestors who achieved great triumphs through tremendous sacrifices and embellished the city, which is able to exclaim: "E fui regina", l.40. <sup>110</sup>

Venice's sorrow at the hardships, poverty and illness of so many of her sons, ll.41-52, reminds the reader, by contrast, of the city's indignation towards the feckless, idle nobility, ll.21-28, thus strengthening the impact of the comparison between the idyllic fourth and fifth strofe and the "Parinian" sixth and seventh.

As Calcaterra has pointed out: "La parte più potente dell'ode è la chiusa". <sup>111</sup> The effectiveness of the closing lines,

Vicin segnale io sento:  
Il suon d'una campana  
Or viene, or s'allontana  
Al trar del vento.

Udite, o figli, udite?  
I morti di Torcello  
Suonan l'estremo appello;  
E voi dormite.

ll.53-60.

is due to a combination of factors: the poem's most fundamental themes —the contrast between past and present and the immediate need for action, not merely to save Venice from floods and sinking foundations — are restated with a moderation and restraint which accentuates the urgency of the situation and the dramatic appeal from the ghosts of the past, symbolised by Torcello, while the dead seem more aware of the real state of affairs than the living.

The reference to Torcello—"... a dieci chilometri da Venezia, fu un tempo una delle città principali della Laguna Veneta; è oggi un piccolo borgo, solitario e silenzioso, che custodisce i monumenti venerandi dell'antica sua grandezza ..." <sup>112</sup> —is also an implicit encapsulation of the contrast between past and present .

The effectiveness of the ode is not merely due to the distribution and presentation of the themes, but also to Zanella's choice of an appropriate rhyme and metre. While the rime incrociate, ABBA, and the delicacy of the quinario, in each strofa, tend to accentuate the plaintive tone of Venice's lament, the quartine provide the ideal vehicle for a rapid succession of compact, vivid images. The use of settenari, whose versatility and flexibility are fully exploited by Zanella to convey different themes and moods, rather than endecasillabi, adds to the

110. Cf. Leopardi, referring to Italy: "Fu ... allor donna e reina."  
(Sopra il monumento di Dante, l.96).

111. Poesie scelte (1957), p.100.

112. Ibid., pp.102,103, note (3).

compactness of the quartine (as does the quinario with which each strofa ends) so that the resulting conciseness and brevity of each quartina makes the vividness of its imagery even more concentrated and striking. The quinario at the end of each strofa, after three settenari, helps to add an element of variety—thereby counteracting any inherent tendency towards monotony which might have been engendered by the rhyme, ABBA, or the use of four settenari—and also, through its very brevity, reinforces the sense of urgency and need for action, which the poet is trying to communicate.

The Venetians, however, were none too pleased with the sentiments expressed by Zanella in Il grido di Venezia. So the poet tried to make amends with another ode, I cavalli di San Marco,<sup>113</sup> also of 1877. In dedicating this poem to Alessandro Rossi, Zanella wrote:

"Questa volta spero di non dispiacere a que' buoni Veneziani, che si crucciarono meco per quel Grido. In quattro piccoli quadri ho cercato di ritrarre il loro meraviglioso passato, che essi continueranno, quando vogliano secondare i tuoi eccitamenti." 114

Although lacking the tautness, the sense of urgency and the incisive tone of Il grido di Venezia, this ode is effective within the context of poet's limited aims. Once again, Zanella displays his concern with the symmetrical structure of his poems: the ode is divided into four parts, each of which consists of four quartine and corresponds with one of the horses<sup>115</sup> mentioned in the title. Yet again, he uses the quartine to provide a rapid succession of vivid imagery, through which, with the conciseness and effectiveness of a Classicist—as Momigliano pointed out with regard to Sopra una conchiglia fossile and Gli ospizi marini<sup>116</sup>—Zanella evokes a panorama of Venetian art, history and culture, including references to trade (a thousand ships sailing as far afield as Egypt and

113. Cf. Baldacci (p.547)—regarding Aleardi's Le città italiane marinare e commercianti—"133. 'i destrier di Corinto': ... i quattro celebri cavalli bronzei di greca fattura ... Il tema dei Cavalli di S.Marco ispirò anche lo Zanella".

114. Poesie scelte (1957), p.103.

115. Ibid., p.103: "Parlano i Cavalli di San Marco, vale a dire i famosi cavalli, posti innanzi alla Basilica di San Marco, in rame dorato, opera greca del IV-III secolo a.C., facenti parte di una quadriga, che i Veneziani nel 1204, dopo la quarta Crociata, portarono da Costantinopoli, dove adornavano l'ippodromo".

116. Momigliano, p.510: "La parola nei suoi componimenti migliori è vigilata e martellata con un'attenzione che farebbe pensare al Parini, se nella sua precisione non fosse compressa una vitalità più pensosa. Molti dei brevi versi della Conchiglia fossile e alcuni de Gli ospizi marini hanno una significazione larga che solo un classico robusto poteva rinchiudere in un angusto scenario".

Scandinavia), military victories (at Lepanto in 1571 and the Dardanelles in 1687), great admirals (Pietro and Giovanni Mocenigo, Francesco Morosini), architects (Palladio), painters (Titian), and men of letters (Trifone Gabrielli, Pietro Bembo and Andrea Navagero). The whole poem unfolds with a deceptively relaxed and smoothly flowing pace.

In the last section, after referring to the great heroism displayed by the Venetians, under Daniele Manin, against the Austrians in 1848-1849, Zanella concludes by gently and tentatively touching upon the fundamental theme of the previous poem—will the glories of the past act as an inspiration for the future?—

E di Lepanto e di Rodi,  
 Se suprema un'ora arrivi,  
 I leoni ancor son vivi  
 Nell'adriatica gioventù? ll.61-64.

Like his co-regionist, Nievo,<sup>117</sup> Zanella not only dealt with the problems of Venice, as in the two preceding odes, but also with those of the Venetian terraferma. However, Nievo, in Le Confessioni d'un Italiano, had been writing at an earlier time and dealing with different pre-unification, historical circumstances. In the two decades following Italy's independence, the socio-economic and political background had been changing very rapidly:

L'economia italiana attraversava ... un periodo difficile per la crisi agraria iniziata intorno all'80 ... Mutò quindi la funzione dell'agricoltura "come fonte dell'accumulazione di risparmio" che aveva condizionato nel primo ventennio dell'unità l'evoluzione economica: con la contrazione produttiva e la discesa generale dei prezzi l'agricoltura diventò "il settore più d'ogni altro ritardatario, i cui problemi finivano per aduggiare tutta la vita economica del paese". Si trasformarono di conseguenza le basi del sistema fiscale ... La crisi agraria contribuì d'altra parte decisamente ad accelerare lo sviluppo industriale ... "Sotto l'azione di questi fattori convergenti si ebbe allora in Italia ... la nascita della grande industria moderna ..." La crisi agraria colpì in particolare il Mezzogiorno esasperandone l'inferiorità economica rispetto al Nord in piena espansione industriale e condizionando anche ... la miseria e le sofferenze "delle genti meridionali, che avrà la sua espressione più vistosa nel grande dramma dell'emigrazione". 118

117. Cf. Romagnoli, p.121: "... sarebbe forse difficile spiegare la contemporaneità della stesura del Conte Pecoraio e dell'Angelo di bontà se non si ricorresse alla considerazione che essa è già indice di una futura fusione di due motivi, che son poi due miti ambientali, la terraferma veneta e la città di Venezia ..."; and also p.125: "Soltanto nei primi capitoli delle Confessioni d'un Italiano il Nievo riuscirà ad esprimere artisticamente il dramma di Venezia, quando saprà farci vedere il nesso tra la decadenza della capitale ... e la situazione economica e quindi politica ... della terraferma. Proprio partendo dal Friuli agreste e pastorale—che non è soltanto una felice invenzione poetica, ma anche un compiuto esame della decadenza economica delle campagne venete ...".

118. Cattaneo, p.288.



In considering the problems of emigration,<sup>119</sup> Zanella was, not surprisingly, primarily concerned with the peasants of his own region of Veneto. This was, in effect, the subject he dealt with in two odes of 1877—Per un augellino d'America detto il cardinale and Risposta d'un contadino che emigra—which were originally published together "riunite col titolo L'emigrazione dei contadini".<sup>120</sup> Zanella prefaced the two poems with a few remarks<sup>121</sup> in which he regretted that so many peasants from the well-cultivated region of Veneto were emigrating to America, while many parts of Central Italy, Sicily and Sardinia were uncultivated. He went on to praise the practice of certain English noblemen, who, in order to encourage the development of uncultivated land, leased it to peasants for a small annual payment for a certain number of years, after which the land, with any improvements which might have been done to it, would revert to the noblemen. Although this proposal is undoubtedly a practical and feasible suggestion, when compared with Agrarian Reform it does indicate Zanella's paternalistic socialism. His social concern is also tinged with patriotism:

"Questi nobili ed imitabili esempi, [the practice of leasing land by the English nobility] e il dolore e la vergogna che i figli d'Italia siano costretti a mendicare altrove ciò che hanno copioso ed infruttifero in casa, hanno indotto l'autore a scrivere questi versi."<sup>122</sup>

It is easy to see how a similar combination of socialism and patriotism was, later, to lead to a justification of colonialism, as in the case of Pascoli.

In the first ode, Per un augellino d'America detto il cardinale, one is forcibly struck by Zanella's presentation and arrangement of the various themes and arguments he employs in order to try and dissuade peasants from emigrating.

In the first four strofe, the poet addresses a small American bird which is happy to be in Italy. The detailed description of the bird and its movements—as in ll.9-12:

Nella tua conca argentea  
Tuffi e rituffi il dorso;  
Alle pendenti indivie  
Dai con ardor il morso;

—seems to anticipate the great detail with which Pascoli will deal with the same subject.

119. This was a subject which was going to assert itself more and more in literature, as may be seen, for example, in the case of two very different figures such as Pascoli and De Amicis (e.g. in his book Sull'Oceano, 1889).

120. Poesie (1928), p.230.

121. Ibid., pp.230,231.

122. Ibid., p.231.

Zanella, in the next four quartine, then highlights the natural beauty and fertility of Italy, so that he can put the peasants' plans to emigrate in an unfavourable light:

Esce il villano improvvido;  
 Ed alla glebe opima,  
 Amore di Virgilio,  
 Prepon selvaggio clima. ll.29-32.

In order to further discredit the peasants' emigration, Zanella suggests that emigrating can only be justified in the case of the people of Iceland, or those living in the mountainous regions of Germany, where cultivating the land cannot provide enough food to sustain the inhabitants. This section, ll.33-56, acquires greater forcefulness from being centrally situated in the poem. In describing the dangers which these immigrants will have to face in the New World, Zanella's admiration for them is evident in the faster pace of the lines, as the poem seems to come to life:

Date al regnante borea  
 Le pronte vele: i nudi  
 Piani oltre mar vi accolgano,  
 I boschi e le paludi.  
 Là con torrenti e turbini  
 In affannosa pugna,  
 Segno al velen dei crotali  
 E de' jaguarri all'ugna,  
 Nell'alta selva incedua  
 Messe le industri scuri,  
 D'immonda creta e d'aliga  
 Vi ergete gli abituri. ll.45-56.

The description of the danger and hazards of the New World is very ably exploited by Zanella, to highlight, by contrast, the almost idyllic evocation of Italy's beauty and fertility which then follows, ll.57-84. The whole pastoral, idyllic effect is heightened by the slowing down of the pace, the exotic Classical vocabulary and the mythological references. It had, of course, been anticipated and prepared for, by the delicate description of the little American bird's appreciation of Italy, ll.1-16, and that of the poet, ll.17-32.

Once again, Zanella changes to a starker tone as he produces his final argument to dissuade emigration. In the concluding section of the poem, ll.85-100, he refers to the dangers of the journey in crossing the ocean, which would be especially frightening for small children, young wives and the old people.

Despite its Classical elegance and the distribution of the themes, this work lacks the "compressed vitality" of the preceding odes, Il grido di Venezia, I cavalli di San Marco, or, in particular, of Sopra una conchiglia fossile and Gli ospizi marini (cf. Momigliano's comment—p.215, note 116).

To Zanella's credit, he produces very strong counter-arguments to his own views, in the second ode, Risposta d'un contadino che emigra, in which a peasant replies to the points put forward by the poet in the first one. As may be seen from the initial section of the peasant's words:

"Poeta! Di collerico  
Non giusto fiele asperso  
Lo strale contro a' villici  
Vibrasti del tuo verso.

Poco era dunque il subito  
Pianto, che l'alma invase,  
Quando l'addio novissimo  
Demmo alle dolci case,

A' vecchi amici, a' memori  
Del dolor nostro altari,  
Al chiostro, ove riposano  
L'ossa dei nostri cari,

Se tu, crudel, sull'ulcera  
Che ne tormenta e lima,  
Non riversavi il tossico  
Della sdegnosa rima?

Ebbri di speme aerea  
E d'aureo sogno illusi  
Noi della villa semplici  
Abitatori accusi;

Ma lo stremato vivere,  
I duri verni, i guai  
De' morbi e delle grandini,  
Gaio poeta, sai?

ll.9-32,

Zanella has fully exploited the versatility of the settenari to convey the depth of feeling and the righteous indignation of the peasant, through the faster pace of the lines, reinforced by frequent enjambement, and the emotive vocabulary. The poet has certainly produced artistic verisimilitude as the compact quartine—their very brevity seems to be accentuated by the frequent enjambement, which also stresses key-words at the end of the lines—provide a rapid succession of emotionally-charged, short, sharp bursts as the peasant exteriorises his innermost feelings in what would seem to be a very clear, direct, and yet, emotional way. It seems pedantic and, perhaps, even irrelevant, to doubt, on reflection, whether an illiterate peasant could have expressed himself in such an articulate, concise and Classically-elegant way.<sup>123</sup> In any case, such considerations do not detract from the literary effectiveness of these lines.

After listing the hardships and problems of his way of life, ll.33-52, the peasant deals with Zanella's suggestion about utilizing the unculti-

123. Ll. 9-32 provide an excellent example of the "limits" of Zanella's Realismo—namely, thematic "realism" within a Classical, stylistic framework.



vated land of Central Italy, Sicily and Sardinia, explaining that it is in the interests of the aristocracy to leave uncultivated fields as pasture land. While the poor are powerless to change things, the seeds of revolution are being sown, ll.77-84, and the peasant wants to leave before the situation explodes, ll.85-89, at least he will find freedom, ll.91,92.

This and the preceding ode combine very effectively, for the Classical, calm, idyllic, pastoral evocation of the Italian countryside in the first ode highlights, by contrast, the presentation of the harsh realities of the lives of the peasants in the second.

Zanella's treatment of this subject, with the warning of impending revolution and the implicit appeal for an end to the social injustices which were plaguing the peasants, shows greater concern than in A Fedele Lampertico 1867, written ten years earlier (cf. pp.195-198), as well as representing an intermediate "evolutionary" position between the pre-veristic Venetian tradition (Dall'Ongaro, Percoto, Nievo,<sup>124</sup>Luigia Codèmo, cf. p. 201 ) and the Verismo of Verga—<sup>125</sup>(cf. the Sicilian peasant revolt dealt with in Libertà from Novelle rusticane, 1883).

Having considered the problems of Venice (Il grido di Venezia, I cavalieri di San Marco) and those of the Venetian terraferma (Per un augellino d'America detto il cardinale, Risposta d'un contadino che emigra), Zanella's view of social injustices took on a broader, national perspective in the sonnets of Astichello 1880-1887.

For Petronio, who would seem to be echoing Fogazzaro,<sup>126</sup> these sonnets are a testimony to Zanella's virtual retreat from, and lack of understanding of, contemporary society:

L'Astichello, proprio come Psiche per il Prati,<sup>127</sup> corrisponde ad un affinamento della tecnica dello scrittore, ma nello stesso tempo, ad una cristallizzazione del suo mondo poetico. Più che mai lo Zanella è ora incapace di comprendere la società moderna in tutti i suoi aspetti, e ideologici—positivismo, socialismo—e tecnici, ed alla civiltà trionfante oppone il

124. According to Sergio Romagnoli, Nievo displayed: "...l'ammirazione, un po' troppo letteraria, per i semplici costumi delle popolazioni contadine" (Romagnoli, p.103).

125. It is interesting to note that in l.84 Zanella refers to "nero il pane ...", while one of Verga's Novelle rusticane (1883) would be entitled Pane nero.

126. Cf. Fogazzaro (Discorsi), p.257: "Si studierebbe con pietoso interesse quest'anima inferma di pessimismo che, irritata dal contatto dello spirito moderno, si ripiega sopra se stessa e tutto respinge ciò che ha pur di buono e di grande la nostra civiltà, non vede in essa che orgoglio, scetticismo, cupidità di piaceri e di lucri".

127. The importance of Zanella's return to the sonnet form (already undertaken by Prati and Carducci) will be considered in Ch.6.

mondo dei campi, arcadicamente immaginato felice, l'immobile vita dei contadini, la loro illetterata saggezza: un mondo qualunquistico, gretto, e, in fondo in fondo tutto letterario. 128

Admittedly, the sonnets of Astichello are dominated by the theme of Nature. However, even within a Classical, idyllic framework, Zanella does deal with contemporary social problems.<sup>129</sup> Thus, for example, in sonnet XXVII, when the villagers gather on Sunday evenings in the "piaz-zetta di Cavazzale",<sup>130</sup> many things are discussed, including the heavy taxes and the high rents landowners charge tenant farmers—unless the former are moved by "amor del giusto" or "salutar sgomento", 1.10, things are going to get harder for the peasants. The poet then contrasts the villagers' "semplice dir" with the "ventoso boato" of the easily-corrupted members of Parliament. In fact these issues—heavy taxation, high rents and the way in which the peasants, although making an important contribution to the national wealth through agriculture, were finding their condition deteriorating—were all of central importance to the social, economic and political life of the country, in the two decades following unification:

"Il fatto fondamentale della vita economica italiana in questo ventennio" è rappresentato dal considerevole incremento della produzione agraria che si realizzò col sacrificio dei cati rurali esclusi dai vantaggi dell'aumento del reddito agrario. Di qui il diffuso malcontento nelle campagne per gli esosi contratti di affittanza deplorati anche nei congressi cattolici e le frequenti agitazioni contro l'imposta sul macinato... L'incremento del reddito agrario fu posto così al servizio dello sviluppo economico generale e contribuì in misura notevolissima agli investimenti industriali e alla politica delle opere e dei servizi pubblici oltre che alle eccessive spese militari. 131

The corruption and dishonesty in the financial and political institutions, as well as the grasping, materialistic façade of the commercial world, were dominant themes in literature and journalism:

L'uomo di affari spregiudicato, imbroglione ... è una delle figure dominanti della narrativa di quegli anni... 132

and again:

Questa Italia depredata dagli avventurieri della politica e della finanza, come appariva dalle roventi battaglie parlamentari e dalle polemiche giornalistiche alla inferocità

128. Petronio, p.521. However, Pasquazi (1967) (p.63) rightly stresses the extent and up-to-date nature of Zanella's knowledge of science and philosophy, thus somewhat negating Petronio's view that the poet was "...incapace di comprendere la società moderna in tutti i suoi aspetti, e ideologici ... e tecnici ...".

129. Cf. Carlo Muscetta's definition of Pompeo Bettini (1862-1896) as "socialista idillico". (Cusatelli, p.550).

130. Poesie (1928), p.346.

131. Cattaneo, p.274.

132. Ibid., p.399.

opinione pubblica, offrì non pochi spunti alla letteratura del tempo, ai versi di Stecchetti come alla narrativa e al teatro di Rovetta, ai romanzi di Castelnuovo e di Ciampoli: del '94 sono La baraonda e L'onorevole Paolo Leonforte.<sup>133</sup>

Two important objections to Petronio's views, as expressed above (cf. p.220-1)—in effect, he sees Zanella as being unable to grasp the prevailing spirit of the age—are, firstly, that Zanella was dealing with subjects (social injustices towards peasants and parliamentary corruption), which, with all their ramifications, were of fundamental national importance; and, secondly, that these subjects were also of great concern to the Church, as well as to contemporary literature and journalism. Is it really valid, therefore, as Petronio would seem to be suggesting, that Zanella was "rejecting" reality? In addition, is it unreasonable that, against such a dismal, socio-economic scenario—which included the virtual inactivity of the politicians towards the "questione sociale"<sup>134</sup>—he should feel a sense of disillusionment at the contrast between the ascendancy of positivism and scientific materialism and the corresponding "decline" in Risorgimento values? There is an interesting parallel, here, with the attitude of Mario Pratesi (1842-1921) in his novel, Il mondo di Dolcetta 1895:

Insieme al fervore risorgimentale e alla vaga tendenza socialista si riverbera in questo libro la delusione politica di un uomo che dopo la rivoluzione aveva visto l'affermarsi del compromesso e il trionfo degli ipocriti, dei reazionari mascherati da liberali. 135

Furthermore, it is not surprising, when one remembers the optimism and high hopes of A Fedele Lampertico 1867—in which Zanella had stated that he did not wish to be like a "Barbogio vate" who condemns the present and yearns for a bygone age of Saturn (cf. p.197)—that Zanella's disillusionment should find bitter expression in terms of precisely the same Classical, mythological allusion in sonnet LXXXV:

Più non armar di siepe, o buon villano,  
L'angusto campicel, a' tuoi digiuni  
Unico scampo; e non voler la mano  
Più lungamente insaguinar ne' pruni.

Torna Saturno e l'aureo tempo umano,  
Che comuni le terre e fien comuni  
L'entrate al campo, ove per pochi il grano  
Più non fia che biondeggi e l'uva imbruni.

Non odi tu Giscon, che dalla scranna  
Sua signoril, tumido l'èpa e rosso  
Dal ventenne Borgogna che tracanna,

Il bel secolo annunzia; e d'un molosso  
Rapido alza la bramosa zanna,  
Se ignaro pastorel varchi un suo fosso?

133. Ibid., p.289.

135. Ibid., p.385.

134. Ibid., p.273.



In the stinging attack on the corrupt aristocracy, which ferociously guards its lands, ll.9-14—the tone is reminiscent of Parini, but stronger—one is reminded of Nievo's condemnation of the nobility, in Le Confessioni d'un Italiano, as shown by Sergio Romagnoli:

... nel Carlino adolescente si presagisce già la condanna di quella aristocrazia decrepita, di quella società chiusa nei suoi sempre più squallidi privilegi e tiranneggiata dal bisogno nascosto dietro i debiti e le ipoteche, incapace di destare una qualsiasi forma di vita nuova, e appagata soltanto dall'ossequio formale di un popolo servile ... 136

The presentation of the fat, lazy, drunken, tyrannical aristocrat, ll.9-14, is very effective, not only because of the vivid, striking vocabulary—"... tumido l'èpa e rosso/Dal ventenne Borgogna che tracanna," ll.10,11—but also because it is heightened by the contrast with the calm, idyllic, mythical picture of the Golden Age of Saturn, in the preceding lines (5-8), which constitutes the closest that Zanella comes to suggesting Agrarian Reform, without actually mentioning it.

Zanella's nostalgia for the mythical past is not only an indication of his disillusionment with the present, but also, in a way, an act of faith in the future. It is interesting that Giambattista Salinari should describe a similar attitude in Carducci's "... rievocazione di antiche età come precorritrici della futura ... una specie di paradiso sulla terra, che prende realtà, secondo il verso dantesco, dalla fede che nasce dalla speranza ...".<sup>137</sup>

Zanella's compassion for the plight of the peasants finds a calmer, but no less eloquent, expression in sonnet LIX. On seeing a country cemetery and on reflecting on the extreme hardships of the lives of the peasants who are buried there, the poet invokes the earth, "o madre antica", l.4, that she may be: "... lieve alle stanche ossa ...", l.12. After all, these "oscuri sepolti", l.1, grew wheat and cultivated vines, from which they derived "... il licor .../Che tempra della vita il molto amaro", ll.10,11.

The patronising, paternalistic overtones of Zanella's socialism also emerge in Astichello. Thus we find him emphasizing the virtues of saving and frugality in sententious, moralising tones, sonnet XXVI, as well as adopting an unfair and unrealistic attitude towards emigration in sonnet LXXX. The quartine and the first terzina describe the anxious search of a heron for its nest and familiar places. The poet concludes in the second terzina:

Cupido, illuso per un suol che ignora,  
Italico villan lascia contento  
Il certo pane e la natal dimora.

136. Romagnoli, p.130.

137. Salinari, p.684.

This is very unjust point of view bearing in mind the arguments put forward in the ode, Risposta d'un contadino che emigra 1877.

Among the Astichello sonnets, those dealing with social themes are possibly the weakest in terms of stylistic merit. It is interesting, in this regard, that, according to Cusatelli, those poets who tackled social problems did so "... con un'insistenza e uno zelo cui non fanno certo riscontro, nelle grande maggioranza dei casi, una profonda e autentica sensibilità al problema nè mezzi stilistici adeguati".<sup>138</sup> Cusatelli did not, of course, and quite rightly so, include Zanella among these poets of "La protesta sociale".

However, it is not altogether surprising that the ottave entitled La posta in campagna. Alla egregia giovinetta Pia Fabrello 1881, written at the same time as the Astichello sonnets, and dealing with social questions, should not be among Zanella's best works and were, in fact, omitted from the fourth (1885) edition of his poetry.

The poem's value lies essentially in its function as a vehicle for Zanella's views and in the way the themes have been arranged. Although it exhibits his usual Classical elegance, the poem is, on the whole, stylistically undistinguished and has something of the "pedestrian" quality of Il Piccolo Calabrese 1871 with which it shares the same rhyme, ABABABCC, and metre, endecasillabi.

The first ottava not only introduces the poem's fundamental framework—the series of "episodes" will be linked to news arriving by post—but also provides a calm, idyllic setting, Pia Fabrello's beautiful home at Vigardolo,<sup>139</sup> which will heighten, by contrast, the plight of the peasants.

In order to stress the impact which letters can have, Zanella compares it with that of the weather—lightning, winds—ll.9-16.

Probably the most noteworthy ottava is the third:

Tramonta il giorno: la campagna imbruna:  
 Vien dalla scuola il figlio giovinetto,<sup>140</sup>  
 Intorno a cui sull'aia si rauna  
 Fraternal stuolo alla lettura inetto.  
 Le sillabe infilzando ad una ad una,  
 Con rosse guance e con ansante petto  
 Legge: poggiato sulla marra il vecchio  
 Austero genitor tende l'orecchio. ll.17-24,

<sup>138</sup>. Cusatelli, p.564.

<sup>139</sup>. Poesie (1928), p.515: "Vigardolo è piccola terra sulla riva sinistra dell'Astichello, con bellissima villa e grandioso parco".

<sup>140</sup>. Cf. ll.17,18 with Leopardi, Il sabato del villaggio, l.16: "Già tutta l'aria imbruna", and l.1: "La donzelletta vien dalla campagna".

in which the poet's detailed, affectionate tableau of country life reminds one of an analogous attitude in the writings of the Countess Caterina Percoto (1812-1887)—her works "rimangono esempi singolari di affezione al mondo semplice delle campagne"<sup>141</sup>—who was mentioned earlier in connection with la letteratura domestica e rusticale and what was described as the pre-veristic Venetian tradition (cf. p. 201).

Particularly striking and unusual is the way Zanella describes the boy's hesitant manner of reading, ll. 21-23. Fortunately, the letter he is reading brings the family joy—the eldest boy, Piero, a soldier, will be home on leave.

The next two "episodes" are part of Zanella's continuing efforts to dissuade the peasants from emigrating. The first, ll. 33-64, occupying the central part of the poem in order to make a greater impact, deals with a letter from an emigrant who has found even worse poverty and has lost his son and his wife. The description of the endless, hostile, dangerous landscape in the New World:

Pianure interminabili d'arena  
E paludi che immonda aliga ammanta,  
Il picciol campo sospirar gli fanno,  
Che al fratello ha venduto or compie l'anno.      ll. 53-56,

is of course, in sharp contrast, not only with the peasant's own small holding which he has sold, but with the idyllic setting presented in the first ottava.

The next three ottave deal with a mother who asks the priest to read the letter from her son, who has gone to Hungary to find work. Here, of course, the poet is adding another argument against emigration: the sorrow of those who are left behind.

In the conclusion of the poem,

Così gioia, dolor, speme, paura,  
D'esattori minacce e di padroni,  
Ne' villerecci alberghi entran l'oscura  
Pace a turbar de' timidi coloni. 142  
Un artigiano, appiè di vecchie mura,  
Un giornal sta leggendo a più garzoni;  
De' ricchi arde i palagi, e fra pezzenti  
Divide in sorte equal campi ed armenti.

Mentre lo scalzo Saint-Simon schiamazza  
E nel sangue dei re la destra intride,  
Votata la valigia, in sulla piazza  
Di tanti moti il biondo autor si asside:  
D'un vermiglio acquerel colma la tazza  
Ed alla figlia dell'ostier sorride,  
Finchè la notte al sonno lo consiglia,  
Che inconsapevol tolse a tante ciglia.      ll. 89-104,

141. Romagnoli, p. 97.

142. Alcaldi, Le tre fanciulle, ll. 72, 73: "al limitar del mio povero ostello/ ieri saliva il cupido esattore:"—Baldacci's comment could also apply to Zanella: "72-3. 'ostello...esattore': caratteristica di questa nostra poesia ottocentesca è l'alternanza spesso stridente, come qui appunto, di antiche forme auliche ('ostello') e di neologismi tecnico-prosastici ('esattore')." (Baldacci, p. 566).



Zanella attacks the sufferings, hardships and misery inflicted on the peasants by the cruel, grasping landowners and usurers.<sup>143</sup> While these injustices are sowing the seeds of a potential revolution, the poet condemns the irresponsibility of the journalist who has written an inflammatory article preaching revolution.

One can see from this that Zanella, like Parini, wanted the reform of the aristocracy, not its destruction.

### (III) COSMIC VISION

From the patriotism and social concern of the poems already considered, Zanella's view of society rose to the level of a cosmic vision in the important odes of 1864, Sopra una conchiglia fossile and La veglia.

The former appears about half-way through his poetic output over which it towers like an achievement which he was never again to attain. It is not merely stylistically and thematically superior to any of his preceding compositions, but is also free from the polemical bitterness and didactic, moralising tone which characterised so many of his later poems, including the better ones such as La veglia, Egoismo e carità and Astichello.<sup>144</sup>

To what can the poem's success and value be attributed? It is not enough to see it as merely continuing "... in pieno Ottocento quella tradizione di poesia della scienza che si era affermata nel Settecento con il Mascheroni e con l'ode montiana Al signor di Montgolfier",<sup>145</sup> or to see Zanella as "... l'ultimo rappresentante, nell'Ottocento, di quella poesia panica settecentesca che era culminata nell'esempio del Monti".<sup>146</sup> Undoubtedly Zanella presents a vision of the Universe, but it is imbued by his Christian, spiritual values, so that it becomes an uplifting, radiant hymn of faith, hope, light and optimism.

Calcaterra's enthusiastic appreciation concentrates on three main features:

143. Cf. a similar juxtaposition in Carducci "Fiammeggia, ecco, la festa ... E dotti ed usurier mesce e baroni", (Carnevale, Voce di sotterra, ll.132-136); and cf. Romagnoli, p.91 regarding Carcano: "... narratore di intimità familiari, di virtù domestiche sacrificate nella miseria, spezzate dalla consunzione, subimate nel dovere, insidiate dalla cattiveria dei potenti ...".
144. While Lampertico (Poesie (1894), Vol.1, p.XLV) pointed out how Zanella himself implicitly realized the importance of the ode in relation to anything he had previously done, its value has been re-emphasized in recent times (Greenwood, pp.316-318).
145. Cusatelli, pp.559,560.
146. Baldacci, p.XXXIV

La bellezza dell'ode sta nella splendente fusione fantastica delle immagini, con cui è rievocato il mattino della Terra; sta nel senso di giovinezza perenne, con cui è sentita la vita; sta nella contemplazione serena e fidente delle sorti, assegnate da Dio al genere umano. 147

It was shown in Chapter 2 that Zanella placed a great deal of emphasis upon the "Classical" qualities of balance, harmony, cohesion, unity and proportion between the parts of a composition. As will be seen, these qualities are certainly present in this ode.

The first eight stanzas deal with the world's prehistoric, geological "evolution", while the last six depict the advent of Man, his future and his destiny, as well as the world's "spiritual" evolution within the context of the relationship between God and Man.

On seeing a fossil shell which he uses as a paper-weight, the poet imagines the primeval world before Man. In the first stanza the contrast between the fossil's present state—stressed by the repetition of "riposi" ll.4,5—and the way it began life in the sea is effectively conveyed by the juxtaposition of two very different images, ll.1-4. The first depicts the shell on top of works of literature, while the second refers to when it came into being in the ocean. In other words the present-day fossil is separated from its former existence by prehistory and human history, represented by the books on which the fossil lies.

The contrast<sup>148</sup> is heightened in the second and third stanza. As against the fossil's immobile, inanimate condition ("Riposi marmorea",<sup>149</sup> l.5) as described in the first stanza, the poet refers to its playfulness and liveliness in l.12, "Vagavi co' nautili",<sup>150</sup> when it lived in the ocean at the dawn of the world. The reference to "giovane mondo", l.10, and the fact that Man had not yet appeared, l.14, further emphasizes the vast time lapse separating the living shell from the present-day fossil. This theme is expanded in the third stanza where the poet shows that all the cataclysmic happenings of the various geological ages—"Di lente stagioni", l.16; these epochs were so long as to seem "slow"—have literary left their mark on the shell itself. This is a particularly striking strofa for the single, basic idea it contains is so well brought out through a series of compact images which occur in a rapid, but unified succession:

147. Poesie scelte (1957), pp.7,8.

148. Cf. the striking thematic similarity between ll.3-13 of Sopra una conchiglia fossile and Carducci, Alla città di Ferrara, ll.10-12: "Come ne le scendenti spire de la conchiglia un'eco/d'antichi pianti, un suono di lungo sospiro profondo/dal grande oceano ond'ella strapata fu, permane;".

149. Both "marmorea" and "nautilo" are in Mascheroni's Invito a Lesbia Cidonia (Zardo, p.76).

150. Cf. Alceardi, Il Monte Circello, l.542, "...nautili..." (Baldacci, p.538).

Per quanta vicenda  
 Di lente stagioni,  
 Arcana leggenda  
 D'immani tenzoni  
 Impresse volubile  
 Sul niveo tuo dorso  
 De' secoli il corso! 151

11.15-21.

The very rapidity of these lines heightens, by contrast, the "slowness", "... lente stagioni", l.16, with which these long epochs unfolded, "De' secoli il corso!", l.21. Each image is so brief and yet it fully and effectively conveys the poet's intended meaning. Thus in ll.17,18 we find that the tremendous force which must have been unleashed in the course of the world's geological evolution is so succinctly depicted in two words, "... immani tenzoni", whilst "Arcana leggenda"<sup>152</sup> imbues these natural phenomena with a haunting vagueness, as Zanella poeticises them in "transferring" them from the realms of Natural History<sup>153</sup> to those of Man's mysterious, mythical past shrouded in the mists of antiquity.

In l.22, "Noi siamo di ieri:", there is the encapsulation of the fourth and fifth stanzas, namely that however long the world may have been in existence, mankind is still in its infancy. For it seems just like yesterday, the repetition of "pur ora" in ll.23 and 26 emphasizes this, that the sun was shining on the Ancient Eastern Empires<sup>154</sup> and Aeneas<sup>155</sup> had set sail for the banks of the Tiber. After similarly referring to the "recent" fall of the Roman Empire,<sup>156</sup> Zanella goes on to stress that Man has only just been created by God. There is of course the implicit rejection of the Theory of Evolution, for according to Zanella, Man has been directly created by God. This theme will be taken up again in l.72.

151. These lines (15-21) have been seen as an answer to the following, from Mascheroni's Invito a Lesbia Cidonia, "...a quelle/Qual Dea del mar d'incognite parole/Scrisse l'eburneo dorso?" (Zardo, p.75).
152. Poesie scelte (1957), p.8, note (3): "La frase 'arcana leggenda' dà agli antichi e ignoti cataclismi...un aspetto quasi favoloso".
153. Lampertico (Ricordi), p.173: "Lo Zanella ... il 24 febbraio 1864 avea scritto ad amico: '... Sono immerso nella letteratura di Lyell e di Prescott, che non mi lasciano pensare ad altro ...'".
154. Elwert, p.496: refers to Leconte de Lisle's treatment of India's remote antiquity in his Poèmes antiques (1852), but there is no mention of Aleardi's interest in the same subject—cf. Aleardi's note to l.256 of Le prime storie (Baldacci, p.520).
155. Elwert (p.496) rightly points out that the arrival of Aeneas in Italy is only briefly mentioned and not endlessly spun out like the historical reminiscences in Aleardi's Il Monte Circello. Nevertheless, the present writer feels that Elwert is discounting evidence of yet another link between Zanella's masterpiece and Aleardi's poem.
156. It is not only the reference to Rome (ll.29-31), but (cf. Elwert, p.487) particularly l.14 ("E l'uomo non era.") which is reminiscent of the line, "... e Roma ancor non era ;" from Mascheroni's Invito a Lesbia Cidonia.



The next three stanzas bring the first half of the poem to an end. Once again the poet depicts the former life of the fossil shell and contrasts it with the fact that mankind was still not in existence; Italy, for example, was still almost completely submerged by the sea. The seventh stanza very strikingly portrays the tremendous upheaval as the land masses emerged from the oceans. Particularly noteworthy is the onomatopoeic effect of "squarciavano",<sup>157</sup> which refers to the destructive force with which earthquakes demolished the land which separated different expanses of water<sup>158</sup>, "... pelaghi ignoti", l.48, now unknown since no longer in existence. The proof of all these cataclysms which characterised the world's geological evolution is to be found in the various types of fossils. This is the basic scientific notion, but here, as elsewhere in the poem, Zanella has completely avoided the use of technical terms, concentrating instead on Classical vocabulary. It may be the scientist's function to merely transmit information, but it is certainly not the poet's. Thus in ll.43-46 Zanella does not simply state that the emerging volcanoes were erupting, he depicts the way these eruptions must have been reflected in the sea.<sup>159</sup> Almost every word seems highly evocative and rich in associations. Thus "... ceruli"<sup>160</sup> "piani", l.44, conveys the image of the sky-blue expanses of water over which, "Ardeva il baleno/Di cento vulcani:" ll.45,46. The word "baleno", meaning a flash of lightning, might seem almost too "weak" on its own, but it is reinforced by "Ardeva", emphasizing the intensity of the glow of the eruptions, magnified by "Di cento vulcani", and, of course, stressed through enjambement by its position at the end of the line. The basic theme of the eighth stanza, namely that geological phenomena left their mark on fossils, seems to echo that of the third stanza, where the poet had been referring specifically to the fossil shell of the title.

In the second half of the ode, Zanella is concerned with Man who, within the framework of his relationship with his Creator, is the protagonist of the poem. The repeated references, in the first half of the poem, to Man and to the fact that mankind is still only in its infancy—l.14, "E l'uomo non era"; l.22, "Noi siamo di ieri;" and ll.32-35, "Si crede canuto/

157. Cf. Aleardi, Le prime storie, l.339, "Si squarcia il nemo..." (Baldacci p.523).

158. Cf. Aleardi, Le prime storie, ll.419-420: "...un incalzante flagellar dell'onda/su le dighe travolte..." (Baldacci, p.525).

159. Cf. Aleardi, Il Monte Circello, ll.573-575: "...tremuli.../riverberi di luce, onde un vulcano/imporporava le sinistre baie," (Baldacci, p.539).

160. Carducci also used the epithet, "cerulo", on several occasions: "...nel cerulo/riso del mare..." (A Giuseppe Garibaldi, ll.49,50); "...e cerula.../...precipita/la Dora..." (Il liuto e la lira, ll.68-70); "...la cerulea Dora" (Piemonte, l.22).

/Appena all'Artefice/Uscito di mano/Il genere umano!"<sup>161</sup> —not only give the whole composition a thread of continuity which contributes to its balance and unity, but also anticipate an important aspect of the second half of the poem, as well as helping to establish Man as the central figure.

The various "strands" and themes in the last six stanzas are very well integrated and interwoven. The fundamental leitmotif, "spirituality and materialism", of Zanella's poetry re-emerges. Man may have a material, earth-bound body but his immortal, spiritual soul forces him to gaze heavenwards: "Sui tumuli il piede,/Ne' cieli lo sguardo,"ll.64, 65. Similarly Zanella refers to Man as "Divino straniero", l.72, pointing out that while he is the last creature to appear on earth, his immortal soul has been directly created by God. As in ll.32-35, Zanella is implicitly repudiating the Theory of Evolution.

The poet has repeatedly stressed that however old the world may be in geological terms, human history is comparatively very very short. This theme, the basic fundamental one of the latter part of the poem, is summed up in l.77, "È giovin la terra".<sup>162</sup> In other words if there are still slaves to be freed<sup>163</sup> and wrongs to be righted this is not a cause for despondency, for mankind is still in its infancy and the world is young in terms of human history. In any case Man is hopeful, optimistic and anxious to fight injustice and use his God-given talents, his intellect, his will and his enterprise, to exploit scientific discoveries for the benefit of all and to explore the world.

Faith is necessary, for Man must operate within the context of his relationship with God and aim for a goal which is hidden in the future.

There are repeated exhortations of optimistic encouragement: ll.71,72, "T'avanza, t'avanza,/Divino straniero"; ll.82-84, "Con brando e con fiaccola/Sull'erta fatale/Ascendi, mortale!"<sup>164</sup>

161. Cf. Prati, *L'uomo*, ll.9,10, "l'uom dalla mano eterna/colmo di vita uscì." (Baldacci, p.583).

162. Cf. Prati, *L'uomo*, l.32, "... la giovin terra" (Baldacci, p.584).

163. With regard to freeing of slaves, Elwert (pp.502,503) suggests that Zanella might have been influenced by Longfellow's *Poems on Slavery* and Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, while Baldacci (p.544) feels that in ll.59,60 of *Le città italiane marinare e commercianti*, Aleardi "... anticipa il concetto ispiratore del suo conterraneo Zanella ..." of ll.75-77 of *Sopra una conchiglia fossile*.

164. "Con brando e con fiaccola...ascendi,mortale':Quel 'brando' indica che il poeta crede alla necessità della guerra fino a quando, come dice nella strofe seguente, vi sarà nel mondo tranquillo un solo vessillo degli uomini liberi" (Janni, Vol.II, p.463).

Was Zanella, at a political level, expressing the ardent wish, in line with Mazzini, that all nations and peoples should be free within the context of a World Federation?

At this point, it would be worth noting the similarities, indicated by Elwert,<sup>165</sup> between Sopra una conchiglia fossile and Longfellow's poem, Excelsior—the combination, in both works, of the themes of progress, optimism and "ascent"; "il personaggio dell'Excelsior del Longfellow che sale sempre, e quello della Conchiglia fossile che fa altrettanto...";<sup>166</sup> the analogy between Zanella's "santo standardo" l.67 and Longfellow's "...banner with the strange device,/Excelsior!" ll.4,5;<sup>167</sup> as well as the way in which the repetition of "Excelsior!" (with all its concomitant overtones of progress and ascent) at the end of each verse seems to be echoed, in the Italian ode, according to Elwert, in various ways: "Incalza", l.61; "... procede ... si spande.", ll.66,70; "T'avanza", l.71; "Ascendi ...", l.84; and, of course, "Eccelsa ...", l.78. While this is very noteworthy, it would seem more indicative of a superficial impact on Zanella than the German critic is suggesting. Thus he would appear to be exaggerating when he states that "Zanella's Conchiglia represents an expanded transposition to a meditation, from Longfellow's Excelsior".<sup>168</sup> In any case, as regards the theme of "ascent", it is present in other poems, such as La veglia, in other contexts, and could also be said to be derived, in a broader, more general sense, from religious writings in which it constitutes a standard, common image. Not surprisingly, Elwert later concludes: "In fact Zanella has produced something quite different from Longfellow's poem".<sup>169</sup>

After the descent of the Holy Spirit<sup>170</sup> the whole of mankind will be united in peace and freedom. This is reminiscent of Christ's prayer for the world, "That they may be one". Ll.82-84 and 85-91 echo some of the lines from Manzoni's La Pentecoste, in particular the following images

165. Elwert, pp.492,493, 499-501, 503, 505, 506.

166. *Ibid.*, pp.492,493, footnote 19.

167. Would not a comparison with ll.53-55 of Zanella's A Dante Alighieri 1865—"Sovra men scabre vie/Umanità cammina/Col labaro immortal: Fede e dottrina."—be more appropriate?

168. Elwert, p.493: "Zanellas Conchiglia stellt eine um eine Meditation erweiterte Transposition von Longfellows Excelsior dar.

169. *Ibid.*, p.499: "In der Tat hat Zanella aus Longfellows Gedicht etwas ganz anderes gemacht."

Correspondingly, the present writer feels that Elwert is tending to be too dismissive of the impact on Zanella of Mascheroni and particularly, Aleari (in Il Monte Circello). Apart from the similarities already noted, it should be borne in mind that Mascheroni and Aleari, albeit with a different emphasis from that adopted by Zanella, did deal with the history of mankind (compared with the history of the earth, in Mascheroni's Invito a Lesbia Cidonia—cf. Elwert, p.487), Rome, and the discoveries of Palaeontology.

170. Monastra, p.29—"...cfr. Aleari, Monte Circello, v.603 ("il viatore Spirito di Dio") e vv.607-8 ("l'Infinito/spazio su la queta urna de l'acque")".



from the latter, "lo Spirito/Rinnovator discese,/E l'inconsunta fiaccola/  
Nella tua destra accese;" ll.33-36 as well as,"Nova franchigia annunziano/  
i cieli,e genti nove;" ll.73,74, where Manzoni refers to the renewal brought  
about in the world by Christianity. Zanella would also naturally have been  
familiar with Psalm 103, 30, "Si emittis spiritum tuum creatur, et reno-  
vas faciem terrae".<sup>171</sup>

In the last stanza the poet declares that when Man has reached the goal  
assigned to him by God, the Earth, like an enormous ship<sup>172</sup> on the ocean  
of infinity,<sup>173</sup> will wait at anchor for, "Il cenno divino/Per novo cammi-  
no." <sup>174</sup> ll.97,98.

This whole, strikingly-original panorama of the world—from its prim-  
eval beginnings, through all its geological changes, the advent of Man, his  
future and his destiny, the implicit reference to world unity within the  
context of freedom—as well as the theme of the world's "spiritual" evol-  
ution, seem to anticipate, to a great extent, the views of Zanella's  
disciple, Fogazzaro,<sup>175</sup> who was also concerned with reconciling Faith and  
Science and was a firm believer in the Theory of Evolution, which he ex-  
trapolated from the material and biological plane to the spiritual and  
moral level (cf. Ascensioni umane). It goes without saying that Zanella  
would never have shared Fogazzaro's enthusiasm for Darwinism.

In this ode, more than anywhere else, Zanella is truly the conciliator  
between Church and State, ll.89-91, Science and Faith, ll.66,67, within

171. Poesie scelte (1957), p.11, note (1).

172. Cf. Aleardi, Le prime storie, ll.185-189: "... Ed ella/...s'avvia/  
.../sovra il mare dei tempi a una beata/terra promessa che non giunge  
mai" (Baldacci, p.517); and also A.B.Brunamonti, Stelle nere, ll.3,9,  
13,16: "astri vi sono ... Ma sembran navi ... corteo sinistro ... e  
mai non entra in un porto di luce" (Muscetta and Sormani, Vol.II, p.1501).

173. This image seems to find a distant echo in Pascoli: "... lento,/flu-  
iva il cielo verso la sua foce.", La pecorella smarrita, ll.17,18. In  
these lines, Pascoli was not merely describing the gradual disappear-  
ance of the night sky, but also employing the metaphor of a river.  
He also refers to "... quel mare/d'astri ..." in ll.42,43 of La ver-  
tigine.

174. For Elwert (p.505) l.98 draws its inspiration from Vico's cyclical  
view of history. It is also reminiscent (together with the image of  
the Earth as a ship travelling towards an unknown goal) of Aleardi's  
verses quoted in n.172.

175. Zanella's view of the Universe may also be said to find interesting  
parallels with the "vigorosi accenti di una religiosità cosmica" in  
Tommaseo's Poesie 1872 (cf. "Tommaseo", Enciclopedia Garzanti della  
Letteratura, 1972, p.750)—for Vittorio Rossi (Rumor (1928), p.66)  
"...il 'buio degli anni' ... della Conchiglia fossile, con consonan-  
ti 'nobili affanni', viene dalle Memorie de' popoli del grande sti-  
lista dalmata ..."—as well as, to a lesser extent, anticipating  
Pascoli's mystical sense of wonder at the immensity of the Cosmos,  
as in ll.28-31 of La pecorella smarrita, in which the reference to  
the Earth as "un agnello sperso" has obvious, unmistakable, Christian  
connotations.

the relationship between God and Man. Zanella has fused the optimism of the nineteenth century, in terms of an eighteenth-century poetic view of the universe, with his own spiritual and religious values to produce an uplifting, radiant view of the world's future and its "spiritual" evolution.<sup>176</sup>

The stylistic defects of Zanella's poetry as described by Arturo Graf —<sup>177</sup> "... certa sdolcinatura talvolta; qualche accattata o faticosa eleganza; qualche stentata perifrasi; un po' di prosaismo e di convenzionalismo; alcuni ripieghi non dissimulati abbastanza; alcune sentenze trite; alcune (come ho a dire?) allumacature di romanticismo attardato e non buono." — are conspicuous by their absence. In addition there is none of the disillusionment of his later years, nor the polemical bitterness<sup>178</sup> which appears, for example with regard to the Theory of Evolution, even in La veglia,<sup>179</sup> which was written in the same year as Sopra una conchiglia fossile. Thus, in the latter Zanella is primarily concerned with stressing God's intervention in creating Man. The rejection of the Theory of Evolution is merely implied, ll.32-35, l.72. However, in La veglia, Zanella's aversion to Darwinism finds expression in polemical bitterness,

Co' pesci in mar ricetto  
Già non ebbero i miei progenitori;  
Ne' preser d'uomo aspetto  
Per le foche passando e pe' castori.

Per dotte vie non corsi  
Le belve ad abbracciar come sorelle;  
Ma co' fanciulli io scörsi  
Una patria superba oltre le stelle.

Or dall'ambite cene  
De' congeneri uranghi il piè torcendo,  
Io verso le serene  
Plaghe dell'alba la montagna ascendo. ll.73-84.

It is interesting to note that while Petronio<sup>180</sup> regards Zanella's vagueness as a fault, it is in fact one of the reasons for the poem's effective-

176. G. Alberti, "La poesia scientifica dello Zanella", Il Marzocco, XXVII, 1922, n.2, p.3, "... lo Zanella non perdette mai di vista il concetto che nel creato tutto si rinnova ed avanza verso un'ulteriore perfezione. È questo il concetto centrale dell'ode ... la sintesi più ardita del sistema filosofico, religioso e scientifico dello Zanella".

177. Poesie (1928), p. XXVI.

178. Pasquazi (1967), p.71: "Nel sentimento del poeta e nei suoi versi convivono, giustapposti, ma non bene fusi in vera ed omogenea sintesi, il sociale, lo scientifico, il religioso: donde le accuse di allotria, di scompensi, di limite religioso... In questa prospettiva possiamo anche spiegare perchè l'ode Sopra una conchiglia fossile sia giustamente considerata come il capolavoro del nostro poeta. In essa, infatti, la dialettica Dio-creatura è colta nel momento iniziale e in quello terminale: uscendo cioè dal presente e dall'urgenza dei problemi".

179. This ode was considered in detail in Ch.3, pp.82-86.

180. Petronio, pp.469,470.

ness. For Zanella has reached a wonderful balance between conveying precisely what he wants to communicate and leaving a certain element of vagueness, which stimulates the imagination<sup>181</sup> and heightens the poem's impact. As was mentioned earlier it is not in any case the poet's function merely to communicate information.

Among the poem's outstanding qualities is the way in which Zanella has been able to integrate the two "parts" of the work.<sup>182</sup> The first half, dealing with the world's primeval beginnings, is richer in lyrical, descriptive, evocative images, while the second part, concerned with a strikingly original cosmic vision, shows no sign of being rendered ponderous or sententious by the gravity of the subject.

In this context, the rhyme and metre also make an important contribution to the poem's effectiveness. Particularly striking is the way Zanella has so adroitly adapted the senario to his own ends. The six-syllable line was normally associated with popular compositions or patriotic poems of the Risorgimento, for example, Mameli's Fratelli d'Italia, because of its "jauntiness", but here Zanella has used this very quality of "briskness" to convey his own radiant optimism. At the same time, he has attenuated and modified the rapid, agile pace of the senari in such a way that it does not seem at all inappropriate or undignified for such a momentous, all-embracing theme, fundamental to the poet's values and view of life. In addition he has counteracted the inherent tendency of the senari towards monotonous uniformity, by making the fifth line of each stanza a non-rhyming senario sdrucchiolo (ABABCDD), while the comparative brevity of the seven-line stanza, rather unusual in Zanella's poetry, not only breaks up the insistent rhythm of the senari, but also provides an optimum length for dealing with a complete image or idea in each stanza.

It is also noteworthy how closely Zanella has conformed to his own poetica in three main ways. Thus, the metre and rhyme-scheme are conventional, orthodox, with the possible exception of the seven-line stanza, and rigidly consistent. Moreover he has completely avoided technical terms when describing natural phenomena or scientific notions, preferring to utilise Classical vocabulary, for example, l.16, "stagioni" from the Latin "statio,-onis"; l.19, "volubile" from "volubilis". In addition he has also used figures of speech sparingly and only when appropriate, as in the

181. This was an important element in Zanella's poetica, cf. pp. 34;44.

182. However the almost equal division between the first eight stanzas (the earth's geological evolution) and the last six (the advent of Man) does establish a gulf or separation, which the poet very ably exploits in order to stress that Man has been directly created by God and is not merely the product of a continuous, "material" evolution from lower species.



personification of Italy in ll.38,39, or the methaphorical description of the Earth as a ship in ll.93-95. Zanella not only advocated the use of these two features, but also greatly admired their application in Parini's poetry.<sup>183</sup>

For all these reasons it is easy to understand why Sopra una conchiglia fossile is considered Zanella's best poem and why it should have been such an important watershed in his poetic development.

#### (IV) INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

The two poems, Il taglio dell'istmo di Suez 1866 and La guerra nel settembre 1870, considered in this section demonstrate not only Zanella's great concern with the problems of mankind on a global scale, but also the depth of his humanity and his abhorrence of modern warfare.

Il taglio dell'istmo di Suez is yet another poem which shows how much Zanella's imagination was stirred by contemporary events, as Petronio has pointed out:

Il taglio dell'istmo di Suez nel 1866 commosse ed entusiasmo largamente l'Europa. Di questa commozione vuol rendersi interprete lo Zanella, che ne approfitta per cantare temi suoi favoriti: la fraternità e unità del genere umano, il civile progresso verso cui l'umanità ascende, il desiderato connubio tra scienza e fede. Il tutto con aulica classicità di parole e con il facile entusiasmo di un ballo "Excelsior". 184

Zanella himself said of this poem: "... il futuro ritorno delle genti di Europa alla loro culla ... Questo è il concetto fondamentale della mia poesia".<sup>185</sup> Undoubtedly, this theme is the most fundamental one in these verses and yet, the most striking feature of the work as a whole is the strange dissonance between the very Classical and refined style and the rather facile and unhistorical judgement displayed by Zanella.

After referring to the common ancestry and language of the Indo-Europeans, ll.25-28, Zanella simplistically explains the difference in the development of East and West in terms of environmental factors: the hot climate and fertile soil in the Orient led to apathy,

Ma di blandi riposi il clima amico,  
Le olenti selve e la spontanea messe  
Franser tua possa: all'ardimento antico  
Ozio successe. 11.37-40,

while harsher conditions in the West stimulated energy and effort, resulting in modern industrialization,

183. Cf. pp. 41-5 for a detailed examination of Zanella's views on rhyme and metre and his appreciation of Parini.

184. Petronio, p. 483.

185. Poesie (1928), p. 80.

Noi futuri del mondo agitatori  
 All'occàsso movemmo. Il cielo avverso,  
 E sterile il terren, se di sudori  
 Pria non asperso,  
 Destâr l'insita fiamma. Alla natura  
 Noi contendemmo il pãuroso regno; 186  
 E bello di costanza e di sventura  
 Fulse l'ingegno. 11.41-48.

Thus, whilst one can admire the Classical elegance, the ease and fluency with which the poem proceeds and the very effective way in which Zanella conveys Oriental exoticism and its concomitant apathy—particularly noteworthy, for example, in ll.37-40 is the felicitous combination of "exotic" ("blandi", "olenti") and Classically-refined ("selve", "ardimento") vocabulary evoking a calm, gentle, leisurely atmosphere, synonymous with the luxurious and opulent "Ozio"—one is struck by the naïve historical reasoning and judgements. Similarly, his ardent wish that, by means of the Suez Canal, Europe will more easily be able to transmit its science, religion and civilization to Asia, so that the people of the world will find themselves "... non più dissimili, ma, in verità, fratelli",<sup>187</sup> is very praiseworthy but, nevertheless, betrays very patronising and paternalistic overtones towards the Third World, since Zanella virtually ignores the very great contributions of Eastern civilizations. Furthermore, he presents nineteenth-century Europe in an idyllic light,

O lieta della Fè, che in un amplesso  
 I suoi possenti popoli comprende,  
 Verso il cheto splendor d'un dì promesso  
 Europa ascende. 11.57-60.

This is all the more surprising when one considers the glaring social injustices about which Zanella himself wrote.

The enthusiasm and optimism for the future, evident in this poem and Il lavoro, will be found to turn to disillusionment in Zanella's later works.

Not surprisingly, Zanella's desire for close, constructive cooperation between East and West—within the context of world unity and peace (cf.p.230, n.164)—was matched by a detestation of war and the ensuing, inevitable suffering, as is evident in La guerra nel settembre 1870. The circumstances of its composition are as described by Lampertico,

Narra il Lampertico nei Ricordi: "Eravamo in villa a Montegaldella ed insieme movevamo impazienti incontro a chi recasse notizie urbane. Ci incontrammo in un ospite che ci diede l'annuncio della grande disfatta di Sedan e dell'imperatore Napoleone III prigioniero. L'impressione che lo Zanella ne provò, e che mi è tuttora innanzi, mi spiega al vivo que' versi". 188

186. Cf. Foscolo, A Zacinto, l.10, "... bello di fama e di sventura".

187. Poesie scelte (1957), p.34.

188. Ibid., p.82.

That this poem is superior to the other ode of 1870, Per gli ossari in San Martino e Solferino, also dealing with warfare and human misery, may be due, in part, not only to the tremendous impact, on Zanella, of the news of France's defeat in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, but also to the apparently immediate and spontaneous inspiration which gave rise to the work. It lacks the forced and slightly sententious quality of the other ode and gives the impression of being more vital, natural and smoothly-flowing.

Its other noteworthy features include the sequence and arrangement of the themes, the choice of an appropriate rhyme and metre, as well as the poet's ability to adapt them to convey different themes and moods.

The opening lines communicate the poem's most fundamental theme, Zanella's desire to seek refuge in the peace of Nature:

Giammai d'arbori, d'acque,  
 Di silenzio, d'oblio  
 Più profondo desio  
 Nel core non mi nacque:  
 Ne mai sì fiera, intensa  
 Mi stimolò la cura  
 Di mescermi all'immensa  
 Vita della natura.

ll.1-8.

Having stressed the intensity and urgency—through the appropriate choice of vocabulary: "... sì fiera, intensa/Mi stimolò la cura", ll.5,6—of his desire to escape, he does not give the reason for it, so capturing the reader's attention.

The next two ottave,

Vorrei cangiar di spoglia:  
 Questa maschera umana  
 Vorrei gittar lontana.  
 Oh, s'io fossi la foglia  
 Che contro il Sol protende  
 Il suo picciolo schermo  
 E dall'ardor difende  
 Il fiorellino infermo!

Quando nel tuo sembiante  
 Io mi affiso, o mortale,  
 Un'angoscia m'assale  
 Che mi rattien tremante.  
 Del divin dito appena  
 Vi discerno più l'orme;  
 Ma lampeggiar la lena  
 Vi rimiro che dorme.

ll.9-24,

only provide part of the answer, thus sustaining the reader's attention while stimulating his curiosity. The poet's abhorrence of human brutality is very well brought out in several ways: his desire to seek refuge in the peace of Nature and to belong no longer to the human race, while having difficulty in seeing Man's spiritual dimension, which seems to be replaced by that of a hyena. Comparing Man's nature to such an animal



also confers upon it the characteristics of cowardice and opportunism. In addition, throughout these three strofe, the poet intertwines the two basic strands of the beauty, calm and idyllic peace of Nature (ll.1-4; 7,8; 12-16) with his horror of human cruelty and his desire to escape from it (ll.5,6; 9-11; 17-24), so that they complement and highlight each other and anticipate the whole "pattern of contrasts" or "chiaroscuro" which so effectively assists in conveying the full impact of the thematic content of the work.

Calcaterra has indicated the link between ll.21-24 and Dante:

Anche Dante raffigura gli istinti belluini come negazione dell'angelicità e dello spirito divino. 189

Perhaps there is no better exemplification of Zanella's preoccupation with the virtually "symmetrical" balance and harmony of his compositions, than in this ode. Thus, he goes on to present two different visions of the world—each consisting of three ottave and beginning with the word "Sognai"—the first, his ideal vision of the future, depicts a peaceful, prosperous world, in which science and knowledge have made great advances, ll.25-48, whilst, the second, through its description of the warfare, misery and suffering spreading from Germany into France, ll.49-72, presents, in effect, the harsh reality of world history, both past and present.

As often in his poetry, Zanella puts contemporary events into their historical perspective by comparing them with events from the past. In this case he refers to Attila's attack on Gaul, thus highlighting the barbaric cruelty of the Prussian invasion of 1870. In addition, he reminds the reader of the earlier comparison between human nature and the hyena, for he shows the German aggression as being motivated by envy, as well as being unjustified: "Ahi di che cagion lieve/Vestiam feri costumi;" ll. 53,54. These lines are an unusual instance of a Petrarchan reminiscence in Zanella's poetry: "Già il Petrarca nella canzone Italia mia: 'Di che lievi cagion che crudel guerra'". 190

The next ottave,

Qui, dove stommi, è pace  
Meridiana: al fosco  
Rezzo del vicin bosco  
L'augel ripara e tace.  
Nel campo, ove il marito  
Dall'alba ara o raccoglie,  
Siede al breve convito  
Co' pargoli la moglie.

Io guardo e gemo. O quanto  
Correr di sangue altrove!  
Di quante spose piove  
Di quanti orfani il pianto!

189. Ibid., p.83.

190. Ibid., p.84.

La speme de' coloni  
 Col fumo al ciel si volve;  
 E le vaste magioni  
 Dell'industria son polve.                    ll.73-88,

present a self-contained contrast, which seems to recapitulate the poet's two preceding "visions" in a concentrated form. This has the effect of focussing the reader's attention even more strongly on the poet's sense of horror.

The symmetry within this comparison is also noteworthy. While ll.73-76 present the peace of the natural scene and ll.77-80 show the concord of family life, the whole ottava highlights the harmony between Man and Nature—the bird seek refuge in the wood and the peasant finds peace with his wife and children.

The harshness and suffering caused by warfare, depicted in ll.81-88, are reinforced by the repetition of "hard" sounds—hard "g": "guardo", "sangue"; hard "c": "Correr", "coloni", "Col"; "q": "quanto", "quante", "quanti"—while the tears and bereavement of widows and orphans, ll.83,84, are highlighted by the contrast with the tableau of family unity ll.77-80. The sentence, "Io guardo e gemo" l.81, is striking and effective. Not only does it link these two ottave, but it also heightens the contrast between them, for when the poet shudders he is looking at the idyllic scene of ll. 73-80 and it is precisely this which helps him to be horrified by how different things must be in France. After inveighing against his own century, in which the art of warfare is more advanced than ever, ll.89-96, and lamenting the fall of Napoleon III, ll.97-104, the poet returns to the fundamental theme of the opening lines of the ode—his desire to belong no longer to the human race, but to see himself as part of Nature; while mankind continues to inflict such terrible suffering upon itself.

The use of the ottava gives the poem the overtones of epic grandeur which are synonymous with the recounting of historical events. The dignity and sombre melancholy tone, which imbue the whole work, are reinforced by Zanella's choice of a more varied rhyme, ABBACDCD, than the more usual one, ABABABCC, which might have tended to lessen the dramatic impact of such a serious subject. The substitution of settenari for endecasillabi tends to attenuate the gravity of the subject, whilst not undermining its importance. On the contrary, the shorter seven-syllable line helps to stress the sense of urgency and tautness which heighten the poem's impact. It is also noteworthy how Zanella is able to adapt the settenario—fully exploiting its versatility and flexibility—in order to convey both the idyllic peace of nature and his own sense of horror at the misery caused by warfare.

It is interesting that whilst Zanella, in certain poems, turned to Classical Mythology as an escape from the cold materialism of his own age, he should seek refuge from the harsh reality of Man's cruelty in the peace and calm of natural beauty.

(V) CIVILIZATION AND RISORGIMENTO VALUES

In this section one can see how Zanella's condemnation of colonialism is linked to an almost hierarchical scale of values, in which the attainment of freedom, justifiable and praiseworthy though it is, should not be viewed as an end in itself, for it inevitably brings the concomitant responsibility and obligation to aspire to higher "spiritual" goals, including, contributing to civilization and the progress of mankind, as well as the realization that the Risorgimento should not be political, but also intellectual, cultural, artistic, moral and spiritual.

Thus, in the sonnet, Ad Enrico Austin Layard scopritore ed illustratore delle rovine di Ninive, Ministro d'Inghilterra alla Corte di Madrid 1876,

Tauri alati, di benda adorni volti,  
Accosciati leoni e ne' graniti  
I pomposi di Belo incisi riti,  
De' prischi evi Colombo, hai dissepoliti.

Altri defunti ed altri regni hai tolti  
A lunga obblivion ne' nostri liti,  
Tu che all'Europa ancor Murano additi  
E da nove Cellini i bronzi scolti.

Pago l'alto tuo cor dunque non era,  
Che per tutte le terre e gli oceani  
Andasse emula al Sol l'angla bandiera,

Se del britanno, divinamente ingegno,  
O Layard, non avean delle tue mani  
Tutti i secoli e l'arti impresso il segno?

after paying high tribute to the work of Layard as an archeologist and to the way in which he has encouraged the Arts,<sup>191</sup> Zanella condemns the expansion of the British Empire.

The basic theme that a country should contribute to human progress and civilization rather than concentrate on colonial expansion is positively, constructively and effectively conveyed, without undue rhetoric, but by means of a specific, relevant instance, Layard's archeological discoveries and his reviving of arts and crafts.

This is, in effect, closely connected with Zanella's view of Italy —that, drawing upon her past heritage, she should express herself, in future, through her contribution to civilization and human progress.

The first quartina exotically conjures up the archeological atmosphere of Layard's discoveries. To describe him as a Columbus is original

191. Poesie (1928), p.494: "Per i consigli e l'opera del Layard i vicentini Salviati e Cortellazzo risuscitarono l'arte de' nielli. (Z).".



and noteworthy, it shows the great importance Zanella attached to Layard's discoveries.

The unusual term, "Accosciati" l.2, is striking and effective in describing the "seated" lions of Antiquity.

The two terzine effectively present Zanella's basic argument—could England not assert herself and make a far bigger impact through Layard's achievements than through colonial expansion?—in the form of an incisive question, which is heightened by its contrast with the colourful, exotic tone of ll.1-8. The whole sonnet is well-balanced, well-developed and has a unifying thread running through it.

The quartine entitled Le Catacombe di Roma 1876 also contain a condemnation of colonialism and constitute, in effect, an emphatic reaffirmation of Zanella's strong links with the "spiritualistic" back-cloth of the Risorgimento. The poem is also of interest, apart from its not inconsiderable inherent worth, since it marks a dramatic turning-point in Zanella's recovery from his terrible crisis, 1872-75.

Whilst the ode, Nelle nozze Lampertico-Mangilli, Alla sposa 1876, betrays the bitterness and pessimism of depression, these feelings are not evident in Le Catacombe di Roma, which was also published for the wedding of Angela Lampertico and Fabio Mangilli. In fact, the poet himself was aware of the "re-awakening" of his love of composing poetry:

Ecco la dedica dello Zanella alla sposa, in data del 24 aprile 1876: "Abbiti questi versi ... Li ho scritti, quando l'anima, partecipando della nuova allegrezza, sentì rinascere in sé l'antico amore dell'arte ..." 192

One is reminded of Leopardi's poem, Il risorgimento, in which he celebrates the "resurrection" of his imagination and his ability to feel after the five years of his "poetic silence".

Le Catacombe di Roma is undoubtedly one of Zanella's best "post-depression" poems. This is primarily because all its various elements, rhyme, metre, vocabulary and thematic development, combine harmoniously and reinforce each other to convey the fundamental themes very effectively.

In the opening lines of the poem,

Ne' grandi calici  
Spuma il Falerno: 193  
Cantando i Sali  
L'impero eterno.

Bendata vittima  
Sul Palatino  
Gli altari imporpora  
Sacri a Quirino.

ll.1-8,

192. Ibid., p.204.

193. Cf. Carducci, A Satana, ll.5,6: "Mentre ne' calici/Il vin scintilla".

Zanella very concisely and dramatically conveys a portrait of mighty, pagan Rome, seemingly invulnerable and unaware of the gathering storm:

Come all'irrompere  
Della tempesta  
Ondeggia e mormora  
Ampia foresta, ll.9-12.

One can see from these strofe how compact each quartina is, especially because of the poet's use of quinari rather than the more usual endecasillabi, and how effectively he exploits this very "brevity" to heighten the impact of the dramatic, Classical vocabulary, particularly appropriate with reference to Ancient Rome, whose atmosphere is very evocatively invoked—"Falerno", "Salii", "Palatino", "Quirino". The conciseness and vividness of the imagery are very striking. Thus, in the first two verses, Rome's wealth, implicit corruption and lack of awareness of any imminent danger<sup>194</sup> are all very well brought out. Rome's self-assurance is confirmed in ll.3 and 4, by being presented as virtually an article of faith of the State Religion, whose pagan cruelty is illustrated in ll.5-8. The verb, "imporpora", l.7, is an excellent example of the dramatic force of the vocabulary, for the impact of its visual imagery is stressed by its active grammatical subject, "Bendata vittima" l.5, who is really the passive, helpless, sacrificial victim.

The rapid, agile quinari not only contribute to the "brevity" of the quartine and the dramatic impact of the vocabulary, but also, and primarily, enhance the febrile pace and sense of urgency, foreboding and doom, which pervade the poem.

The first five strofe, ll.1-20, present the might of Imperial Rome. Centrally and symmetrically situated within them, the third strofa, ll.9-12, introduces the idea of an impending, unidentified cataclysm. The effect of ll.9-12 is heightened by contrast with ll.13-20, which stress the lack of concern of the Romans.

The next five strofe, ll.23-40, present the cruelties of Rome, which had been anticipated in ll.5-8. Particularly noteworthy is the way in which Zanella fully exploits the briskness of the quinari to convey more effectively the sheer speed and ruthless efficiency with which Rome's conquests had been achieved:

Truce Romulida!  
I corsi mari, 195  
L'arse metropoli,  
Gl'infranti altari;

194. These themes seem to be echoing ll.25-28 of Aleardi's Le città italiane marinare e commercianti— (Baldacci, p.543).

195. Cf. Aleardi, Le prime storie, l.338, "... le corse terre", (Baldacci, p.522).

Regali vergini

Tratte pel crine,  
Pugne, vittorie,  
Fughe e ruine;

Dal Tago all'ultime  
Scitiche brume  
Stese dell'Aquile  
L'avare piume;

11.29-40.

The next two strofe echo the message of 11.9-12:

I fidi oracoli,  
L'eterno impero  
Volvi nel tumido  
Ebbro pensiero;

E sotto il fervido  
Asse non senti  
Mugghiar del Pantheon  
I fondamenti?

11.41-48,

and—through the almost imperceptible slowing down of the pace, combined with the tone of menace and foreboding—prepare for the central part, 11.49-92, of the poem in which Zanella simultaneously presents the rise of Christianity, from the obscurity of the catacombs, and the distant threat to the power of Imperial Rome.

From a subdued beginning,

Al cupo sonito,  
Come di tomba,  
Ch'entro la concava  
Terra rimbomba,

11.49-52,

the tone and pace gradually increase in intensity, as, for example, in 11.65-68,

L'ossa bisbigliano:  
Entro l'ampolle  
Il pio de' Martiri  
Sangue ribolle:

until they reach a climax,

Già volge al vespero  
L'ora de' forti:  
Sul divin Tevere  
Vincono i morti.

11.89-92,

which is sustained in the next four strofe, describing the barbarian invaders who bring about the fall of the Roman Empire and exact revenge for its cruelties.<sup>196</sup>

The final four strofe are an appeal to the Church to provide spiritual guidance so that Rome will once again lead the world. In condemning Rome's conquests, as he had condemned the expansion of the British Empire (cf. the preceding sonnet Ad Enrico Austin Layard, 1876), Zanella was, of course, echoing Foscolo:

196. Cf. similar themes in 11.1-18 of Aleardi's Le città italiane marinare e commercianti, (Baldacci, pp.541,542).



E vi furono de' popoli che, per non obbedire a' Romani ladroni del mondo, diedero all'incendio le loro case, le loro mogli, i loro figli e se medesimi, sotterando fra le gloriose ruine e le ceneri della loro patria la lor sacra indipendenza.<sup>197</sup>

Thus, in terms of the relative merits of colonialism and civilization, Zanella was in tune with the true spirit of the philosophy of the Italian Risorgimento at its best, as in the writings of Mazzini and Foscolo. The former wanted Italy and all the peoples of the world to have their freedom and independence, within the context of a world federation. Foscolo, as has been seen above, loved freedom so dearly that he was even prepared to censure Rome's conquests. This is a measure of the greatness of the Italian Risorgimento, when one considers what an important part of Italy's heritage the achievements of Ancient Rome constitute. Despite this, men like Foscolo were willing to censure Rome's expansion, not only because they loved freedom, but also because they could not brook inconsistency—if Italy had a right to her freedom and independence, so did every other nation, past and present.

Zanella's reference to the cruelties of pagan Rome seems exaggerated when one assesses Roman civilization and its institutions,<sup>198</sup> in their historical context. Rome was less cruel and had a more profound civilizing influence—with the possible exception of Greece—than its predecessors, or, the barbarian invaders who brought about its downfall. One has only to consider the benefits of the Pax Romana — possibly one of the happiest and most stable periods of history; Roman law; engineering; cultural and religious tolerance; the equal rights enjoyed by all Roman citizens, irrespective of race or creed; and, of course, the inescapable fact that the Roman Empire could never have lasted for so many centuries, unless it had been able successfully to integrate all the different peoples under its rule.

And yet, the Risorgimento patriots valued freedom more highly than the benefits of civilization, even those bestowed by the greatest empire the world has seen.

It is understandable, therefore, that against the "spiritualistic" ideological and philosophical background of the Risorgimento—including, for example, Gioberti's Primato morale e civile degli Italiani—Zanella should view Italy's future destiny in terms of moral and spiritual values (cf. A Lodovico Pasini, pp. 173-5 ), rather than those (colonialism, materialism) inspired by the practical pragmatism of positivism (cf. Il lavoro, pp. 192-194 ).

197. U. Foscolo, Ultime lettere di Jacopo Ortis, Milano, B.U.R., 1949, p.16.

198. As Zanella himself had done, for example, in Per gli ossari in San Martino e Solferino, ll.37-42, cf. p. 176.

But Zanella was also concerned with contemporary artistic and cultural achievements, as may be seen in the sonnet, A Giacinto Gallina 1879, in which there is, in fact, a convergence of various themes including patriotism, implicit regional pride,<sup>199</sup> the fundamental belief in Italy's "civilizing influence" and the related conviction that the Risorgimento should not merely be political, but also intellectual, cultural, artistic, moral and spiritual (cf. Mazzini).

This sonnet,

Se verrà dî che a quella di bei sali  
E di lepidi motti egregia vena,  
Onde la colpa sorridendo assali,  
Atleta quadrilustre, in sulla scena,

Somnacchino le genti a' saturnali  
Use d'oltr'alpe, io non dirò sol piena  
La ruina dell'Arte e de' miei strali  
Segno sol non farò l'usanza oscena;

Ma di virtù dirò spento ogni raggio,  
Spento di patria il sentimento altero  
Che a noi schiavi infondea maschio coraggio.

E griderò: che val se lo straniero  
L'Alpi varcò, quando in più reo servaggio  
Se stesso obblia l'italico pensiero?

although not one of Zanella's best works, and, not surprisingly, omitted from the fourth (1885) edition of his poetry, does illustrate how, even in a "minor" poem, the hallmarks of his art—Classical elegance, conciseness and stylistic perfectionism—are evident.<sup>200</sup>

In particular, one is also struck by the way Zanella develops his argument. Having established the inherent value of Gallina's works as being due to his humorous, but unmalicious, attacks on faults and injustices—Zanella effectively describes Gallina's witty, biting irony as having "bei sali" l.1 and "lepidi motti" l.2—the poet goes on to explain, in the rest of the sonnet, why he would object so strongly if people were to fall asleep during performances of Gallina's plays. Firstly, the poet would conclude that "La ruina dell'Arte", l.7, was complete. He indicates his strength of feeling by referring to the audience's falling asleep as "l'usanza oscena" l.8, which would merit his sharp condemnation, "strali", l.7.

The gradual, sustained increase in the intensity of Zanella's feelings, evident in the progression from "dirò" l.6 to "griderò" l.12, continues in the first terzina, as he correlates the courage, valour and "virtù", l.9

199. Giacinto Gallina (1852-1897) was a Venetian playwright, who, after his first work, Le baruffe in famiglia 1872, was "Salutato come continuatore della tradizione goldoniana" (cf. Cattaneo, p.474).

200. While one can also see how much importance Zanella attached to the unity, balance, harmony and cohesion of a composition (cf. Ch.2, pp. 16;41-2;44-5 —with particular regard to Parini and Manzoni).

—with all its Roman overtones of patriotic and civic commitment and sacrifice—through which Italy has gained her freedom, with an appreciation of art and culture.

The climax comes in the startling and striking rhetorical question with which the sonnet ends. It is, of course, a strong reaffirmation of the importance of the "spiritualistic" back-cloth of the Risorgimento for Zanella.<sup>201</sup> It also shows his awareness of the erosion of Risorgimento values and the corresponding ascendancy of positivism, scientific materialism and economic considerations.

#### (VI) CHURCH AND STATE

It is perfectly understandable that Zanella, as a priest—considered too liberal in his political views by the Church—and as a patriot—regarded as a reactionary by the liberals—should strongly desire harmony between Church and State. This is not only an important theme in Zanella's poetry, but also one of the antinomies which constitutes a variation on the fundamental leitmotif of spirituality and materialism.

The sonnet, La pace di Venezia fra Papa Alessandro III e l'Imperatore Barbarossa 1876, which is in effect of an occasional nature,<sup>202</sup> shows the link, which existed for Zanella, between Italian patriotism and the Church. Even though important political objectives of the Risorgimento—such as, Italian unification (1861), the addition of Venice (1866), and Rome as the capital (1870)—had already been achieved, Zanella continued to be greatly concerned with relations between Church and State and eagerly hoped for a reconciliation between them. In this sonnet, in fact, he seems to be stressing the importance of the Pope (Church) and the Emperor (State):

Slegato il brando e con in man la fronda  
Del santo ulivo il Successor d' Enrico  
A lui che tanta aura di Dio circonda  
Piega il regal ginocchio in atto amico. ll.5-8,

and even exaggerating the cordiality between them, whilst appearing to

201. The way Zanella correlates a decline in artistic values ("La ruina dell'Arte" l.7) with a loss of patriotic ardour ("virtù", l.9) and an even worse condition than foreign domination ("più reo servaggio", l.13) is reminiscent of Carducci's earlier treatment of a similar thematic association in the sonnet, Carlo Goldoni, ll.9-14: "Riedi; e i goti ricaccia .../ .../ .../ Ma no; ch'oggi tu biasmo e onor la brutta/Schiera s'avrebbe. Oh per viltà novella/Quanto basso caduta italic' arte!".

202. Poesie (1928), p.493: "Pubblicato nel libro: Settimo centenario di Legnano festeggiato in Verona, Verona, 1876".



ignore the tripartite nature of the meeting,<sup>203</sup> which was, after all, arranged as "... a conference between the representatives of the Emperor and of the Communes ... under the presidency of Alexander at Venice".<sup>204</sup>

The only real "poetry", at least in the sense of the expression of an impulso lirico, is in the first terzina,

Di pace intanto ripetean<sup>205</sup> parole  
I lidi stupefatti, e le marine  
Più radioso illuminava il Sole,

particularly in the Classical, Virgilian imagery of the personification of ll.9,10, whence even the natural surroundings participate in, and reflect, the wonderful historical event, implicit in the title, and its full significance.

A work of a much higher standard is the ode, A Leone XIII 1887, through which Zanella was hoping to influence events:

Quest'ode fu scritta e pubblicata, da S.Lapi di Città di Castello, nel 1887, dopo che l'allocuzione pontificia del 23 maggio aveva dato adito a speranze di una pacificazione fra lo Stato e la Chiesa anche in Italia. "Le mando—scriveva lo Zanella al prof. Adolfo Borgognoni il 14 settembre '87—l'ode a Leone XIII. Ella vedrà che ho camminato sul taglio d'un rasoio. Il Papa la lesse, nè gli dispiacque. Fortunati Orfeo e Anfione che movevano i sassi!"<sup>206</sup>

Perhaps because Zanella was dealing with a theme, a reconciliation between Church and State, which was very important to him, or perhaps because he wished to make his appeal to Leo XIII as eloquent and efficacious as possible, the "compact" quartine, of three settenari and a quinario, have something of the vibrant, taut quality of Le catacombe di Roma, as well as its sweeping, panoramic, historical perspective, due to the rapid succession of "images".

Zanella is very tactful towards Leo XIII and frequently refers to the great, world-wide, moral authority wielded by the Papacy, as in the opening lines of the ode:

Inerme e prigioniero  
Mandi la tua parola,  
Che desiata vola,  
Al mondo intero;

203. Cf. Salinari, p.687: "... il realismo caratteristico del Carducci si avverte, oltre che nei particolari storici e descrittivi... nell'impostazione generale che è tutta allusiva... a una particolare interpretazione degli avvenimenti a cui si accenna ...". The same is, to a great extent, true of Zanella—in this sonnet he is stressing Church-State relations and seeming to ignore the rôle of the Communes, which, however, is precisely what concerns Carducci most closely in Su i campi di Marengo.

204. J.P. Trevelyan, A Short History of the Italian People, London, 1959, p.87.

205. Cf. Aleardi, Le città italiane marinare e commercianti, ll.83,84, "... e ripetean le rive/ ... il canto" (Baldacci, p.545).

206. Poesie (1928), p.296.

E de' potenti il brando  
 Stretto a comun ruina  
 Respinge alla vagina  
 Il tuo comando.

ll.1-8.

Here for example, the acknowledgement of the reality of the Pope's condition as "the prisoner of the Vatican" l.l, divested of his temporal power through the loss of the Papal States and Rome, is counterbalanced by the reference to his spiritual, moral authority—directed towards peaceful, benevolent ends—and the description of the latter in terms of tangible, concrete, political, temporal power. The implications are that the temporal power, which has been lost, is, after all, really only important in an earthly, "material" sense, while the moral authority is world-wide and on a much higher "spiritual" level.

This is the fundamental idea informing the whole poem, whose function is to reinforce it and present it in different ways. Thus the Church's prestige is enhanced by her long history, which the poet traces from its earliest beginnings—against the background of the Fall of Rome, brought about by the barbarian invaders; the Pope's unarmed defence of the Eternal City against Attila the Hun; the Church's relationship with the Holy Roman Empire—up to its contemporary, catholic, universal status under Leo XIII. The whole of the Church's history is effectively and concisely conveyed with characteristic, Classical elegance, through a simile with the sun:

Era di Dio la figlia;  
 Simile al Sol, che al monte  
 Col primo stral la fronte  
 Erta invermiglia;

Indi al meriggio ascende,  
 E ne' suoi rai fecondi  
 I più lontani mondi

Avvolge e splende.

ll.45-52.

Apart from the obvious symbolism of the "light of faith" bringing comfort to all mankind, this simile is also effective since it makes the Church's rise, from its humble beginnings to its world-wide status, seem logical, natural, inevitable and divinely pre-ordained—just as the sun gradually emerges from the darkness and obscurity of the night to dominate a vast landscape.

The second half of the poem deals almost exclusively with the relationship between the Papacy and Italy. The latter sees herself as "...un'infida/Reietta ..." ll.109-110, who is crying out for peace and stability. Zanella asks the Pope to intervene by using his great influence to bring peace and harmony, for the poet fears that the seeds of discontent and revolution are now being sown. Zanella's concluding plea to the Pope:<sup>207</sup>

207. Cf. Fogazzaro's novel, *Il santo* (1906), in which Piero Maironi ("il santo") discusses his "mission" "...col papa (nel quale...è da riconoscere Leone XIII)". (*Cattaneo*, p.424).

"D'Italia odi la voce;/Ed, arra a lei di vita,/La Croce sua marita/Alla tua Croce" ll.185-188, is preceded by the poet's evocation of Italy's divinely-ordained preminence:

Padre! Se al ciel più cara  
Di questa itala terra  
Contrada mar non serra,  
O Sol rischiara:

Se il mondo Iddio le diede  
In altra età: se pose  
Delle celesti cose  
In lei la sede,

ll.149-156,

as well as by a restatement of the ode's fundamental theme (enunciated in the opening lines):

O degli erranti umani  
Posto a guardar l'eterno,  
Mentre il frale al governo  
È d'altre mani,

ll.117-120.

In this quartina, the clash between the "material" (temporal, political power) and "spiritual" (moral authority) planes<sup>208</sup> is crystallized in the context of Man himself, in the Thomistic terms of body and soul. The obviously much greater importance of the latter, "l'eterno" l.118, as compared to the former, is stressed by the poet's referring to the human body as "il frale", thereby accentuating its finite, weak and materially-corruptible nature—as against "l'eterno", l.118—and so further demonstrating the "irrelevance" of the Papacy's lost temporal power.

This chapter provides further confirmation of the very close correspondence between Zanella's poetry and the broad outlines of his poetica. Thus, his "Romantic" treatment of social problems and matters of contemporary interest, both national and international, in terms of the "active" (reforming, didactic, moralising) and "passive" (reflecting contemporary society and historical reality) rôles of literature—in line with the definition of "Romanticism" given in Chapter (2), pp. 13,14—is contained within a Classical, stylistic framework. The latter, again in line with Zanella's poetica, is reminiscent of Parini because of its Classical elegance, balance, unity, harmony, cohesion and stylistic perfectionism, while its most distinguishing characteristic has been identified by Momigliano as a "compressed vitality" "... che solo un classico robusto

208. This is very reminiscent of the Cavourian formula of a "Free Church in a Free State" as well as the great statesman's basic approach to the Vatican: "Once abandon the outworn claim to the Temporal Power, he urged, and the Church would acquire an influence never before attained over the spiritual life of the people ..." (Trevelyan, op. cit., p.363). There are also obvious Biblical overtones: "Render, therefore, to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's".



poteva rinchiudere in un angusto scenario" (cf. p.215 , note 116).

Attempting to place Zanella in his historical context is conditioned by two fundamental factors: on the one hand, he seems to "retrace" or reflect many of the "evolutionary stages" in the literary arc from Parini to Carducci and Pascoli, while, on the other hand, he almost appears to occupy an intermediary, or even "conciliatory", position between the first and second halves of the nineteenth century.

Thus, his patriotism is closely tied to the Romantic, "spiritualistic" values of the Risorgimento (cf. Foscolo, Mazzini, Gioberti), so that he does not merely wish Italy's "Resurrection" to be purely political, material or economic, and certainly not imperialistic, but also intellectual, artistic, moral and spiritual. In other words, once Italy has gained her freedom, independence and unity (1861), Venice has been added (1866), Rome made the capital (1870), and a reconciliation between Church and State effected, Italy, apart from the resolution of internal social problems, should fulfil her destiny through her civilising influence, bearing in mind her already unique contribution, for Zanella sees Italy as having dominated the world, politically through the Roman Empire, culturally during the Renaissance, and spiritually through the Church of Rome.

Despite Zanella's rejection of colonialism, it is interesting that his compassion for the plight of Irish emigrants to America should have made him justify their displacing the original, Red Indian inhabitants (cf. Il lavoro, pp. 192-5 ). Although this is virtually the only time Zanella justifies what was, in effect, colonization, one can see how he was anticipating<sup>209</sup> the unjust and paradoxical combination of "socialism at home, colonialism abroad"—also inspired by a desire to resolve the problem of emigration—in Pascoli.

Another important aspect of this chapter is Zanella's "socialism", which was in the Christian, moralising tradition of Parini and Manzoni. Not surprisingly, Zanella's treatment and presentation of social problems, particularly those of the peasants, seem to reflect many of the "evolutionary stages" of la linea del realismo, including: Manzoni's concern with il mondo degli umili<sup>210</sup> the works of Grossi and Manzoni's followers, the

209. Zanella was also "linking" the idealism of the Risorgimento with the political pragmatism of colonialism in "anticipating" the scruples felt by Ferdinando Martini (1841-1928): "Del '91 è il suo libro Nell'Affrica italiana. Impressioni e ricordi ... dove ... è espresso il responsabile atteggiamento di un uomo del Risorgimento di fronte alle 'tristi e talora disoneste necessità' dell'avventura colonialista". (Cattaneo, pp.440-441).

210. Cf. also Gli ospizi marini (pp.207-8 )—not only regarding its importance as an evolutionary progression in la via del realismo, but also since it indicates Zanella's "intermediary" rôle ("linking" Leopardi and Prati with Carducci and Pascoli) in terms of his view of Nature and Society.

articles in Rivista Europea of Tenca, Correnti and Carcano, as well as the latter's novels, and those writers who could be said to constitute a pre-veristic Venetian tradition: Lorenzo Crico, Francesco Dall'Ongaro, Caterina Percoto, Luigia Codèmo, and, of course, Ippolito Nievo.

In relation to his contemporaries, Zanella, because of his concern with social problems and his awareness of "... l'insufficienza degli ideali romantici pratiani" as well as "la recondita tara della scienza positivista ...", was classified, by Baldacci, amongst those poets who dealt with "la poesia della nuova Italia"—such as, Costantino Nigra, Felice Cavallotti, Mario Rapisardi, Olindo Guerrini and Giuseppe Aurelio Costanzo.<sup>211</sup>

In fact, the most relevant similarity, as far as Zanella is concerned, is with Costantino Nigra. Cusatelli has pointed out that Nigra, in his Idilli 1893, did attempt "... una celebrazione del paesaggio piemontese e della vita rustica che ha parecchi punti di contatto con lo Zanella...", in terms of "... un realismo calmo e ben calcolato...su strutture stilistiche d'estrazione classicistica, ma con l'intervento di temi e d'interessi innovatori ..."<sup>212</sup> It is precisely in the context of Nigra's similarities with Zanella<sup>213</sup> that Cusatelli shows how Zanella, although providing a possible solution, albeit in a minor key, to the post-Romantic crisis of form, as well as to the problem of dealing with "reality", should be overshadowed by Carducci:

Ma la maniera di realismo raggiunta da Zanella non era facilmente ripetibile, specie quando si faceva sentire, in concorrenza, la soluzione carducciana, ben altrimenti plastica e sonante. 214

Zanella's concern with mankind was not restricted to the regional, social, national or international levels, for he also adopted, especially in his best work, Sopra una conchiglia fossile nel mio studio 1864, an all-embracing cosmic vision. For Cusatelli<sup>215</sup> and Baldacci,<sup>216</sup> Zanella is continuing the eighteenth-century tradition of "poesia della scienza"

211. Baldacci, pp.XXXI-XXXVI.

212. Cusatelli, p.562.

213. G.Petrocchi, Fede e poesia dell'Ottocento, Padova, 1948, pp.27,28, refers to: "... la scuola nata dallo Zanella ... la Bonacci Brunamonti, il Nigra, l'Aganoor giovane prima che la sua vena si colmasse di inquietudine decadente ...", while "... nel ...Fogazzaro l'ascendenza zanelliana si limiterà ad una educazione del verso ...". Certainly Zanella would seem to have influenced Alinda Bonacci Brunamonti (1841-1903)—"Vissuta nel culto dei classici e della natura, il suo temperamento raziocinante e pensoso la portava a risolvere l'idillio nella moralità". (Muscetta and Sormani, Vol.II,p.1498).

214. Cusatelli, p.562.

215. Ibid., pp.559,560.

216. Baldacci, pp.XXXIV, XXXV.

or "poesia panica" established by Mascheroni and Monti. It could also be said that Zanella's vision<sup>217</sup> found interesting parallels with the "religiosità cosmica" in Tommaseo's Poesie 1872, as well as anticipating the views of his disciple Fogazzaro—who extrapolated the Theory of Evolution from the material and biological plane to the spiritual and moral level (cf. Ascensioni umane)—and, to a lesser extent, Pascoli's mystical sense of wonder at the immensity of the Cosmos.

Zanella's attempts to reconcile Church and State, and Science and Faith, in Sopra una conchiglia fossile, together with the ode's uplifting, radiant optimism for the future of mankind, also to be found, for example, in A Fedele Lampertico 1867, as well as his moderate, liberal, progressive Catholicism, were all factors which contributed, as Guido Mazzoni has indicated, to Zanella's Versi (1868) being so well received that he was "... acclamato della nuova Italia poeta principe".<sup>218</sup> In other words, Zanella was very much in line with the "official", cultural background and its fundamental, stable equilibrium between "spirituality" (Christian, moralising, Romantic, "spiritualistic", Risorgimento values) and "materialism" (nascent positivism, tremendous enthusiasm and optimism in scientific advances and Man's ingenuity to resolve social problems).

However, by the 1880s, not only had science not been able to resolve many problems, but incipient industrialization was raising new ones, while the deteriorating plight of the peasants, the consequent problem of emigration, as well as the financial, banking and parliamentary corruption, which were all looming very large against the dismal, socio-economic and political scenario, were bound, inevitably, to produce a bitter sense of disillusionment in Zanella, foreshadowing, in many ways, the Mal du siècle—or crisis of confidence in Western Man—at the end of the nineteenth century.

At a deeper level, the balance between "spirituality" and "materialism" had been nullified, for the erosion of Risorgimento values had been matched by the gradual ascendancy of positivism, scientific materialism, anticlericalism and atheism.

The theme of "spirituality and materialism", the leitmotif of Zanella's whole poetic output, will be examined in detail in the following chapter.

217. Cf. striking, if "superficial", Aleardian reminiscences in the following footnotes— 150, 154, 155, 157, 158, 159, 163, 169, 170, 172, 174 (pp. 227-232 ).

218. Mazzoni, p. 1381.



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### CHAPTER (6): SPIRITUALITY AND MATERIALISM

From the critical analysis of the poems in this chapter, it will be seen that the relationship between God and Man was at the heart of Zanella's religious and spiritual values and beliefs. In fact, he regarded this link as being of fundamental importance in terms of Man's understanding of life, existence and the universe. If Man does not fully appreciate this is because of the incompleteness of his knowledge. Science can help to fill this lacuna, and the more we know of truth, the more we will know about God. In other words, Man's God-given intellect should utilise and develop the tool of Science so that through a better grasp of the functioning of the universe, as well as its great complexity and marvellous order, Man will more fully realise the majesty of God's creation. Not surprisingly, therefore, Zanella tried to reconcile Science and Religion. In particular, in his youthful optimism, he was also naïvely enthusiastic about the benefits to mankind which would derive from scientific progress. When, however, he felt that (what he saw as) the various extreme aberrations of positivism—scientific materialism, atheism, the Theory of Evolution, extreme socialism, the dangers and disadvantages of industrialisation—were gaining ground and not only threatening his own cherished spiritual and religious values,<sup>1</sup> but also the whole fabric of society, he naturally reacted with a resolute defence of his own spiritual values, as well as blistering attacks on positivism and what he regarded as Man's pride and arrogance. For Man was not merely disturbing the balance of the relationship between the human and the divine, he was even denying the existence of God.

#### (I) SPIRITUALITY AND MATERIALISM

"Spirituality and materialism", the most fundamental of all the thematic dualities in Zanella's poetry, appears, in the works considered in this section, in a variety of ways, including: the early, but vague, note of caution in Psiche 1847; the contrast between the sacred and the profane, as in Sulle rovine di un antico convento nei colli Euganei 1869; the description of the poet's own spiritual crisis, Dopo una lettura della "Imitazione di Cristo" 1869, and an examination of the tormented soul of a cold-blooded murderer, Corrado 1885; a comparison between physical and spiritual blindness, Per l'albo d'una cieca 1870; the crushing im-

1. Cf. Pasquazi (1967), p.71, note (1): "Alla protesta antipositivista e antievoluzionista dello Zanella si ricollega in qualche modo la sua critica contro certa filologia corrosiva, che in quel tempo, puntava le sue armi contro i quattro Evangelisti".

fact which suffering can have, Il Piccolo Calabrese 1870; the apparent insignificance of the world and its problems, when viewed from the perspective of eternity, In morte di Pio IX Pontefice 1878; and, the link between material and spiritual beauty, Per l'albo di una fanciulla 1878 and Per l'album di una giovinetta studiosissima 1882.

In one of Zanella's earliest poems, Psiche 1847,<sup>2</sup> we find the admonition, albeit in mild terms, that the human soul should be satisfied with the limited knowledge to it, which is, in any case, sufficient for its happiness:

O dell'anima umana, a cui fatale  
È sovente del ver la conoscenza,  
Immagine gentil, Psiche immortale;

O divina farfalla, a cui l'essenza  
Delle cose è nascosta, o sol si svela  
Quanto basti al gioir dell'innocenza;

Lascia Psiche, l'improvvida querela,  
Nè desiar conoscere lo sposo  
Che la temuta oscurità ti cela.

ll.1-9.

Thus, in the opening lines, the poet has enunciated the work's fundamental theme. It is an essential aspect of Zanella's basic philosophical standpoint, for, in its amplified, developed form, it will be of central importance in his defence of spiritual values against the onslaught of scientific materialism and positivism.

"Psyche", the character from Classical Mythology, symbolises the human soul for the poet. However, the way in which this symbolism is conveyed is heavily over-stated— "O dell'anima umana .../ .../Immagine gentil, Psiche immortale;" ll.1-3, and, again: "O divina farfalla ...", l.4, while the remainder of the first two terzine have a sententious, didactic quality which is too obtrusive and is stressed by the repetitive similarity in ll.1 and 4.

By recounting the story in the present tense, Zanella gives it a greater impact and sense of immediacy. This whole effect is enhanced by his continued attempt, ll.10-18, to dissuade Psiche from seeing the face of her spouse. In this way an element of suspense is introduced as the reader wonders whether the poet is going to change the mythological story.

Although this does not happen,

Ella non ode. Della manca al lume  
Schermo facendo, il talamo vietato  
Entra perplessa e pende in sulle piume.

ll.19-21,

2. Poesie (1928), p.6: "Era in origine la traduzione libera d'una elegia latina di Carlo Bologna, professore nel seminario di Vicenza. Completamente rimaneggiata, comparve come originale nella prima edizione del 1868; lasciata fuori nella terza, ricomparve nella quarta ...".



Zanella's description, ll.19-38, of Psiche's desire to see Cupid, her hesitation and then her surprise at his handsome appearance constitutes the most effective part of the poem, for not only is it free from any sententious, didactic moralising, but it also betrays the poet's delight in dealing with an episode from a bygone, mythical age which allows him to evade the problems of his own century.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, for example, in the following terzina,

Aleggia sulle labbra porporine  
Molle il respiro, ed in vezzose anella  
Scende pel collo fluttuando il crine.                      ll.31-33,

the delicate, languorous sensuality of these lines is conveyed through a variety of means, including: the breathing of the sleeping god described effectively through the verb, "aleggia", which aptly expresses its gentle, repetitive movement; the very gradual "flowing" of the hair is made to seem like a slow, graceful cadence—through the long word, "fluttuando"—which almost complements that of Cupid's "Molle... respiro..."; while the very "slowness" of these lines, enhanced by the many double consonants, seems to stress the intense lingering gaze of Psiche.

The use of words such as "piume" l.21, "coltri" l.26 and "purpureo strato" l.22 to describe Cupid's bed, as well as l.24: "In nettarea quiete addormentato", remind one of the luxury and opulence of the young nobleman in Parini's Il giorno.

The use of terzine helps to atomise the material, enabling the poet to examine Psiche's state of mind in detail and also assists in conveying the gradual unfolding of the events in the mythological episode, particularly with regard to ll.19-38.

In order to heighten, by contrast, the gentleness of this section, Zanella, by exploiting the versatility of the endecasillabi to convey different moods, changes the pace to a faster one:

...                      dall'agitata  
Lampada si dispicca una scintilla  
E stridula si apprende alla rosata  
Spalla d'Amore, che con alto grido  
Balza dal letto esterefatto e guata  
Psiche smarrita ed il rasoio infido  
E l'odiata lucerna: alle nemiche  
Ombre s'invola con terror Cupido.                      ll.38-45,

as he depicts Cupid's rude awakening and flight into the darkness. The tautness of these lines is, of course, reinforced by the repeated use

3. These are features which are also present in poems such as Possagno 1849, Timossena 1865, Alcione 1868 and Aglaia 1878, all of which, together with Psiche, constitute the classical trend in Zanella's poetry. The basic contrast between the Classical past and the problems of the present will find an echo in Carducci (cf. Omero (I), Rime nuove).

of enjambement, which also stresses the dramatic impact of the last words of the lines.

The second half of the poem deals almost exclusively with the harsh consequences of Psiche's actions, as she is punished by Venus. This part of the work counterbalances the lighter mood of ll.19-38 and reminds the reader of the opening terzine, ll.1-9, in which the fundamental theme had been established.

In other words, Psiche's search for knowledge, which was beyond her grasp—seeing the face of Cupid—and her subsequent punishment offer an implicit parallel with Man's pride and arrogance resulting in the Fall.

This analogy is re-emphasized in ll.73-81:

Riporta, Psiche, a Venere i suoi doni;  
Nè di vezzi femmineo desio  
L'orciuol fatale a scoperchiar ti sproni.

Aperto è 'l vase. Soporoso e rio  
Esce quindi un velen che all'infelice  
Preme le membra di mortale obbligo.

Assonnando dechina la cervice  
Sovra l'omero: in volto si scolora,  
Nè più voce o sospir dal petto elice.

Even though there is an unusual instance of Dantesque overtones in l.87, "... in tua beata sfera", not surprisingly there are Leopardian reminiscences in ll.13,14: "D'aurati sogni e di leggiadre fole/Popolata è la notte ...", which have an unmistakable Leopardian rhythm, while ll.58,59, "E tu, come insensata all'opra invano/Movevi, o poverella ...", echo the following from A Silvia:

allor che all'opre femminili intenta  
sedevi ... 11.10,11,  
Tu .../ .../perivi, o tenerella ... 11.40-42.

Although the happy ending, ll.82-88—in spite of Zanella's reference to a reconciliation between Venus and her daughter-in-law—is essentially faithful to the account given by Apuleius in the Golden Ass, it diminishes the effectiveness of Zanella's adaptation of the story as a cautionary tale against the scientific materialism of his own age. In addition, the poet has not succeeded in effectively fusing the Christian theme of the Fall with the story from Classical Mythology. Thus, despite its Classical elegance and the way in which he has exploited the appropriate rhyme and metre, the poem is certainly not amongst his best works.

The poet strikes a calmer note in the escapism of Sulle rovine di un antico convento nei colli Euganei<sup>4</sup> 1869, which, not surprisingly, presents an anticipation of a typical Decadent theme.

4. Poesie (1928), p.140.

Although the basic theme of church ruins in the country also occurs in Pascoli as, for example, in La fonte di Castelvecchio, the tone and mood of Zanella's ode are, if anything, closer to the symbolism of Arturo Graf, for whom,

... la chiesa in rovina (forse da Wordsworth o dagli altri romantici inglesi), significa la desolazione dell'anima logorata dalle prove della vita e ormai da tutti negletta ... 5

as will emerge more clearly from a consideration of the poem as a whole.

With regard to the first strofa,

Almen qui le cadenti  
Logge e l'atrio ventoso  
A Cresi irriverenti  
Non diêr tetto fastoso;  
Nè l'anerita vólta  
Delle celle devote  
La vespertina ascolta  
Canzon d'ebbro nepote.

ll.1-8,

Calcaterra has rightly indicated that,

L'ode incomincia come se il poeta riprenda un discorso, che da anni si rinnova nell'animo suo.

L'accento primo, che rivela quell'intima continuazione d'un sentimento e d'un pensiero, i quali mettono a raffronto il sacro e il profano, il caduco e l'eterno, è quell'avverbio "Almen", posto al principio dell'ode quasi a segnar una fuga dalla volgarità materialistica, che profana lo spirito. 6

Line 3 refers to "... gli arricchiti profani, che riattavano con fasto ostentato gli antichi edifici, monasteri e palagi, da loro comperati".<sup>7</sup>

ll.7,8—"... la canzone dell'erede scialacquatore, che segna il tramonto ('vespertina') dell'antica ricchezza"<sup>8</sup>—have an effective contrast since "vespertina", which is reinforced by its idyllic, Leopardian connotations (cf, Il risorgimento, l.51 "la vespertina squilla,"), is associated with peaceful evening prayers.

The personification of the ruins not only heightens the impact of the first strofa, but also prepares for the second one—"Con questa strofe, da cui ha veramente principio l'ode, subito si entra nella poesia"<sup>9</sup>—

Per la diretta china  
Fra l'èriche e gli arbusti,  
Scende nobil ruina  
Di colonne e di busti:  
Sulla pietra già rósa  
Dal ginocchio de' santi  
Il ramarro riposa  
E serpeggian gli acanti.

ll.9-16,

5. Cusatelli, p.599.

6. Poesie scelte (1957), p.58.

7. Ibid., p.60, note (1).

8. Baldacci, p.719.

9. Poesie scelte (1957), p.59, note (2).



which sets the scene very concisely. Particularly striking, not only for their versimilitude, but also for their inherent contrast, are ll.15-16, in which the green lizard is shown as being passive and immobile, while the plant seems to have the sinuous movement of a serpent.

Although this is not one of Zanella's best poems it has something of the conciseness, if not the "compressed vitality", which Momigliano identified in Sopra una conchiglia fossile.<sup>10</sup>

Thus in the next strofa,

Cerca i deserti siti,  
Opulento mortale,  
Se di fraterne liti  
Breve tedio ti assale;  
D'odorate foreste  
All'ombra sonnolenta  
Delle urbane tempeste  
L'obblío fugace tenta;

ll.17-24,

ll.18 conveys the human obsession with physical comfort, luxury and acquisitiveness—the adjective "Opulento" also confers a slightly ridiculous pomposity on Man's over-inflated view of his own importance—while the substantive, "mortale", not only stresses the brevity of human existence and the poet's implicit warning to consider spiritual values, but also helps to defluate the vain exaggeration of the epithet. The unreasonable nature of mankind's quarrels is indicated by their being qualified as "fraterne".

While ll.17-20 seem to suggest the violence ("liti", "assale") and boredom ("tedio") of city life, with its fleeting and empty rhythm of life, stressed by the fast pace of the lines, the last four lines—once again Zanella's preoccupation with the symmetrical construction of his works is evident—convey the peace and calm of the countryside: through the preponderance of double ("ll", "nn", "bb") consonants, the slower pace of the lines and the idyllic, Leopardian overtones of "D'odorate foreste" (cf. La ginestra, l.298, "... di selve odorate").<sup>11</sup>

Through the fourth ottava,

Ma non toccar le mura  
Venerabili e gli archi,  
Ov'ebber sepolta  
Gli avi di noi più parchi.  
Ride un'austera gioia  
Sulle bianche pareti,  
Che fantastica noia  
Copre d'aurei tappeti.

ll.25-32,

the poet demonstrates the "world's" incomprehension (cf. ll.31,32: "quelle stesse pareti che la 'noia' sempre assorta in strane fantasie, non può ac-

10. Momigliano, p.510.

11. Zanella's use of the settenario recalls certain passages of La ginestra—cf. the Leopardian rhythm of, for example, ll.9-24, quoted above.

gettare nella loro nudità"),<sup>12</sup> confers an almost sacred quality—heightened by the Leopardian associations of ll.25,26: "... le mura/... e gli archi,": "binomio tradizionale; cfr. la canzone All'Italia di Leopardi, v.1"<sup>13</sup> — to the ruins, compares the present unfavourably with the past, anticipates the following strofa, through l.29: "... austera gioia", and links up with the opening lines of the ode,

Questi versi per la loro considerazione morale devono essere riconnessi alla prima strofe dell'ode, in cui sono riguardati con disdegno i "Cresi irriverenti" ... 14

While Calcaterra has regarded the fifth strofa,

Quassù, sazi del mondo,  
Pochi eletti in silenzio,  
Bevan paghi il giocondo  
Delle lagrime assenzio;  
E sotto i pini, aperto  
Su' ginocchi il Vangelo,  
Nell'alpestre deserto  
Godean ore di cielo.

ll.33-40,

as "... il momento lirico più alto"<sup>15</sup> of the poem, Francesco Flora has described these lines as "... questa un po' stilizzata figurazione di frati ... in cui si sente un'aura nuova, che spiegata vibrerà in certi giovanili versi del D'Annunzio, al pari delle vaghe fantasie che son chiuse negli ottonari dei Cavalli di San Marco".<sup>16</sup>

The basic, Christian contradiction, encapsulated in l.29: "... austera gioia", of only being able to find peace and happiness through the purifying hardship of self-sacrifice and self-denial finds expression in ll.35, 36, whose impact is heightened by their Dantesque reminiscence—"dolce assenzio" in Purg., XXIII, 86.

The second half of the strofa, ll.37-40, reinforces another theme which had been introduced earlier: the link between nearness to God, peace of mind and the idyllic, almost sacred beauty of the countryside (cf. Madame de Staël). By implication, Zanella is also stressing the Rousseauistic clash between the city and the countryside (cf. Cowper and Rossetti).<sup>17</sup>

While ll.41-48 describe the charity of the friars, the impact of the seventh and eighth (final) strofe is heightened as the poet, once again addressing the reader or imaginary passer-by directly, returns to the fundamental clash between spirituality and materialism as it relates to the individual, his peace of mind and salvation.

12. Baldacci, p.719.

13. Ibid., p.719.

14. Poesie scelte (1957), p.60, note (1).

15. Ibid., p.60, note (2).

16. F. Flora, Storia della letteratura italiana, Vol.4, Milano, 1966, p.639.

17. Cf. Ch. (2), p.36 and Ch. (4), pp. 159-160.

As well as Zanella's distribution of themes, his choice of rhyme and metre also contributes to the poem's effectiveness.

Thus, the repetition of the alternating rhyme helps to convey the impression of the reverberating echo—this is stressed even more by the rhyme-scheme, ABABCDCD, than might have been the case with the more usual ABABABCC, with its greater inherent monotony—of the friars' chanting. The latter is also conveyed by the rhyme-scheme which tends to give the whole composition a soothing, reassuring, prayer-like quality.

The use of settenari, instead of the more common, in ottave, endecasillabi, helps to attenuate the effects of the rhyme-scheme which might even have been over-stressed by the longer metre, while the seven-syllable line is still sufficiently flexible to enable the poet to deal with a variety of themes and moods.

At the end of the same year, 1869, Zanella composed the ode, Dopo una lettura della "Imitazione di Cristo", in which he not only described the spiritual crisis he had gone through, but also how he had been able to emerge from it. He had been greatly helped by having read the Imitation of Christ and the ode is an acknowledgement of his debt of gratitude to this work of Thomas à Kempis, as Calcaterra has shown:

Sul manoscritto di quest'ode, a pie' di pagina, lo Zanella lasciò segnate queste parole: "Per senso di gratitudine nel dicembre 1869". Gratitudine al libro: Dell'imitazione di Cristo.

La spiegazione può essere trovata in questa lettera a Fedele Lampertico, del 20 novembre di quell'anno: "Da qualche giorno io mi sento assai meglio, e spero coll'aiuto di Dio di trarmi fuori da quella nera melanconia, che da più tempo mi teneva oppresso lo spirito. Comprendo di essermi troppo affaticato nello studio, e di aver troppo esercitata l'immaginazione a discapito delle altre facoltà. Non puoi credere quanto una piccola ombra, un nonnulla mi desse di turbamento; anche l'idea de' miei doveri e come sacerdote e come professore non era estranea all'interna battaglia, che si combatteva nel mio animo. Ora respiro, e sai donde attinsi il coraggio e la serenità? Dal libretto del Kempis, che letto in quella condizione di animo, che ti dissi, mi parve opera non umana, ma angelica, anzi divina". 18

In the opening strofe,

Quale al nocchier fra l'indiche tempeste  
Grata fragranza, che il lontano esala  
Crine dell'aromatiche foreste,  
Volà de' turbinosi euri sull'ala;

Tale attraverso il vortice e la notte  
Dell'inquieto secolo io t'intendo  
Scender soave e dell'interne lotte  
Dissipar col tuo soffio il turbo orrendo,

Aura impregnata del salubre timo  
De' chiostri antichi e dell'occulta manna,  
Che all'alma avvolta nel corporeo limo  
Molci l'ardor che l'intelletto affanna. 11.1-12,



Zanella tries to convey the initial impact of the comfort and consolation which marked the beginning of the end of his terrible depression. The basic, fundamental idea of the simile, the relief afforded by a salutary, fragrant breeze, would seem to be appropriate on account of its biblical and liturgical associations and the reference to "timo" l.9. However the overall effect is undermined by the poet's over-elaborate and heavy presentation and by the rather forced and, to a certain extent, inappropriate comparison of ll.1-4.

There then follows a description of zanella's mental and spiritual anguish,

L'universo cercai. Vidi riflesso  
Splender quaggiuso dell'Eterno il lume;  
Ma faticate di levarsi ad esso  
L'impeto primo non avean le piume.

Dal tuo volto, o Signor, sulla mia traccia  
Tutto io vedeva illuminarsi il calle;  
Ma te già non vedea; chè alla tua faccia  
Vòlte tenea nel mio cammin le spalle.

Più m'avanzava e più all'ansante petto  
Sentìa l'aria mancar: era di gelo  
Una rigida luce; e l'intelletto  
Egro cadea sul limitar del cielo.

Stetti tremante. Da' sublimi affanni  
Tornar arido più sentìa lo spiro;  
Nel mio mortal sbigottimento agli anni  
Di più candida fè volsi un sospiro.

Come nudo augellin, che in notte oscura  
Gittò dal nido la burrasca io giacqui,  
E dell'anima il cruccio e la paura  
A Chi felice la credè non tacqui.

ll.13-32.

These lines have an apparent simplicity, clarity, immediacy and fluidity which heighten their dramatic impact, as the poet gives us an insight into the motions of his soul.

Calcaterra has very rightly pointed out that some critics have mistakenly tried to identify the key to Zanella's interior struggle in terms of reason and faith, science and religion, whereas,

Il dramma interiore, che l'ode delinea, è un altro. È quello dell' "acedia", di cui anche il Petrarca si confessa dinanzi a S. Agostino nel Secretum; è l' "accidia", mortale, che Dante punisce nella palude Stige ("Tristi fummo Ne l'aere dolce che dal sol s'allegra, Portando dentro accidioso fummo"). S. Tommaso dice l' "acedia": "tristitia de bono divino at de quovis opere virtutis", e aggiunge che "opponitur caritati erga Deum". Essa nasce da un eccessivo riconoscimento della propria miseria terrena (ex nimia deiectione), posta a paragone dell' altezza dei beni divini, che devono essere raggiunti; ma, come scrive S. Tommaso, è una disperazione o "tristitia deiectionis spiritus", che presuppone un desiderio e una speranza, e può essere vinta col riaffidare se stessi a Dio. Nello Zanella, come attesta l'ode, questa tristezza era acuita dalla constatazione dell'impenetrabilità del vero nella vita universale, dal riconoscimento che la ragione umana è insufficiente a capir tutto.

Il Petrarca vinse l'*acedia*, trovando sostegno nelle *Confessioni* e nelle altre opere di S. Agostino, il quale aveva aspramente condannato quella *tristitia*. Lo Zanella vinse l'*acedia* con la lettura dell'*Imitazione di Cristo*. 19

In ll.13,14 "... lo Zanella si vale dell'immagine con cui incomincia il *Paradiso* di Dante:

La gloria di Colui che tutto move  
per l'universo penetra e risplende  
in una parte più e meno altrove." 20

Perhaps the most striking part of this section, ll.13-32, of the poem is the third (central) *quartina*, in which the dramatic impact of his spiritual agony is heightened by being expressed in such strongly physical terms. In this context one is reminded of the poetry of Gerald Manley Hopkins (1844-1889). To correlate the soul's suffering with extreme breathlessness not only conveys its pain and seriousness, but also reinforces the imagery of ll.1-12, in which the relief felt eventually by Zanella was compared to that of a refreshing breeze. In this *strofa* he succeeds in capturing the essential coldness and paralysing despair of "*acedia*":

Dice S. Tommaso che dall' "*acedia*" deriva una disperazione, per cui l'anima più non spera di poter giungere a salvezza perchè la mèta sembra troppo ardua, ed essa è come presa da torpore e aridità. 21

The expressions "... l'intelletto/Egro ..." ll.23,24 and "... sul limitar del cielo" l.24 are enhanced by their Leopardian overtones—"egra mente", l.109, *Bruto minore*; "egro spirto", l.26, *Ultimo canto di Saffo*; 22 and " il limitare/di gioventù ..." ll.5,6, *A Silvia*.

Unfortunately the dramatic force of this section, ll.13-32, is diminished by the hackneyed imagery of ll.29,30.

Zanella's preoccupation with the symmetrical structure of his compositions is evident in the fact that the next section, ll.33-52, also consists of five *quartine*:

Chi sei, voce gentil? Prostrato all'ara  
Io sto vegliando: intorno archi ed avelli  
La solitaria lampada rischiara,  
E tu presso mi vieni e mi favelli:

O fortunata l'anima, che intende  
Del Signore la semplice parola  
Che le vien dentro susurrando; e prende  
Dal labbro eterno il detto che consola!

19. *Ibid.*, pp.69,70.

20. *Ibid.*, p.71.

21. *Ibid.*, p.71, note (2).

22. These two quotations are *varianti* contained in Francesco Moroncini's critical edition of Leopardi's *Canti* (Bologna, 1961)—cf. A. Bufano, *Concordanze dei "Canti" del Leopardi*, Firenze, 1969, p. v.

Fortunato l'orecchio, a cui non giunge  
 Vano rimbombo di terrestri eventi;  
 Ma dell'eterna verità, che lunge  
 Non è mai dagli umili, ode gli accenti!

E fortunati gli occhi allo splendore  
 Chiusi del mondo, e notte e giorno aperti  
 Nelle dense caligini del core  
 Di Dio gli arcani a contemplar scoperti!

Pace domandi? De' tuoi sensi, o figlio,  
 Chiudi la porta: così sol ti lice  
 La voce udir, che con sottil bisbiglio  
 Fassi all'orecchio de' gementi e dice: 11.33-52.

Not surprisingly 11.37-64 "... sono un'eco dell'Imitazione di Cristo,  
 l.III, cap. I: ...".<sup>23</sup>

The gentleness of the inspiration of Divine Grace is heightened by the contrast with 1.42, in which the bombastic emptiness of earthly events is reinforced by the echoing alliteration of "rimbombo".

Having, as it were, vocalised the inspiration of Divine Grace, Zanella then presents what would seem to be the voice of God addressing the soul, 11.53-64:

O anima affannata, io la tua pace,  
 Io la tua vita. Nel mio sen raccolta,  
 Quel che l'altera tua ragion ti tace,  
 Dal tuo Signor sommessamente ascolta.

Non sai tu sole cose esser l'eterne,  
 L'altre menzogna? Procacciar che giova  
 Tutto il saper, se l'occhio mio che scerne  
 Negli abissi del cor, vòto lo trova?

Vieni! Remote dalle vie dell'uomo  
 Son le mie vie: t'offenderan le spine;  
 Ma poi rivi di latte e cinnamomo  
 E rose e nardo troverai nel fine.

The references to "cinnamomo" 1.63 and "nardo" 1.64 reconnect with, and reinforce, the olfactory imagery of the fragrant breeze in the opening lines—"Grata fragranza .../ ... dell'aromatiche foreste," 11.2,3; and "Aura impregnata del salubre timo", 1.9.

In the concluding quartine,

Signor t'intesi. Al tuo servo or chi l'ale  
 Di colomba darà? Chi mi solleva  
 Tanto che la beata onda che sale  
 In vita eterna, alla sorgente io beva?

Quando sarò, che questo umano giorno  
 Al mio sguardo si appanni; ed altra aurora  
 Un ciel mi schiuda d'altri lumi adorno  
 Che sol visto per ombra or m'innamora? 11.65-72,

the poet's "reply" to God, recognising the fundamental distinction between this world, "materialism", and the afterlife, "spirituality", and acknowledging Man's dependence upon God, provides an effective counter-

23. Poesie scelte (1957), p.71, note (4).



balance to the long preceding sections, ll.33-52 and ll.53-64.

Ll.65,66 echo ll.15,16 and, like so much of the poem, are enriched by biblical and literary reminiscences:

Fa sua la domanda bellissima del Salmo LIV, 6: "Quis dabit mihi pennas sicut columbae; et volabo, et requiescam". Anche il Petrarca nel sonetto "Io son sì stanco sotto 'l fascio antico - De le mie colpe ...", con vivo senso lirico aveva detto: "Qual grazia, qual amore o qual destino/mi darà penne in guisa di colomba,/ch'1' mi riposi e levimi da terra?" E nella trepidante Epistola ad seipsum: "Quis dabit ut pennas, posita gravitate, colombae/induar alta petens et post tot dura quiescam?" 24

This ode is probably one of Zanella's most underrated works—bearing in mind the notable exception of Calcaterra's appreciation—when one considers the interplay and distribution of the themes, the wealth of biblical and literary reminiscences, and the appropriateness of the metre and the rhyme. Thus, the inherent fluidity and elegance of the endecasilabi enhance the simplicity—itsself reinforced by the alternating rhyme ABAB—and dignity with which Zanella deals with a subject which affected him so deeply and intimately; the brevity of the quartine enables the poet to atomise the material and present a detailed, "progressive" view of his changing state of mind; while the alternating rhyme has a calming, reassuring effect which attenuates the gravity of the subject.

It could be said that in the two preceding poems Zanella was essentially concerned with the great mysteries of life—the soul, God, the Via crucis of life culminating in salvation—within the context of the limitations of the human condition. This basic theme also informs the ode, Per l'albo d'una cieca 1870. 25

Zanella himself explained the circumstances of the composition of this work when he wrote to Lampertico on 16th February, 1870:

"Mi giunse la tua ch'io era occupato a trascriverti questi versi per la povera cieca che abbiamo veduto in casa del prof. Meneghini. Me li aveva chiesti per lei d. Ottaviano Rossi, la cui malattia mi ha fatto affrettare il lavoro". 26

Calcaterra has indicated his own favourable assessment of the poem as well as the opposite view of most critics:

L'ode vien dalla critica considerata un componimento morale e didascalico, "ad personam". Essa si informa certo a un alto spirito etico e nel parlare alla persona, cui è rivolta, giunge talora a viva eloquenza. Ma anche chi vive di alta morale e parla con animo commosso del dolore che è nella vita e cerca

24. Ibid., p.73, note (1).

25. Poesie (1928), p.158: "La cieca, divenuta tale a sei anni, era la baronessa Fanny Weilgesperg, nata a Padova nel 1841 e morta nel 1910 nella sua villa di Montemerlo negli Euganei".

26. Ibid., p.158.



A che segreto aprile,  
 A che nascosti Soli,  
 Dico, il color gentile,  
 O giovinetta, involi?  
 Di che più care stelle  
 Le tue notti son belle? 11.43-48.

By equating her peace and serenity with an appreciation of nature's marvels, Zanella, through his emphasis on visual imagery, is not merely paying tribute to her courage, but is also attempting to console her.

In the third "section", 1.61-90, he gives his recollection of the blind woman's own words,

In che peccai bambina?  
 Qual legge o rito offesi,  
 Perché l'ira divina  
 Sovra il capo mi pesi?  
 O piuttosto non cela  
 A noi Dio la sua tela?

Per notte aspra di guai  
 A maggior ben ne adduce,  
 Ove d'eterni rai  
 Vedrò rider la luce.  
 Non è ver che sotterra  
 Anche il grano si serra?

Che lo spino par cosa  
 Nel verno orrida e morta  
 Ed in april la rosa  
 Sul capo ispido porta?  
 Tal io paga sedendo  
 La mia stagione attendo. 11.73-90.

These sentiments not only attest to her courage, but also give the poet an opportunity to tackle the theological stumbling-block of the problem of suffering—any inevitable infirmity or misfortune should be borne with fortitude and a spirit of resignation, for it is impossible to know the designs of Providence. In addition, suffering may be an essential prelude to eternal life. By implication Zanella is also suggesting that misfortunes are easier to bear when accepted with resignation.

The impact of these verses is heightened by their literary reminiscences, as in the case of 1.73, which is "... un emistichio dell'Ultimo canto di Saffo del Leopardi ..." <sup>29</sup> and of 11.85-88, which constitute an "Immagine radiosa, nel raffigurar il passaggio dal verno alla primavera. Dante nel c.XIII del Par., v.133-135:

' ... i' ho veduto tutto il verno prima  
 lo prun mostrarsi rigido e feroce,  
 poscia portar la rosa in su la cima' ". <sup>30</sup>

29. Ibid., p.78, note (1).

30. Ibid., p.78, note (2).



In the final strofe,

Vergine! E non sei sola,  
Cui tanto bene alletti.  
Natura a tutti invola  
Suoi very intimi aspetti,  
E geme l'universo  
In dura notte immerso.

Di questa fuga eterna,  
Onde per cerchio immenso  
Morte a vita si alterna,  
Quanto comprende il senso?  
Non siam noi che all'ignoto  
Porgiam colore e moto?

Veggenti e non veggenti  
Unica notte involve;  
E d'altri firmamenti  
Esce l'alba, che solve  
Del creato il mistero  
E ci posa nel vero.

ll.91-108,

Zanella links the fate of the blind baroness with that of the whole of humanity. In this way, he not only passes from the particular to the general as he attempts to, as it were, rise above the "occasional" nature of the work, but also, once again, offers the young woman consolation. For if she suffers from "material", physical blindness, everyone is prey to the same condition at a "spiritual" level. The whole world, "Veggenti e non veggenti", l.103, is "In dura notte immerso", l.96, due to Man's limited knowledge and it is only with the dawn of eternity that mankind will really be able to "see".

According to Calcaterra, in order to understand fully the concluding lines of the ode, "... si ricordino le parole di Beatrice nel.c.XXX del Paradiso:

' ... Noi siamo usciti fore  
del maggior corpo al ciel ch'è pura luce:  
luce intellettuale, piena d'amore;  
amor di vero ben, pien di letizia;  
letizia che trascende ogni dolzore'<sup>31</sup>.

In evaluating this poem Zanella's aim in writing it has to be considered. He was essentially concerned with offering the young baroness consolation and it is to this end that the structure of the composition and its stylistic features are directed.

Thus, after showing that he is fully cognisant of her misfortune, Zanella pays tribute to her courage, faith and spirit of resignation, while he concludes that at the deepest and most important level of human

31. Ibid., p.74.

existence, that of the soul, she is at one with the rest of mankind.<sup>32</sup>

By using the sestina, more generally associated with lighter or satirical themes—its homely and almost provincial tone and the reassuring repetitiveness of the rhyme, ABABCC, have a calming, soothing effect—Zanella is attempting to attenuate the gravity of the subject without trivialising it. The choice of settenari tends to reinforce this effect to a greater extent than might have been the case with the more typical endecasillabi.

Despite Zanella's good intentions, the "occasional" nature of the work, its over-emphatic, moralising tone and the way in which the stylistic devices have not been successfully integrated into the fabric of the poem are all factors which tend to undermine the ode's effectiveness.

Having given what could be considered the "standard" Christian attitude towards inevitable misfortunes in Per l'albo d'una cieca 1870, in the following year, 1871, Zanella returned to this subject in the long tale, Il Piccolo Calabrese.

After pointing out that only Faith can bring comfort to the afflicted, ll.1006-8, Zanella later, rather surprisingly, refers to: "... Lui che i suoi quaggiù pasce d'amaro." l.1920. Does this line betray an unconscious streak of Jansenism in Zanella—it would almost seem to be an exaggerated glorification of the rôle of suffering in life, as well as seeming to denigrate God's love and mercy—or does it indicate the pessimism and depression, felt by the poet, which, following his mother's death in 1872, would result in his terrible "crisis" of 1872-1876?

However, in the verses entitled, In morte di Pio IX Pontefice 1878, Zanella reverted to a more orthodox theological stance. While this work is somewhat reminiscent of the quartine, In morte del Re d'Italia, it is of greater interest for various reasons: it does rise above the level of a purely occasional poem, it presents some noteworthy analogies with Manzoni's Il Cinque Maggio, and provides another instance of the importance Zanella frequently gave to the almost symmetrical construction of his works and the interplay of the themes, which, as is so often the case, are basically variations on the leitmotif of spirituality and materialism.

32. The combination, in a blind person, of resignation and a desire to rise above the loss of sight through a deeper, spiritual awareness seems to find a parallel in the life and works of Tommaseo: "One might have supposed that Tommaseo's second exile and his simultaneous certainty of impending blindness would have halted or at least reduced his writing of poetry: they led on the contrary to a new surge of song ... as if he were determined to record the beauties of the world before darkness fell ... and in a poem entitled Vita nuova he sought the attainment of a universal awareness that could not be impaired by the loss of any physical faculty"—(Wilkins, p.430).

Thus, the poem may be divided into three parts, consisting respectively of seven, four and six quartine. The middle section, ll.29-44, containing the most important theme—the relative insignificance of the loss of the Temporal Power ("materialism") compared to the world-wide, moral and spiritual authority of the Papacy ("spirituality")—is anticipated and prepared for by the first section, ll.1-28, and complemented by the final one, ll.45-68. The initial and terminal parts of the work are also linked.

The opening lines, with their emphasis on the "soul-less" body ("materialism")—

Gelato esanime  
 Ne' vaticani  
 Atri, sul candido  
 Pallio le mani,

Posa l'Angelico:

ll.1-5—

not only have a thematic similarity with ll.1-4 of Il Cinque Maggio,

Ei fu. Siccome immobile,  
 Dato il mortal sospiro,  
 Stette la spoglia immemore  
 Orba di tanto spiro,

but also have a link with the final part of the poem, where Zanella directly addresses the soul ("spirituality") of the Pontiff and asks him to intercede for mankind. This of course echoes the initial "movement" of the work, in which reference had been made to Pio Nono's prayers for the world while he was alive.

This approach—describing the lifeless body of the deceased in the opening lines and then referring to his soul in the afterlife towards the end of the composition—had been anticipated in Il Cinque Maggio.

The clash between "spirituality" and "materialism" expresses itself in various ways, prior to its most emphatic enunciation in ll.29-44. The Pope's prayers for the world transcend all its travails and the events he has witnessed—kingdoms have been swept away, Italian unification has been achieved, while the Papal States and Rome have been lost. Spiritual considerations also transcend the purely earthly, material or political spheres as the Pope had displayed forgiveness towards Victor Emanuel in blessing him as he lay dying. This also touches upon a related theme, which was very important for Zanella, reconciliation between Church and State. While all these thematic variations on the poem's leitmotif prepare for its most vital expression in ll.29-44, they also find an echo in the closing lines—from the perspective of eternity ("spirituality"), the world and all its problems ("materialism") seem so insignificant—

Padre de' popoli,  
 Che or dal ciel vedi  
 Rotar quest'atomo  
 Sotto i tuoi piedi,



Fendi le tenebre  
 E a chi t'implora  
 D'età pacifiche  
 Apri l'aurora.

11.61-68.

Despite the detachment of the Dantesque imagery in 11.61-64, the poem ends on a trite and hackneyed note.

While both Zanella's composition and Il Cinque Maggio deal with the demise of famous men and their enormous impact on the world—

Alpi ed oceani  
 Nell'ampia zona  
 I rai non chiusero  
 Di tua corona;

In morte di Pio IX Pontefice, 11.45-48,

Dall'Alpi alle Piramidi,  
 Dal Manzanarre al Reno,  
 Di quel sicuro il fulmine  
 Tenea dietro al baleno;  
 Scoppiò da Scilla al Tanai,  
 Dall'uno all'altro mar.

Il Cinque Maggio, 11.25-30—

it is also worth noting how both poets have shown the way in which Providence is able to draw some good even out of evil, whether in the case of Napoleon's life and actions, or the loss of the Pope's Temporal Power which has thrown into greater relief the overwhelming importance of the Church's spiritual and moral authority. This last theme, which will be taken up more insistently and forcefully in A Leone XIII 1887, together with the hope of a reconciliation between Church and State, shows how close Zanella's views were to those which had been held by Manzoni.

As has already been seen so often in Zanella's poetry, his technical expertise—including, for example, the distribution of the themes, Classical elegance and the appropriate choice of rhyme and metre—is invariably present. Thus, the quinari help to convey the fleeting passage of time, while the very compact quartine not only enhance this effect, but also provide a rapid succession of brief, but vivid, "images". Nevertheless one can understand why this poem should have been omitted from the fourth (1885) edition of Zanella's verses, when one compares it with the far more effective work, Le catacombe di Roma 1876, in which the same rhyme and metre had been employed.

There is, in contrast, a quieter, more peaceful and almost contemplative tone, derived from the smoothly-flowing endecasillabi, in Per l'albo di una fanciulla 1878, in which the poet links material and spiritual beauty:

Perchè se mezzo aperta e mezzo ascosa  
 Miro la rosa ingentilir la spina;

Perchè se, non ben notte o giorno ancora,  
 Miro l'aurora alzarsi alla marina,

Col pensier corro a te? Le cose belle  
 Sulla terra e nel ciel sono sorelle.

Even in such a short composition one can see Zanella's preoccupation with the balanced, symmetrical construction of his works. In this case, the repetitive framework—"Perchè se .../Miro ...", ll.1,2 and also ll.3,4—despite its overtones of maxim-like sententiousness, does help to link the various phenomena and thus shows how the poet views them as variations on a fundamental theme: the inherent spirituality of ordinary, everyday occurrences.

There is a very similar emphasis in Per l'album di una giovinetta studiosissima 1882<sup>33</sup> in which Zanella refers to the link between the material and spiritual planes—the wonders of Nature lead him to think of the purity of a young girl and so to spiritual beauty:

Silenziosa e bruna  
 La notte nel suo sen porta le stelle:  
 L'Oceàn genitor delle procelle  
 Le nivee perle nel suo fondo aduna.  
 Tu, giovinetta dal tranquillo viso  
 E dagli occhi pensosi e verecondi,  
 Del tuo vergine cor nel paradiso,  
 Di', quali stelle, e quali gemme ascondi?

Despite the unpretentious quality of this short poem, it has some of the defects ascribed to Zanella's verses by Arturo Graf including: "... certa sdolcinatura talvolta ... alcune sentenze trite ..." as well as elements of "... romanticismo attardato e non buono ...",<sup>34</sup> without having the more appropriate and redeeming simplicity of the preceding composition.

Zanella returns to an examination of the motions of the human soul in the long tale Corrado 1885. He shows how Corrado, a peasant, having become rich by stealing the jewels of a Jewish merchant, whom he had murdered, is relentlessly tormented by his conscience in order to induce him to confess, repent and make some form of reparation.

Quite early on in the poem, Zanella personifies Conscience as follows: "Austera, incorruttibile una dea/... ch'ha nome Coscienza ..." ll.125-6. In an almost Parinian contrast, he shows how differently Conscience deals with a poor, just man and an evil, rich one, She helps the former to sleep peacefully, despite the physical discomfort of his poverty, whilst she fills the latter's nights with "terribili larve", l.129, so that he is unable to sleep properly in spite of his "molli porpore", l.128.<sup>35</sup> Corrado, feeling the pangs of remorse so strongly that he even hates his own name, does not want it to be perpetuated through his grandson, who comes to be called Sandrino. Man may be able to escape from the retribution of

33. Poesie (1928), p.516: "Scritti per Giorgina Foscolo Vasta, questi versi furono compresi in Astichello ed altre Poesie".

34. Ibid., p.XXVI.

35. Cf. Ch.3, pp.70-1.

human law, but he cannot evade divine justice, for the sins of the fathers are visited upon the sons up to the fourth generation, ll.99-106. After reading passages from the Psalms, Giannina realises this and senses the fate which awaits her dying son, Sandrino. More than once Zanella, using biblical imagery, points out that the blood of the murdered man cries out to heaven for vengeance. Once again stressing that divine justice cannot be evaded, the poet highlights the futility of Corrado's idea of settling in some distant land, far from: "... quelle/Funeste abbominevoli montagne/Conscie del suo delitto ..." ll.454-456.

The air of inevitable disaster pervades the poem right up to the end,<sup>36</sup> enveloping even the innocent Giannina, Corrado's daughter. After the death of her husband, Ippolito, and her son, Sandrino, the discovery of her father's guilt and his subsequent imprisonment, she devoted her life to prayer for her "defunto amore", l.539, and in expiation of her father's crime. Zanella seems to be implying that God's mercy not only pursues the sinner through the persistent voice of conscience, but also inspires the prayers of loved ones.

Although the ottave of Il Piccolo Galabrese 1871 and the endecasillabi sciolti of Edvige 1881 and Corrado 1885 constitute, in effect, a developmental progression towards a closer contact with reality, even in Corrado, as was the case in Edvige, the characterisation is very superficial. Thus, Corrado, and Giannina would almost seem to be personifications, in the form of exaggerated caricatures, of, respectively, "Materialism" and "Spirituality", rather than well-developed characters. Not surprisingly, therefore, they are shown to be poles apart. He is so grasping and avaricious that he has even committed murder for the sake of material gain. She is a kind, gentle innocent girl—described merely as "soave/Beltà", ll.45,46, so that the lack of physical detail would almost seem to be accentuating her "spirituality"—who is shocked by her father's behaviour:

Giannina si sentì come straniera  
Nella casa paterna, ove di Dio  
Ogni ben si vedea, ma non già Dio. ll.65-67.

In this case, Man is undermining his relationship with God through his ingratitude. In other words, he is quite happy to accept the material benefits of the world created by God, but not only does he not thank his Creator, he even ignores Him.

36. Both the "partecipation" of the countryside (as in ll.454-456) and the sombre, dramatic, fatalistic tone of this tale would seem to be echoing, to a certain extent, Fogazzaro's Malombra—"Il paesaggio è un elemento essenziale del racconto: addirittura è reso partecipe alle vicende ..." (Cattaneo, p.416).



## (II) SCIENCE AND FAITH

Science and Faith, one of the most important and recurring thematic variations of "spirituality and materialism", was, for Zanella, an integral aspect of the relationship between God and Man. While Science should serve to strengthen Faith, the reverse is happening, and Man, despite his increased knowledge, is losing the benefits of religious and spiritual consolation.

From the early admonition of Ad una antica immagine della Madonna 1863 and the virulent attack on Darwinism for implicitly denying reunion in the afterlife, A mia madre 1865, the poet turns to a recognition of scientific advances and of their limitations in front of life's mysteries, Microscopio e telescopio 1866 and Milton e Galileo 1868, as well as Science's inability to provide peace of mind, L'industria. Ad Alessandro Rossi membro del giurì internazionale di Parigi nel 1867 1868. Attacks on the Theory of Evolution, Sopra certi sistemi di fisiologia 1869, Gli anni. A Corinna 1877, Edvige 1881 and L'evoluzione 1886, are intertwined with the more dignified, prayer-like, but no less resolute, reaffirmations of Zanella's faith, Alla Madonna di Monte Berico presso Vicenza 1875, Dinanzi ad una cappella della Madonna 1876, and Nel Venerdì Santo 1880.

In the rapport between Science and Religion, the former should reinforce the latter. If this "link" is disturbed, there will be very serious and far-reaching consequences within the broader context of the relationship between God and Man. The development of this theme seems to begin in the quarantine, Ad una antica immagine della Madonna 1863. On seeing the highly-venerated image of Our Lady in his birth-place, Zanella pays tribute to the wonderful consolations of Faith in contrast with the poverty and sterility of negative positivism. He goes to stage that proud and arrogant nineteenth-century Science, despite its discovery, cannot give Man peace of mind. Atheism, derived from scientific materialism and positivism, brings despair and extinguishes the serenity of hope, which leads the tired soul back to God—this image would later be expanded in La religione materna 1865.<sup>37</sup>

Petronio's comment on this poem of 1863:

È il motivo, che tante volte ritorna nella lirica dello Zanella, della inattività della scienza polemicamente contrapposta alla religione: lo Zanella non concilia, come spesso si è detto fede e scienza, ma intende solo adoperare le conquiste moderne della scienza quali prove della verità affermate dalla fede: la scienza che egli esalta è al servizio della fede ... 38

37. Cf. Ch.3, pp. 86-8.

38. Petronio, p.463.

despite its unfavourable presentation, has accurately assessed the fundamental nature of Zanella's view of Science and Faith. It should however be borne in mind that the polemical bitterness of this work is surprising when compared with the message of light and hope of Sopra una conchiglia fossile 1864 and Zanella's optimism in the 1860s, as well as his genuine attempt to reconcile Science and Religion. Although this bitterness will find an echo in the second half of La veglia 1864,<sup>39</sup> the force and depth of the poet's feelings seem strange in the earlier work of 1863.

Once again one can see the importance Zanella gave to the almost symmetrical construction of his poetry and the arrangement of the themes.

Thus the first half of these verses, ll.1-28, pays tribute to Our Lady and the comfort and consolation of religion, as for example in the following lines,

L'umile paësel non ha dolori  
 Che non ricorra alla chiesuola antica,  
 E da Te grazia implori,  
 O non mai tarda degli afflitti amica.

Lì sgomentata, l'abito negletto,  
 Vien giovin madre che per pochi istanti  
 All'egro pargoletto  
 Il conforto rapì de' suoi sembianti.                      ll.9-16.

Here, Zanella has fully exploited the reassuring, repetitive monotony of the quartine and their rime alternate, in such a way that these lines almost sound like a prayer or litany. This effect is enhanced by the vezzezzeggiativi, "paësel", "chiesuola", "pargoletto", which betray the poet's affection for this pastoral, idyllic setting.

Zanella has also taken full advantage of the flexibility and versatility of the endecasillabi and settenari by adapting them to convey the virulence of his condemnation of Science and Materialism in the second half of the poem, as may be seen in the following verses:

Degno frutto ti par questa sparuta  
 Di vil lucro maestra e di sozzura  
 Filosofia, che muta  
 L'anima in fango e l'avvenir ti fura?

Ahi! dal dì che lo scettro in sua man tolto,  
 "Più non v'ha Dio," l'uom disse e re si assise  
 Dell'universo, il volto  
 Scolorato abbassò, nè più sorrise.                      ll.45-52.

Several factors contribute to this result, including: the hard, harsh sounds, "frutto", "sparuta", "lucro", "sozzura", "fango", "scettro"; the sharp, mordant tone of the striking contrast in l.48, L'anima in fango ...", and of course, the insertion in the third line of each quartina of a settenario, which not only helps to counteract the soothing monotony of the four-line verse, ABaB, and its rime alternate, but also, through its

39. Cf. Ch.5, p. 233.

very brevity, is more suitable for indicating the poet's vehemence than might have been the case with an endecasillabo.

The marked division between the two parts of the poem is re-emphasized through its encapsulation in the final verse.

The very obviousness of these stylistic devices—an indication that they have not been truly integrated into the fabric of the poem—diminishes the effectiveness of the work.

Zanella's deep faith, and particularly its devotional aspect, had its roots in the close link which existed between his love for his mother and for his faith, which she had taught him. Zanella dealt with this theme in La religione materna 1865<sup>40</sup> and referred to it in A mia madre, written in the same year, when it seemed as if his mother were going to die.

As in La veglia 1864 the poet's expression of his love for his mother and his family is followed by a virulent attack on Darwinism. For Calcaterra, in both works, the first part is poetically superior to the polemical bitterness of the second part. His assessment of the sestine of 1865 very accurately conveys the tone and mood of the work:

Nell'ode si avverte certa compostezza accademica, che smorza la poesia di alcune singole immagini, bellissime. La parte più grave è la polemica contro l'atomismo e contro il darwinismo, che ha trovato modo di insinuarsi anche in questo canto di intima consolazione. Ma è indimenticabile quella pia figura di madre, che nella prima strofe, con la cerea mano, batte alle porte oscure dell'al di là, mentre un'aura dei cieli vicini, come zefiro soave che sul far del giorno sale dal mare, già muove i veli, di cui è coperta la spoglia mortale. 41

Calcaterra seems to imply that Zanella's attack on the Theory of Evolution is unconnected with his concern for his mother. There is in fact a very cogent link, at least, as far as the poet is concerned, as will be seen.

The opening lines of the ode,

Al limitar di morte  
Correvi, o madre. Colla cerea mano  
Già picchiavi alle porte  
Caliginose, e qual dall'oceano  
Sale sull'alba un zefiro, i tuoi veli  
L'aura agitava de' propinqui cieli. ll.1-6,

constitute the most effective part of the poem, at least in terms of an impulso lirico. While ll.1,2, "Al limitar di morte/Correvi ...", are reminiscent of Leopardi—"... il limitare/Di gioventù salivi?", A Silvia, ll.5, 6—ll.2-4, "...Colla cerea mano/Già picchiavi alle porte/Caliginose ...", find an echo in Carducci, both in the Rime nuove, "È il fanciulletto mio, che a la romita/Tua porta batte ..." Funere Mersit Acerbo, ll.5,6, and in the Odi barbare, "... e io .../battea le porte de l'avvenire;" Per le nozze di mia figlia, ll.3,4.

40. Cf. Ch.3, pp.86 - 8 .

41. Poesie scelte (1957), p.22.



In the first four sestine Zanella, after expressing his deep love for his mother and the pain and sorrow he would experience if she were to die, points out that the faith which he received, as a child, from her, still gives him consolation and comfort.

With the sarcastic tone of ll.23,24, "...ma l'ingegno umano/Forse con frutto scandagliò l'arcano?", the poet launches his bitter tirade against his overall view of positivism and its materialistic connotations.

For positivism and the Theory of Evolution cannot give Man peace of mind since they would tend to deny the immortality of the soul and, therefore, also the poet's reunion with his mother and his loved ones in the afterlife. After recapitulating and exalting the fundamental principles of his Christian faith, which had inspired the great Venetians of the past as well as Raffaello's many paintings of the Madonna, "Questa pia Fè che .../.../Di vergini s'avi/A Raffaello popolò le tele;" ll.49-52, Zanella refers to the Christian distinction between "Sapïenza", Divine truth, and "Scienza", human knowledge. He sees them as sisters: the latter,

... Audace, esperta  
Al correre, e le belle  
Membra di screziati ostri coperta,  
Più cupida scïenza e giovinetta  
Tutto il crëato a misurar si getta.

Scende nel mar: de' venti  
Cerca le patrie: di gemmate grotte  
Ne' lunghi avvolgimenti  
Di titaniche età turba la notte:  
Vola fra gli astri, e l'universo intero  
Disvelato vagheggia al suo pensiero. ll.62-72,

is young, impatient and very curious, while the former,

Ma più modesta il manto  
E più soave al portamento, all'atto,  
Vien Sapïenza accanto  
Della balda sorella; e tratto tratto  
De' rischi l'ammaestra e de' divini  
All'ingegno mortal posti confini. ll.73-78,

is older, wiser and has a beneficial, restraining influence. Once can see how Zanella has adapted the settenari and endecasillabi so that ll.62-72 have an appropriately faster pace to convey the recklessness of Science, while the slower pace of ll.73-78 assists in establishing the moderation and sobriety of "Sapïenza".

The poet has exploited the homely and almost provincial tone of the sestina to underline his description of his love for his mother, ll.1-23, as well as its inherent lightness to convey his sarcastic attacks on Darwinism.

Apart from the polemical bitterness which blights more than two-thirds of the poem, the obviousness of the stylistic devices also diminishes its effectiveness.

Zanella returns to the fundamental theme that Science can increase mankind's knowledge of the material world, but cannot provide peace of mind, in the ode Microscopio e telescopio 1866, originally entitled Natura e Scienza. The two optical instruments in question have revealed so many of Nature's secrets, but they cannot penetrate the mysteries of life and creation. In effect, Science makes Man more aware of his smallness in front of the awesome majesty of the Creator.

In this work one can see two important, recurring features of Zanella's poetry. Perhaps the more obvious of the two is the way in which he has conformed with the most fundamental aspect of his poetica. In other words he has dealt with scientific concepts within a Classical, stylistic framework. This was, of course, as was seen in Chapter (2), a combination which not only exemplified Chénier's "formula", but which Zanella greatly admired in Parini's verses.

This basic combination has provoked the not always favourable judgements of certain critics such as Petronio:

Il tutto con la dignitosa eleganza che gli è propria, in uno sforzo di nobilitare, con la preziosa classicità della parola e del verso, la modernità delle cose cantate ... 42

and Croce, according to whom, from a slightly different perspective, the "difetto organico" of Zanella's verses is to be found "nella sovrapposizione di forme letterarie al sentimento schietto".<sup>43</sup>

Before assessing the validity of these views it would be appropriate to consider the other important feature of this poem, and indeed of so much of Zanella's work, which does not seem to have been fully taken into account. This is, of course, Zanella's preoccupation with the symmetrical structure of his poems which he often employs to set up dramatic contrasts.

Thus, this ode has a definite, "quantitatively-balanced" structure—the four main "sections" each consist of four quartine.

The first four strofe show how Nature hides her secrets from Man:

Come ritrosa vergine t'involi,  
Discortese Natura, al guardo umano,  
Che pel lento mutar di mille Soli  
Di cielo in terra t'ha cercata invano.

Con giocondo terror vide talvolta  
Balenar dall'abisso il tuo sembiante;  
Ma tosto di più nere ombre ravvolta  
Scese la notte sul deluso amante.

Ne' mèandri di tacite spelonche  
Chiusa intanto, al gocciar cheto dell'acque,  
D'opaline piramidi e di conche  
Gracili vezzi fabbricar ti piacque.

42. Petronio, p.492.

43. B.Croce, La letteratura della nuova Italia, Vol.I, Bari, 1973, p.283.

Nitido specchio e virginal collana  
 D'agate ti polivi e di cristalli,  
 Che poi vaga e fantastica sultana  
 Franti gettavi alle sopposte valli.      11.1-16.

Croce has made the following comments on 11.1-8:

Queste strofe sono deliziose all'orecchio ... Ma di che cosa si parla in esse? Dell'ansia dell'uomo nella caccia del vero, supremo bisogno dell'esser suo? E non pare piuttosto di assistere a uno di quegli inseguimenti boscherecci di ninfe, descritti dai bucolici e dai loro imitatori più o meno arcaici? 44

and on 11.9-16:

Quadro orientale di un Oriente da Mille e una notte ... La Natura, vergine ritrosa, si è mutata in sultana capriccio - setta ... 45

The poet then describes the discovery of lenses and therefore of the microscope and telescope:

Troppo scherzati, improvvida gelosa!  
 Lo spezzato cristal l'uomo raccolse,  
 L'occhio armandone; e te non sospettosa  
 Dietro la tenda ad osservar si volse.  
 Or ti appiatta, se sai! Presso e remoto,  
 Pari a Luna, che subito si scopra  
 Tra nube e nube, curioso, immoto  
 Quel grande, infaticato occhio t'è sopra.      11.17-24.

Croce refers, as follows, to the fifth strofa:

La scena è da stampa erotica, francese o inglese, del settecento, o da poesia di abate Bertola ... 46

and to the sixth:

E della medesima letteratura è il movimento che segue, arieggiante alla birichineria del tradizionale pastorello che scopre Galatea, invano celata e desiderosa di essere scoperta...<sup>47</sup>

Whilst agreeing with Croce, one cannot help feeling that, paradoxically, his very criticism would almost seem to indicate that Zanella has, at least partially, succeeded in his aims. In other words, while the elegant, elaborate, Classical style is not inappropriate for dealing with a subject which was very important for the poet, the latter has deliberately exploited the "lightness" and even "playfulness" of this section of the poem, as well as the "eastern exoticism" of 11.9-16, not only in order to attenuate the gravity of the subject, without trivialising it, but also, by contrast, to heighten the dramatic impact of the serious conclusion, 11.61-76.

In the second, 11.25-40, and third, 11.45-60, "sections"—the former dealing with the microscope, the latter with the telescope—the pace quickens as the poet displays his genuine, earnest excitement at the discoveries which can be made through these two optical instruments, as may

44. Ibid., p.283.

45. Ibid., p.284.

46. Ibid., p.284.

47. Ibid., p.284.



be seen from the microscopic examination of a drop of water:

Quante in que' flutti immagini di morte!  
 Quante fughe e vittorie! In fiera danza  
 Dell'universo affacciasi alle porte  
 Rude la vita e dolorando avanza. 11.37-40.

or a view of the heavens:<sup>48</sup>

Mille sfere nel rapido viaggio  
 Lasciassi addietro, e son mille anni e mille  
 Che piove pel silente ètere il raggio  
 Pur or giunto dell'uomo alle pupille. 11.53-56.

The conclusion of the poem, the fourth and final group of quartine:

Se per l'alto universo intatta via  
 Al vol dischiusi dell'umano ingegno,  
 Fuggon forse le tenebre di pria,  
 E palese di Dio splende il disegno?  
 Tante luci che fan? Che fanno i mondi  
 Che, come faro d'ignorati porti,  
 Ora scemano fiocchi e moribondi,  
 Or con vividi incendi ardon risorti?  
 Donde e quando si mosse? A quali prode  
 Veleggia l'universo? Alme viventi  
 Albergano lassù? Liete di lode  
 All'eterno Valor sciolgon concenti?  
 Muore la lampa, e scuro un vel si abbassa  
 Sullo sguardo dell'uom, che sbigottito  
 Scorge per entro l'ombra Iddio che passa  
 Novi Soli a librar nell'Infinito. 11.61-76.

contains the main theme of the work—"La scienza ... ci fa solo avvertire meglio la nostra piccolezza dinanzi a Dio".<sup>49</sup>

The sense of mystery and wonder at the immensity of the Universe is reinforced by the succession of interrogations, reaching a climax in the penultimate strofa, and encapsulated in l.65: "Tante luci che fan? ...", which not only echoes a similar sense of perplexity in La veglia: "Che son? che fui? ...", l.29, but also has an illustrious precedent, as Baldacci<sup>50</sup> has shown, in Leopardi:

48. This contrast between microcosm (a drop of water) and macrocosm (a view of the heavens) seems to be an anticipation of a Decadent theme—as well as a very unusual instance of a tenuous "link" between Zannella and the Scapigliati—particularly with regard to Domenico Gnoli, who "... nella raccolta... Fra terra ed astri, svilupperà... il tema di microcosmo e macrocosmo, in una misura anche più estesa che Pascoli o Graf. Una poesia come Presso l'Etrusca fontana—riprendendo Incantesimo di Prati (ma anche negli Scapigliati abbiamo trovato questo motivo)—introduce il poeta nella dimensione dell'infinitamente piccolo e lo induce a meditare sulla relatività di quei valori e di quelle proporzioni che all'uomo sembrano intangibili ... All'opposto, il poeta si colloca con la fantasia negli spazi sterminati in cui rotano gli astri, confronta l'esiguità del nostro pianeta alla gigantesca macchina dell'universo, e considera il mistero impenetrabile delle cose ..." (Cusatelli, pp.604-5).

49. Petronio, p.492.

50. Baldacci, p.714.

a che tante facelle?  
 che fa l'aria infinita, e quel profondo,  
 infinito seren? che vuol dir questa  
 solitudine immensa? ed io che sono?

Canto notturno di un pastore errante dell'Asia, ll.86-9.

Analogous themes recur in Pascoli, as for example in Il libro, the mystery of existence and creation, and Il ciocco, a sense of awe in front of the limitless majesty of the Heavens: ll.141-146; 162-168; 182-186; 294,295.

After the febrile pace of ll.69-72, the poem ends on a suitably subdued note as the limitations of Man's quest for knowledge almost seem to force him to humbly turn to his religious faith for an answer to life's mysteries.

Apart from the distribution of the themes in order to heighten the dramatic impact of the concluding section, ll.61-76, Zanella's exploitation of the flexibility and versatility of the endecasillabi is also noteworthy. Thus he not only gradually quickens the pace in the second, ll.25-40, and third, ll.45-60, sections, but also makes full use of the inherent fluidity of the endecasillabo to convey more effectively the vastness of space, as for example in ll.53-56.

According to Baldacci, Microscopio e telescopio "... è fra tutte le cose dello Zanella quella più vicina a certi esempi del Monti: si pensi all'ode Al signor di Montgolfier".<sup>51</sup>

Thus, in this ode, Zanella's interest in scientific discovery and his cosmic vision show his debt to Monti and the "poesia panica settecentesca",<sup>52</sup> while, through his sense of wonder and bewilderment at the immensity of the universe he almost seems to constitute an "evolutionary link" between Leopardi and Pascoli.

Two years later, in 1868, Zanella composed the ode saffica, L'industria. Ad Alessandro Rossi membro del giurì internazionale all'Esposizione di Parigi nel 1867, in which he pays tribute to the way in which Man, through his ingenuity and intelligence, which set him apart from animals, has tamed the elements. But the more progress mankind makes through its God-given talents, the more it seems inclined to deny His existence. Science has certainly increased knowledge, but it cannot provide peace of mind. Zanella inveighs against the pride, arrogance and atheism of the age of scientific positivism, pointing out that freedom and an appreciation of human dignity have come from Christianity.

The poem begins with a forceful presentation of Man's expulsion from the Garden of Eden:

51. Ibid., p.712.

52. Ibid., p.XXXIV.

Fuggiasco e nel segreto mormorio  
 Delle profonde selve e nell'orrendo  
 Mugghio del tuon la provocata udendo  
 Ira di Dio,

Col gel, co' nemi, colle belve in guerra,  
 Di selce armato e di nodosa clava,  
 Questo re del futuro attraversava  
 Nudo la terra.

11.1-8.

With the Virgilian overtones, "... nel segreto mormorio/Delle profonde selve ...", of 11.1,2 and the starkness of life after the Fall, dramatically enhanced by the Classical elegance with which it is conveyed, the figure of primitive man emerges with an aura of heroic nobility.<sup>53</sup>

Unfortunately this whole effect is shattered by the reference, in 1.11, to "... l'uomo soletto ...". In his description of Man, "Nudo sì, ma pensante. Arme il leone/Pari non ha ..." 11.13,14, Zanella would seem to have inadvertently, bearing in mind his vehement opposition to Darwinism, given the definition typical of an evolutionist in seeing Man as a "thinking" animal, whose only claim to primacy over other creatures lies in his superior intelligence.

After praising the achievements of civilization, the poet describes, in mythological terms, the way in which craftsmanship and the arts spread from the East to Greece and then to the shores of Italy.

There then follows a bitter attack on what Zanella saw as the root-cause of the ills of his age—humanity's over-weening pride—and an exaltation of Christianity's liberating influence:

Vanti i tuoi dritti e della Fè degli avi  
 Ridi, superba età. Ma non d'Atene,  
 Nè di Roma venìa chi le catene  
 Ruppe agli schiavi;

Dal casolar del Legnaiuolo ebreo  
 Fra le sviate genti uscì dottrina  
 Che fe' santo il lavoro e l'officina  
 Novo Tarpeo.

11.55-62,

as well as an appreciation of Florence's rôle in fostering the arts and crafts.

The last part of the poem is a recapitulation of human progress, in industrial terms, which juxtaposes the earth's geological evolution, Man's primitive condition and the great advances of the nineteenth century.

In the description of the prehistoric world,

Quando le dighe agli oceani aperse  
 Previdente natura e ne' marosi,  
 Che l'alpe trascinavano, i frondosi  
 Gioghi sommerse,

11.99-102,

there are strong reminiscences of Sopra una conchiglia fossile, but the later work lacks the "genuine", radiant hope and optimism of Zanella's

53. Cf. thematic similarities with Prati's L'uomo, 11.31-40 (Baldacci, p.584).





of Renaissance Italy, he points out that Europe was shocked to see the money, which had been paid to Rome, being used to finance artistic projects instead of works of charity. He then asks Galileo how he can possibly have any respect for an institution such as the Papacy, in any case:

Sovra la curva de' rotanti Soli  
 Uso a colloqui coll'Eterno, udirne  
 Credi la voce d'un Urban sul labbro? 11.323-325.

Galileo replies by defending Rome and the Papacy. The Church has recovered from the blow dealt her by the Reformation. Whilst admitting that perhaps there may be too much pomp in her ritual, Galileo tells Milton that he should be able to distinguish between appearance and reality, for he seems to be forgetting that the Church, whilst having God's guidance, has a human, weak and sinful element—Milton is concentrating on the latter to the exclusion of the former.

Here we have the fundamental point which Zanella wished to stress: the distinction between the human and divine elements in the Church. However much one may disapprove of the way She has behaved, this does not invalidate the teaching authority of the Papacy with regard to fundamental spiritual truths.

This poem was published in 1868 and it is interesting to note that two years later, the First Vatican Council proclaimed the Dogma of Papal Infallibility. One can see the extent of the interest which this subject aroused at the time.

What Zanella was emphasizing has wider implications outside the immediate context of Catholicism. Namely, that the misdeeds of the adherents of a particular creed do not automatically negate its theoretical validity.

Galileo then warns that: "... Il cor s'indura/Dell'aspro ver nella ricerca ..." 11.372,373, unless religion, spiritual values and the feelings of the human heart are also present; for ritual, beautiful churches and the liturgy have their place and function, the sacraments—from baptism to extreme unction—guide Man throughout his life. Zanella's remarks, through his mouth-piece, Galileo, would seem to be directed against the cold materialism of his age. Galileo continues in a conciliatory tone, by pointing out that Faith and worshipping together foster the idea of the brotherhood of Man, removing hatreds and making men realise that they are united in their weakness and in their need for divine guidance. He adds that Rome will one day reconcile all differences: "... a tutti madre,/Tutte l'umane dissonanze accorda," 11.402,403.

Milton, whilst praising Galileo's description of faith, asks "... Ma di Roma/Questa è la Fè? ..." 11.413,414. He then goes on to attack the Church and declares that individual conscience is more important than the authority of the Pope. He accuses the Church of Rome of obscurantism and of

interfering with the pursuit of knowledge—in this context, he cites the example of Galileo himself.

The latter, calling for peace and unity, asks why it is that the pioneers of the New World, having already so much in common, do not also have a common faith and prayer. For if religion and spiritual values are supplanted by a purely materialistic creed, disaster and the end of civilization will be the result. As Catholics and Protestants have both committed atrocities in the past in the name of religion, would it not be better to forget them and look to the future in a spirit of friendship and cooperation. Re-opening old wounds would only lead to further violence and bloodshed. Whilst conceding that Rome, in attempting to maintain doctrinal orthodoxy, may be hypersensitive to anything new, Galileo envisages the day when Rome will once again be the centre of Christendom. With this positive, constructive exhortation to all Christians to work together in peace and harmony—to stem the tide of materialism—Zanella was anticipating the Ecumenical Movement.

In this poem, Zanella also defines the limits of scientific enquiry, as well as its rôle and function. Thus, through his discoveries, Galileo feels that he has glorified the Creator. But, as Galileo explains to Milton, the goddess, "Sofia", has told him not to probe too deeply into the mysteries of life and the universe, for science and human reason are limited; in this life, only Faith can provide some of the answers; in the afterlife everything will be revealed. She advises Galileo to probe the secrets of Nature.

Although science banishes old myths and leads to progress and the advance of civilization, he fears that in future ages Man will be too proud and arrogant. Milton replies that even if scientific progress were to lead to materialism and atheism, poetry would try to lead mankind back to God. Milton will, therefore, as a poet, warn of the dangers of pride and arrogance by writing about the Fall (cf. *Paradise Lost*). Once again Zanella highlights the importance of the relationship between God and Man.

The poet may be said to have succeeded in presenting a reasonable, moderate and well-balanced view of the Church's historical rôle. By using the format of a dialogue, he has made the succession of argument and counter-argument flow more smoothly and naturally.

Even though the presentation of these same themes in prose might have been possible in a more concise form, the poet's choice of the endecasillabi sciolti has proved very suitable. First of all, Zanella has been able to exploit the flexibility and versatility of the endecasillabi, not only in dealing with a wide range of themes—as for example in the astronomical descriptions in which the vastness of the heavens seemed to be enhanced by the inherent fluidity of the eleven-syllable lines—but also, by altering



the pace of the lines, in conveying the changing tone, mood and strength of feeling of the two men. The absence of a rhyme, with its potentially-distracting, repetitive monotony, does not in any way hinder the smoothly-flowing course of the composition.

In the following year, 1869, shortly after a certain Professor Herzen had given a lecture, Sulla parentela fra l'uomo e la scimmia, at the Museo di Storia naturale in Florence, Zanella sent the sonnet, Sopra certi sistemi di fisiologia, to his friend, Mariano Fogazzaro.<sup>55</sup> In it, Zanella not only attacks the Theory of Evolution, but also the foreign origins of positivism.<sup>56</sup>

How can Dante and Machiavelli have had the same brain as a monkey! However, the fact that his fellow-countrymen are so ready to accept the conclusions of "Democriti stranieri", makes Zanella sarcastically remark: "Che il bravo urango sia nostro fratello, /Itali miei, più non m'è cosa oscura." ll.7,8.

Despite the fact that there is a certain light-hearted vigour in the poet's irony, particularly in the quartine, the bitter, carping, polemical and rather petty tone of the terzine tends to reduce the effectiveness of the work, which was not included in the fourth (1885) edition of his poetry.

Not surprisingly, in Alla Madonna di Monte Berico presso Vicenza 1875 and Dinanzi ad una cappella della Madonna 1876—written when Zanella was emerging from his terrible ordeal, 1872-6—the theme of spirituality and materialism appears in starker, more dramatic contours, in terms of a clash between his strong, simple faith, as exemplified by his devotion to the Madonna, and the ever-menacing forces of positivism. The latter wants to eliminate Religion and take its place in order to improve Man's lot. However, no matter how much progress Science makes, it will never be able to provide the solace which Our Lady gives to those who turn to her for help:

Ma non sulle compresse ali del foco  
I trasvolanti carri; non l'accento,  
Come guizzo do folgore, trasmesso  
A' più lontani continenti: i mari  
Pesati e delle stelle i multiformi  
Concili aperti e le spiate cune  
Scemano il duol, che per le vie del mondo  
All'egro Adamo compagno eterno.  
Noi quando il cor di lagrime è più pregno,  
E nega il labbro alle parole il varco;  
Quando n'è duro sostener lo sguardo  
D'un volgo altier che a' nostri mali irride;  
Noi quassù saliremo, e nel tuo seno  
Da tante spade vulnerato un giorno  
Deporre, o Beata, il nostro affanno,

55. Ibid., p.480.

56. Zanella had a degree in philosophy, knew English, French and German, and had read the works of, amongst others, Hume, Condillac, D'Holbach, Helvétius, Condorcet, Comte and Bentham.

Come i padri solean ...

Madonna di Monte Berico presso Vicenza, ll.51-66

In the sonnet, Dinanzi ad una cappella della Madonna,

Da questo scoglio, che torreggia immoto  
Nel brullo del torrente arido letto,  
Ove la Fè di secolo remoto  
Pose il solingo, candido tempietto,

Odi, o gran Donna, il cantico devoto,  
Che a Te leviamo dall'acceso petto;  
E de' giovani cuori adempi il voto  
Fidenti appien nel tuo materno affetto.

Come questo inconcusso, altero scoglio,  
Su cui prostrati T'adoriam, del flutto  
Tempestoso in april spezza l'orgoglio;

Fa' che salda la Fede in noi resista:  
E qual miriam questo torrente asciutto,  
L'error dilegui ch'oggi il mondo attrista.

which is in effect "Una preghiera inalzata con animo trepido, come sospirando un' Ave Maria ...",<sup>57</sup> the poet implores Our Lady that, through her intercession, the erroneous scientific materialism of the age may disappear.

Although the fluent, Classical elegance of the endecasillabi sciolti enhances the sombre, dignified tone of the earlier work, one has only to compare the heavy quality of ll.51-55 with the "compressed vitality" of ll.64-70, from Gli ospizi marini dealing with the same theme,<sup>58</sup> to see the comparative inferiority of the poem of 1875, which was included by Zanella in the fourth edition of his verses.

It is perhaps rather suprising that the sonnet of 1876, with its simple, delicate, unpretentious directness and apparent spontaneity,<sup>59</sup> should however been omitted.

The same basic theme—an attack on scientific materialism—informs the sonnet, Pel centenario della battaglia di Legnano 1876,

Non più d'aste superba e di corsieri  
Scende lamagna sul lombardo piano;  
Ne serrati al Carroccio i pii guerrieri  
Guardan la tenda del Pastor romano.

Di titanici armato atei pensieri  
Oggi Arminio discende, e schermo invano  
Fanno l'angel d'Aquino e l'Alighieri.  
Quando fia che ne allegri altro Legnano?

Itale genti! Venerabil voce  
Tuona dal Tebro e sotto il segno antico  
Tutte vi aduna dell'irrisa Croce.

57. Poesie scelte (1957), p.100.

58. Cf. Ch. 5, p. 206.

59. Poesie scelte (1957), p.100: "Il sonetto fu quasi improvvisato per un gruppo di giovani, che con lui visitavano l'elegante tempietto a Maria, guardiana delle Alpi, eretto 'fra scuri burroni e valli orrende' presso Romano d'Ezzelino".

Commilitoni nell'eccelsa prova  
 Con voi Torquato si armeranno e Vico,  
 E la via segneran Volta e Canova.

Although, in this work, as in another sonnet of 1876, La pace di Venezia fra Papa Alessandro III e l'Imperatore Barbarossa, also dealing with the Battle of Legnano, Zanella was concerned, as to a great extent was Carducci,<sup>60</sup> with viewing his own age through a historical perspective.

Presenting the powerful, foreign, atheistic influence of positivism as an invading army does serve to make the present-day threat to Italy more evident, dangerous and imminent, while, if anything, the actual contrast between a marauding, medieval force and the subtle, "unseen", but virulent, infiltration of these atheistic influences, intensifies their insidiousness and therefore the urgent need for action. The whole effect is reinforced by the fact that neither the theology of Aquinas, nor the works of Dante can stem the tide of this philosophical invasion. Nevertheless this fundamental comparison has a rather trite, conventional and artificial quality which undermines the effectiveness of what was essentially an "occasional" poem.<sup>61</sup>

The final terzina not only echoes the closing lines of Il taglio dell'istmo di Suez 1866,

Quando sotto le palme e fra gli amomi  
 Noi moveremo insieme ed alla folta  
 Ombra odorata insegneremo i nomi  
 D'Humboldt e Volta.

ll.77-80,

but also the following lines from Carducci,

Umana industria in divo lume avvolta  
 Spezzi il mistero e le sognate porte,  
 E minacciando insultino a la morte  
 Galvani e Volta:

Agl'Italiani, ll.13-16.

The extent to which polemical bitterness was becoming increasingly entrenched in Zanella's poetry may be gauged from the ode, Gli anni. A Corinna 1877.

Calcaterra has noted the unusual nature of the poem, its basic themes and tone:

Parlano gli anni con immaginosa arguzia; parla cioè il tempo, dicendo quel che dona e quel che toglie alla vita, man mano che trapassa.

È poesia di augurio, mandata dallo Zanella a una gentildonna, la quale si diceva veridicamente già innanzi negli anni, ma serbava vivissima la fantasia e componeva belle rime, che sottoponeva al giudizio del poeta. L'ode finisce pertanto con un elogio della virtù vivificatrice, che è sempre insita nella fantasia.

60. Cf. Ch.5, p. 247, n. 203.

61. Poesie (1928), p.492: "Pubblicato nel volume XXIX Maggio MDCCCLXXVI. Settimo centenario della vittoria di Legnano. Ricordo agli Italiani. Modena, Tip. dell'Immacolata, 1876, a pag.93; e compreso nella terza edizione delle Poesie".



A tutta prima l'ode sembra portar un'intonazione nuova tra le liriche zanelliane, perchè ha spirito giocoso e chiusa galante; ma lo Zanella ... allo spirito giocoso, con cui fa parlar il tempo, unisce il lampo dell'immaginazione tutta sua, con la quale egli suole sorvolare sulle forme labili e caduche, cercando quel che vale e dura.<sup>62</sup>

The rapid passage of time is certainly well conveyed by the febrile pace of the ottonari, as may be seen in lines 1-6:

Frettolosi zingarelli  
 Con canestri e bossoletti,  
 Con uncini, con martelli  
 Ed al piè sordi calcetti,  
 Noi corriam, corriamo a tondo  
 Quanto è lungo e largo il mondo.

Although the poet points out that so many activities, enterprises, arguments and controversies—particularly in the context of the dismal back-drop of the sordid, contemporary, political and socio-economic scenario—seem so petty and insignificant, when viewed against the perspective of fleeting centuries,

Quante usanze, quante fole  
 Già da noi sepolte un giorno,  
 Nelle case e nelle scole  
 Or per noi non fan ritorno!  
 Il topè, la Pompaduro,  
 L'omo-scimmia ed Epicuro.

Della Camera l'inchieste  
 E gli omèi sulle finanze,  
 Le filippiche indigeste,  
 Le ringhiose interpellanze,  
 Di farragine, che ammorbata,  
 Ci ricolmano la corba;

Che con monti di giornali,  
 Di programmi, di utopie,  
 Di trattati universali,  
 D'incomprese poesie,  
 In atlantici volumi  
 Dell'oblio portiamo a' fiumi.                    11.49-66,

he himself is unable to suppress the polemical vein in his poetry, as he becomes embroiled in the controversies of his own day. Through his ironic reference to the Theory of Evolution, "L'omo-scimmia ...", l.54, and his attack on materialism, Zanella undermines the effectiveness of the whole work as he discards the detached, Olympian aloofness with which he had viewed mankind.

In fact none of the poem's stylistic or technical qualities—the appropriateness of the sestine for a satirical subject; the way in which their very lightness helps to convey the rapidity with which time passes; the way in which the ottonari not only reinforce the fleeting nature of time, but also, through their inherent monotony, assisted by the echoing

<sup>62</sup>. Poesie scelte (1957), pp.111,112.

repetitiveness of the rhyme, ABABCC, and the Classical elegance of the whole work, heighten, through a dramatic contrast, the efficacy of the satirical tone; and the felicitous fusion of the satirical bitterness and the "chiusa galante"—can counteract this fundamental weakness.

In 1880, in the verses, Nel Venerdì Santo, Zanella returned to the theme—already dealt with in the endecasillabi sciolti, Alla Madonna di Monte Berico presso Vicenza 1875, and the sonnet, Dinanzi ad una cappella della Madonna 1876.—of the attack on Religion launched by positivism. However, the emphasis is different and the poet displays more force, urgency, vigour and hope than in the two earlier poems mentioned above, which is not surprising, as they were written when he was recovering from his terrible "crisis".

This work of 1880 is in effect a prayer with its interwoven threads of adoration, thanksgiving and supplication.

By addressing the Crucified Christ directly with the familiar "Tu",

Nudo e piagato sei: di sangue intrisa  
È l'arbore feral che Ti sostenta;  
Pur nell'ansio pensier che la sgomenta,  
In Te l'errante umanità si affisa,

Divin Re de' dolori; e dal profondo  
Buio mentale, in cui delira avvolta,  
Uscir spera per Te, che un'altra volta  
Da nere posse hai francheggiato il mondo. 11.1-8,

Zanella heightens the urgency of his plea and the impact of his act of adoration at the foot of the Cross—the devotional contemplation of the most vivid manifestation of what Man's redemption has cost. But Christ has not only redeemed mankind,

Tu del tapino e della donna i dritti  
Hai riscattati: parco il desco, e santo  
Festi l'amore; e Tu beato il pianto  
E beati dicesti i derelitti. 11.13-16

The slow, gentle pace of this lines intensifies, by contrast, the dramatic force of the poet's righteous indignation at the arrogance of nineteenth-century materialism, which, in trying to supplant God, is insulting the Cross:

Ora vedi, o Signor? Di forze adulta  
E d'immenso saper, ch'è pur Tuo dono,  
Questa tumida età rapirti il trono  
Tenta dell'alme ed alla Croce insulta;

Procace insulta alla divina Idea;  
E nella cieca ebbrietà del senso  
Alla sozza materia arde l'incenso,  
Che su' Tuoi altari un giorno ardea. 11.17-24.

Once again, Zanella, by contemplating the Crucifixion,

O di rosso color risibil vesta!  
O vil scettro di canna! O d'irte spine  
Rinterzata corona! O avulso crine  
E sul petto cadente esangue testa, 11.25-28,

stresses God's infinite love for Man, thus reinforcing the impact of ll.1-8, and so prepares for the final quartina in which he expresses his certainty that the Crucified Christ, whose outstretched arms embrace the whole of humanity, will have the ultimate victory.

Apart from the distribution of the themes, the interplay of the threads of the prayer and the related changes of tone and pace, the poet has also effectively exploited the rhyme and metre.

Thus, the flexibility and versatility of the endecasillabi are very well suited to dealing with different themes and moods, while the quartine not only provide a rapid succession of "distinct" images—in contrast with the more fluent, tightly-linked endecasillabi sciolti of, for example, Alla Madonna di Monte Berico presso Vicenza 1875—but also, together with the echoing repetitiveness of the rhyme-scheme, ABBA, reminiscent, to a certain extent, of a prayer, contribute to the emphatic, insistent character of the work as a whole.

Although it has to be admitted that the obviousness of the stylistic devices diminishes their effectiveness, the poem does have an energy, conviction and driving force which somehow lift it above the level of mere polemical bitterness, for Zanella is fighting for the defence of his most cherished spiritual and religious values and beliefs, while the grave, sombre tone which pervades the whole composition enhances the seriousness of his fears and the sense of urgency of his plea to Christ.

It is interesting at this point to note how Zanella's disillusionment at the way in which Science has failed to solve mankind's problems and create an earthly paradise—

Balda scienza alle famiglie umane  
 Aurei tempi promise. Ora, se duro  
 L'oggi si volve, è l'avvenir più scuro;  
 E cosa salda in terra non rimane,                      11.33-36<sup>63</sup> —

anticipates not only one of the contributory factors in the crisis of confidence or Mal du siècle which was to afflict Western Man at the end of the nineteenth century, but also one of the currents, namely neo-Idealism, which was, in effect, to constitute a reaction, at a philosophical level, against positivism.

In the long tale Edvige 1881, Zanella continues to decry the claim of the adherents of materialistic positivism, that Science in the nineteenth century would destroy Religion by showing it to be mere superstition. The poet points out that science and knowledge, without being able to provide answers to many fundamental questions, can bring unhappiness and bitterness. In other words, Science can stimulate the thirst for knowledge of

63. These lines would seem to have an illustrious Leopardian precedent—La ginestra, 1.51, "Le magnifiche sorti e progressive".



the human soul without satisfying it.

Zanella goes on to refer to the soul, "l' Io misterioso" l.640, which cannot be viewed under a lens or dissected, and is to be found "Fra il voler combattuta e l'intelletto" l.648. For while the whole of creation follows the laws of Nature, Man alone, through the exercise of his free will, can choose not to do so. Too much importance is given to the perishable body which is like a cage imprisoning the restless soul, while Man goes through this earthly life, "... questa folle/Nostra danza de' morti ..." ll.667,668, which is merely a prelude to the real dawn of his existence.

Yet again the emphasis is on the essential distinction between the spiritual and the material, the infinite and the finite, as well as the importance of the relationship between God and Man, an important aspect of which—the response of the individual soul, through the exercise of its free will, to the promptings of divine grace—is also dealt with in *Edvige*.

Zanella looks at the way Teobaldo, a young doctor, returns to his childhood faith, after having been a sceptical atheist. In spite of his pride, Teobaldo would very much like to participate in other people's joy, as he had done in his childhood, and so be able to "sottrarsi alla noia" l.487. Having become a doctor, travelled extensively and visited foreign universities, he had acquired "molta dottrina e molto orgoglio" l.495. The way these two things have been juxtaposed implies the rather sweeping generalisation that the acquisition of knowledge is inevitably linked with that of pride, although it must be admitted that Zanella was of course referring specifically to the case of Teobaldo. The poet was probably on much firmer ground when he pointed to the lack of maternal affection and attention, as well as being left with wicked servants, which had made Teobaldo grow up "Iracondo e selvatico" l.545. Although there still remained within him some spark of that "ardor celestial" l.579, which had made the world seem beautiful when he was a child, he was primarily prey to "un tedio cupo" l.580, proud disbelief and mocking cynicism—these things made him live out his days in a tired routine, without love or hope: "... e della vita/Altra mercè non attendea che il nulla." ll.585-6. The impact of the words "noia" and "nulla" is intensified by their Leopardian associations.

Thinking of his past life, Teobaldo reflects:

... "Io vissi, —  
 Fra sè pensava, —avventuroso io vissi,  
 Quando poco alla mente, al core assai  
 La natura parlava ... ll.603-606,

Similarly, the majesty of creation causes him to conclude that: "... Il cor lo sente,/Noi comprende il pensiero ..." ll.789,790. Zanella's insistence upon the importance of the human heart and soul—apart from being an important element in terms of the spiritual values which he stood for

in an age which was becoming increasingly materialistic—shows his almost constant adherence to Romanticism,<sup>64</sup> at least with regard to the themes that he dealt with.

In mentioning Teobaldo's belief in the Theory of Evolution, Zanella takes the opportunity of attacking it, presenting it in an unfavourable light.

But at this stage in Teobaldo's own evolution towards his conversion, the conflict within him is beginning to take shape. Whilst he feels scorn and derision for religion and the Bible, as well as the theories of Linnaeus, Edvige's beauty and innocence seem to be leading him back to the "buon sentiero antico" 1,687.

Learning, erudition and knowledge (science) having left him bereft of hope and consumed by bitterness, he had cursed life, despised heroic virtues and ironically mocked virtue, particularly in women. He had thought Evil to be eternal and invincible and had gone against the promptings of his heart, according to which God had created the world. He realized the gravity of his mistake. He was like a perfumed, smartly-dressed corpse, walking about with a smile on his lips, boredom at his side and death in his thoughts. From then on he became more pensive, but less haughty and brusque. Not wanting to be alone, Teobaldo was often drawn to Edvige's school. On hearing the school-children singing a hymn to Mary, he is moved and thinks of the importance of prayer. As a child he had prayed, now it was difficult because of his mocking scepticism. At the bedside of a dying woman, he feels useless—his knowledge cannot save her, and he therefore wonders whether he has the right to deride "... le preghiere e le speranze .../Che la morte fan bella ..." 11,840,841. Watching the priest giving the dying woman Extreme Unction, Teobaldo is deeply affected, and, as if gripped "Da terror sovrumano" 1,865, he rushes out. He then mounts his horse and gallops to the edge of a sheer drop. In spite of the fact that Teobaldo keeps on prodding the animal until he draws blood, the horse will not move. Guglielmo, who had been sent by Edvige to follow Teobaldo, calls out to him. This causes Teobaldo to turn in bewilderment, as if he had just woken from a terrible dream. This crisis seems to be the turning point in Teobaldo's conversion. From then on he often talks with the priest and seems to have found happiness and peace of mind. But perhaps the most characteristic change in him is his new attitude to Nature—prior to his conversion he had viewed it in Leopardian terms as a cruel stepmother.

Although Zanella has tried to show Teobaldo's conversion as being a gradual process, and has attempted to give the character a certain "substance" by sketching in a psychological and educational background, one

<sup>64</sup>. Bearing in mind the strongly "spiritualistic" component of Romanticism as referred to in Ch.(2), pp.34 - 9 .

cannot help feeling that there are elements of over-simplification, exaggeration and caricature. Just as atheists may regard theists as being too gullible and naïve, so the latter sometimes view the former as cynical, sceptical and irreverent, in the extreme. Both generalisations are, of course, exaggerated and certainly not universally-applicable. But, here, precisely because the character of Teobaldo has not been fully developed, one feels that he seems more of a two-dimensional symbol—a stereotyped composite of stock "atheistic" features. In addition, the turning point in his conversion seems rather theatrical and contrived.

In the carme, L'evoluzione 1886, Zanella yet again attacks the Theory of Evolution, for it is implicitly attempting to deny the relationship between the human and the divine.

Thus, although Nature has given Man sovereignty over Creation, as well as "Di divin lume adorno/ ... l'intelletto;" ll.23,24, through his pride and arrogance, he childishly thinks he can oppose Nature. In spite of the great freedom he has been given, there are limits beyond which he has no power, and Nature reigns supreme. She has kept the different species separate, and Man has always been as he is now—he has not "evolved" from lower forms of life.

Despite the rapid succession of compact quartine, the lightness and fluent pace of the settenari and quinari, as well as the way in which the last line of each strofa rhymes with the first line of the following one, so enhancing the poem's overall fluency, this work has a tired, heavy quality. Even the polemical bitterness lacks the sarcastic vigour of earlier poems. This is evident, for example, in the following lines where the personification of Nature addresses Man:

Il tuo poter non vale  
A sciorre la catena,  
Che terre e cieli affrena  
E li governa:

Immobilmente eterna  
Tra specie e specie io posi,  
E l'uom tentar non l'osi,  
Una parete.

Ben di mie fisse mète  
Rider tu puoi che vanti  
Ne' bruti al bosco erranti  
I tuoi fratelli;

ll.45-56.

One is left with the impression of an elegant, academic and sententious composition.



(III) RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL VALUES

The importance of religious and spiritual values for Zanella emerges in several ways: through an appreciation of the rôle of a country priest, Per un amico parroco 1851, and an almost religious exaltation of life in the country, Le campane de' villaggi 1879; while the clash of Egoismo e carità 1865 and the inevitable disillusionment of Il sonno—due to the enormous gulf between the poet's idealistic vision of the world and contemporary reality—are followed by a tribute to St. Francis, Assisi 1882.

It is not surprising, since Zanella was a priest and a sincere, committed Christian, that religion should figure very prominently in his poetry, not only in terms of the broad perspective of the fundamental theological relationship between God and Man, but also at a humbler, everyday, grass-roots level. Thus, for example, in the poem Per un amico parroco 1851, he stresses the importance of religion in life, through a consideration of the rôle of the priesthood and the part played by the Church in the everyday lives of the people.

According to Pasquazi<sup>65</sup> the literary antecedent of this poem is to be found in Terenzio Mamiani's Il pievano di Montalceto, while Nievo, with a slightly different emphasis from that of Zanella, "invitava ... a non confondere la sorte dei poveri preti di campagna (e pensava forse al suo don Lorenzo Foschiani, il protagonista dell'interrotto Pescatore d'anime), unico tramite tra le miserande plebi rurali e la classe politica al potere, con le alte gerarchie ecclesiastiche".<sup>66</sup>

In these quartine, which originally constituted an occasional poem, Zanella paid generous tribute to his old friend and former colleague,<sup>67</sup> who had sacrificed earthly ambition, youthful dreams—1.2, "... auree larve dell'età primiera", cf. Leopardi, Nelle nozze della sorella Paolina, ll.2, 3: "... le beate/larve e l'antico error ..."—and fame as a poet, for his vocation to the priesthood: "... di ben far voglioso," 1.13.<sup>68</sup>

After praising his friend, don Ottaviano Rossi, in particular, Zanella turns to a more general appreciation of the rôle of a priest: how he brings comfort, guidance, support, advice, as well as setting a good example, in accordance with the different needs and circumstances of the individuals in the community. Great emphasis is placed on the value and relevance of the sacraments—baptism, marriage, the last rites—inasmuch as they fulfil a vital need during the course of an individual's earthly existence.

65. Pasquazi (1961), p.2781.

66. Romagnoli, p.141.

67. Poesie (1928), p.16.

68. Cf. Pasquazi (1967), pp.43,44: "L'immagine dell'amico par quasi sentita in una idealità pariniana ... Una figura che converge tutta in un verso, sintesi di una vocazione: 'Di conversar cogli umili contento' ...".

One can see how there are elements of realism coexisting with a view of the peasants and country life in general, which is not only very Classical, but even too "literary" as Petronio pointed out with regard to Astichello 1880-1887.<sup>69</sup> Thus, although there is a reference to the inherent hardships and uncertainties of a peasant's life,

Spera l'agricoltor che la tua mano  
Terra lunge il furor della tempesta,  
Quando biondo ne' solchi ondeggia il grano; 11.42-44,

the overall presentation of this rural life betrays a detached and idealised viewpoint as in the following quartine:

Suona la squilla. Sulla via frequente,  
Sparsa di fronde e di silvestri fiori  
In adorno vestir esce la gente,  
Parchi coloni e semplici pastori,  
  
Che lungo il prato in bipartita schiera  
Addensando si van, come talvolta  
In fondo all'orizzonte, che s'annerà,  
Nuvola sopra nuvola si affolta. 11.17-24.

Apart from the Leopardian reminiscences of 1.17—cf. "... un suon di squilla", Il passero solitario, 1.29—and 1.19 with its unmistakable associations with Il passero solitario:

Tutta vestita a festa  
la gioventù del loco  
lascia le case, e per le vie si spande; 11.32-34,

and Il sabato del villaggio:

Or la squilla dà segno  
della festa che viene; 11.20,21,

the elegant Classical vocabulary ("fronde", "silvestri fiori", "in bipartita schiera") with its patronising overtones, "Parchi coloni e semplici pastori" 1.20, shows the relative weakness of Zanella's realistic vein<sup>70</sup> in his early poems, compared to its forceful emergence in the sonnets of Astichello and other poems written at that time.

In 1865, Zanella turned to a consideration of a very fundamental antinomy in one of his best works, Egoismo e carità:

Odio l'allòr che, quando alla foresta  
Le novissime fronde invola il verno,  
Ravviluppato nell'intatta vesta  
Verdeggia eterno.

Pompa de' colli; ma la sua verzura  
Gioia non reca all'augellin digiunò;  
Chè la splendida bacca invan matura  
Non coglie alcuno.

Te, poverella vite, amo, che quando  
Fiedon le nevi i prossimi arboscelli,  
Tenera, l'altrui duol commiserando,  
Sciogli i capelli.

69. Cf. Ch.5, pp. 220, 221.

70. Cf. p. 321, n. 133.

Tu piangi, derelitta, a capo chino,  
Sulla ventosa balza. In chiuso loco  
Gaio frattando il vecchierel vicino  
Si asside al foco.

Tien colmo un nappo: il tuo licor gli cade  
Nell'ondeggiar del cubito sul mento;  
Poscia floridi paschi ed auree biade  
Sogna contento.

As Baldacci has pointed out, this "saffica famosa" was very highly praised by Carducci—"... così scriveva al Chiarini: 'degnò d'Orazio (massima lode) e d'un greco ... È l'unica forse nella letteratura di questi ultimi 40 anni!'"<sup>71</sup> — and found an echo in one of the sonnets from Rime nuove, Colloqui con gli alberi:

Te che solinghe balze e mesti piani  
Ombri, o quercia pensosa, io più non amo,  
Poi che cedesti al capo de gl'insani  
Eversor di cittadi il mite ramo.

Nè te, lauro infecondo, ammiro o bramo,  
Che mènti e insulti, o che i tuoi verdi e strani  
Orgogli accampi in mezzo al verno gramo  
O in fronte a calvi imperador romani.

Amo te, vite, che tra bruni sassi  
Pampinea ridi, ed a me pia maturi  
Il sapiente de la vita oblio.

Ma più onore l'abete: ei fra quattr'assi,  
Nitida bara, chiuda al fin li oscuri  
Del mio pensier tumulti e il van desio.

The obvious similarities between the two works include: the selfishness of the laurel which is of no benefit to anyone and is only interested in arrogantly displaying the useless pomp of its "verzura"; the way in which l.9, "Te, poverella vite, amo ...", in the earlier work is almost identically repeated by Carducci, l.9, "Amo te, vite ..."; and, of course, the benefits bestowed by the charitable vine: happy dreams for the old peasant, Egoismo e carità, ll.14-20, and a felicitous evasion from life's problems for Carducci.

Zanella's poem, as Calcaterra has commented:

Forma perfetta. Il poeta, nel contemplare il sentimento lirico, con cui guarda alla vita, e le immagini, in cui esso si incorpora, trova per la raffigurazione la parola più nitida in un ritmo sobrio e definito. Altre volte egli ama diffondere intorno alle immagini un senso di arcano e ineffabile, di etereo e fuggente. Qui egli delinea con precisione il momento lirico-fantastico, nel quale gli piace soffermarsi ... 72

seems to be a harmonious fusion of the delicate, idyllic and bucolic subject with the sober elegance and Classical conciseness in whose fabric the stylistic devices have been very successfully integrated.

71. Baldacci, p.708.

72. Poesie scelte (1957), p.39.



The opening words, "Odio l'allòr ... " 1.1, immediately capture the reader's attention and demonstrate not only the poet's direct "intervention" and personal involvement, but also the vehemence of his feelings. The impact of "Odio" is, of course, heightened by its dramatic clash with 1.9: "Te, poverella vite, amo ...", and also by the contrast with the delicacy which envelops the whole composition.

The poet then explains the reason for his hatred of the laurel—it has an almost "masculine", over-bearing, arrogant pride in the fact that, unlike the other trees of the forest, it does not lose its leaves in winter, but

Ravviluppato nell'intatta vesta  
Verdeggia eterno.

Pompa de' colli ...

11.3-5.

The effectiveness of "Pompa" is anticipated and prepared for by the smug, forceful, grandiloquent tone of "Ravviluppato", "intatta" and "Verdeggia", not only because of their "length"—which, of course, almost seems to be reinforcing the idea of "eterno"—but also on account of the strongly emphatic double consonants: "vv", "pp", "tt", "gg", and the rather harsh alliteration of "t" and, to a lesser extent, of "v" and even of "r".

For Calcaterra "... quel 'ravviluppato' fa quasi prendere all'alloro aspetto di persona ...".<sup>73</sup> The personification of the target of Zanella's hatred makes the latter seem more plausible, and even justifiable, than would have been the case if it had been directed against a mere plant.

The laurel's pride in its appearance is shown to be unwarranted because the tree is unable to provide enough sustenance even for a small bird.

Having merely referred to the laurel, the poet, by contrast, now addresses the vine directly in a familiar tone as he expresses his love and admiration for it in 1.9. As Calcaterra has indicated—

La vite, dai tralci sparsi intorno al ceppo, come donna che  
pianga sulla desolazione delle piccole piante ferite dal ver-  
no è immagine della carità—74

the vine is presented as a personification of charity with the tender, compassionate attributes—heightened, through this section, 11.9-20, dealing with the vine, by the vezzeggiativi: "poverella", "arboscelli", "vecchierel", and by the alliteration of "l" and "ll"—of a woman.

11.11-13,

Tenera, l'altrui duol commiserando,  
Sciogli i capelli.

Tu piangi, derelitta, a capo chino,  
are reminiscent of Leopardi's personification of Italy,

<sup>73</sup>. *Ibid.*, p.39, note (1).

<sup>74</sup>. *Ibid.*, p.39, note (3).

... sparte le chiome ...  
siede in terra negletta e sconsolata,

...  
... e piange All'Italia, ll.14-17.

In ll.14-20, the poet shows how the fruit of the vine puts an old man into a good mood<sup>75</sup> and makes him dream of pastoral bliss.

There is a hint of realism, ll.14-16, in the fact that the old man, sitting next to the fire and living in restricted quarters, is of humble condition. However this in no way detracts from the delicate, bucolic tone of the work, for, on the contrary, it is perfectly consonant with, and even enhances, the essential simplicity, sobriety and elegance of the Classical style. In addition the Classical conciseness and limpidity reinforce the quintessential overtones—smallness, neatness, attractiveness—of the vezzezzati. In fact the tone and mood of ll.14-20 anticipate Astichello 1880-1887, in which, according to Cusatelli, Zanella achieved "quella tonalità 'media' di realismo che vanamente avevano inseguito, in quegli anni, tanti poeti: un realismo ugualmente disposto all'evocazione elegiaca del paesaggio e alla istanza umanitaria, sobriamente nutrito di classicismo ...".<sup>76</sup>

In appreciating the vividness of the poet's affectionate presentation (implicit in the vezzezzativo) of the "vecchierel"—"Quell'ondeggiar del gomito sul mento, mentre la mano accosta il bicchiere alle labbra, dà alla figura del vecchierello una stupenda evidenza"<sup>77</sup>—it should be borne in mind that the poem as a whole, and in particular ll.14-20, displays the "compressed vitality" of a "classico robusto" which, as Momigliano<sup>78</sup> has shown, characterizes Zanella's best works.

The strofa saffica, one of the Classical metres adopted by Carducci in his Odi barbare, consists of three endecasillabi and a quinario. In Egoismo e carità Zanella, as Prati<sup>79</sup> had already done and Pascoli<sup>80</sup> was later to do, follows the example of Parini (cf. the ode Alla Musa) by employing rime alternate, ABAB, which give the strofa saffica a Classically elegant, agile pace. Zanella also fully exploits the intrinsic attributes of the quinario, whose graceful subtlety makes it very appropriate for expressing delicate sentiments.

This poem is undoubtedly one of his best works, not only on account of all its qualities, which have already been mentioned, but also because its delicacy and lightness, whilst not trivialising the basic theme (central

75. Cf. Pascoli, Myricae, La vite e il cavolo, ll.7,8.

76. Cusatelli, p.559.

77. Poesie scelte (1957), p.40, note (1).

78. Momigliano, p.510.

79. Cf. Baldacci's comment on Prati's Una serata d'inverno, "È un'ode saffica rimata, di stampo pariniano, e che quasi prelude al Carducci di Rime nuove". (Baldacci, p.608).

80. E.g. Myricae, Pensieri, I-VII, IX, X.

to Zanella's moralising attitude to life), prevent the composition from becoming ponderous or sententious due to the gravity of the subject.

Zanella, who employed the strofa saffica in other compositions,<sup>81</sup> may, perhaps, be seen as following in the footsteps of Parini and Prati, while anticipating, and even influencing, Carducci.<sup>82</sup>

Zanella's moralising view of life is also evident in the ode, Il sonno, published in 1866, but written at an earlier date. Like so many moralists and idealists he often finds himself torn between the way he would like things to be and the way they really are. Thus, in this work the poet tells us that, overcome by sleep, he dreams of an ideal world in which all men would be united in equality and brotherhood. However, when he wakes up he finds himself confronted with the harshness and cruelty of reality.

The poem in fact consists of two parts corresponding to Zanella's dream and his subsequent awakening to reality. Most of the stylistic devices in this composition are directed towards dramatising this fundamental contrast.

The first three ottave:

Odo d'api pascenti  
Un confuso ronzio:  
Al bosco un mormorio  
Odo di chiusi venti.  
Ebbra l'anima nuota:  
Alla pupilla incerta  
Si scolora la nota  
Sulla pagina aperta.

Veggio ombrose campagne  
E solitari seggi:  
Passan pastori e greggi,  
Passan laghi e montagne.  
Per insensibil china  
Entra sotterra un fiume,  
Che lento mi trascina  
Sull'obbluose spume.

Dell'antro in sulla porta  
Lascio l'elmo e lo scudo,  
E mi commetto ignudo  
A tenebrosa scorta.  
Pende ignava la mano:  
Vacillante e sopita  
Ecco afferra un estrano  
La lampa di mia vita.

ll.1-24,

by their sheer length, seem to emphasize the vast time lapse needed to reach this "new world", which is shown to be physically and geographically

81. E.g. Il taglio dell'istmo di Suez 1866, A Camillo Cavour 1867, Alla memoria di Guglielmo Toaldi 1868, Nelle nozze Lampertico-Mangilli, Alla sposa 1876, A Pietro Metastasio 1882.

82. As Calcaterra has suggested when commenting on the ode, Il taglio dell'istmo di Suez 1866: "È degno di nota che l'arte, con cui lo Zanella veniva rievocando idealmente la storia, non fu senza azione sullo stile del Carducci, nelle saffiche e in altre odi di argomento storico. Il Carducci intese e gustò lo stile dello Zanella" (Poesie scelte (1957), p.31).



very distant by the description of the long journey in ll.9-16.

In ll.1-4 the alliteration of "s", "sc" (both in "pascenti" and "bosco") and "z", helps to convey the low, murmuring sound of a slumber-inducing, breeze-like noise, whose auditory impact is heightened by the repetition of "Odo" and by the gentle, repetitive monotony of the rhyme between "ronzio" and "mormorio", the latter is also stressed through enjambement by being the last word in the line.

There is an element of verisimilitude in the fact that the poet's hearing is the first of his senses to be lulled to sleep. Calcaterra has very aptly indicated the effectiveness of ll.5-8—"Preludio musicalissimo. L'assopimento avviene come sopra una onda melodica"<sup>83</sup>—and also the Petrarchan reminiscence of ll.9,10: "La frase richiama il 'seggio fresco, fiorito e verde' del Petrarca".<sup>84</sup> Petronio has seen an anticipation of Pascoli in the first two ottave:

... quel lento insensibile abbandonarsi al sonno, quel venir meno della coscienza, quelle sensazioni incerte e vaghe: un paio di strofe che diremmo prepascoliane e per le quali l'ode attira oggi il nostro interesse. 85

In fact the idyllic, dream-like tone of ll.1-16 finds an echo in Pascoli, as for example in Il vischio and Il sonellino, on which Purkis has commented as follows:

... this poem, like many others, shows how Pascoli loves to abandon himself to his dreams. The fourth stanza especially ... shows that he sometimes preferred dreams to reality. 86

In the third and fourth ottave Zanella describes his entry into his ideal world through an underground river. One can begin to see superficial, Dantesque overtones, including the harmonious fusion of elements from Classical Mythology, Christianity and the Middle Ages. However, Zanella's guide is anonymous and the poet is less concerned with conveying his own "subjective" reactions, for nothing must distract the reader's attention from the fundamental features of the vision, summarised in the following lines:

Lasciò l'aurato manto  
 Il tiranno sul trono,  
 Nè schifo ha del colono  
 Che gli remiga accanto:  
 Al monaco il soldato  
 Sul collo un braccio posa:  
 Van, come cigni, allato  
 Torquemada e Spinosa. ll. 13-40.

It is obvious that harmony and equality, at the social, political, ecclesiastical, philosophical and religious levels, are the hallmarks of

83. Ibid., p.27, note (1).

84. Ibid., p.27, note (2).

85. Petronio, p.487.

86. G.Pascoli, Selected Poems of Giovanni Pascoli, edited by G.S. Purkis, Cambridge University Press, 1965, p.94.

Zanella's ideal world.

The section of the poem dealing with the dream ends on a note of Christian exaltation,

La man Bianca e la Nera  
Stringon d'amore il patto:  
Segnale del riscatto  
Sventola una bandiera;  
E come tuon si spande  
Sovra i mari una voce:  
"Cristo risurse: grande  
Regna omai la sua Croce".

ll.65-72,

which once again stresses human brotherhood within the context of the relationship between God and Man.

The last four ottave recount Zanella's brusque return to the unpleasant realities of his own century.

While the dream had been slowly and carefully introduced in ll.1-24, the poet's awakening is very sudden and abrupt. He has very appropriately exploited the versatility of the settenari, for they have a slower, more restful pace in the dream, but a faster rhythm—than might have been the case with the more usual endecasillabi—in the final part of the poem. Zanella's sense of perplexity and bewilderment at the contrast between his own age and his vision are reinforced by the succession of interrogations. The flexibility of the settenari is enhanced by the adoption of a more varied rhyme scheme, ABBACDCD, than the more usual, ABABABCC. The poet's use of the ottava is appropriate for the "epic" tone of his account of his "mythological" journey and his vision and so helps to further dramatise the basic contrast upon which the poem is constructed.

There is an echo of this clash, between illusion and reality, albeit in a more personal and subjective vein and with a different perspective, in Carducci, as for example in Sogno d'estate:

Il passato felice, o meglio creduto felice, si contrappone  
al presente doloroso, ma pur indica la via a propositi fermi  
e disincantati per l'avvenire. 87

The impetus of optimism, which emerges in spite of the prevailing disillusionment, can also be found in Zanella's view of the ode Il sonno:

Pubblicata il 30 luglio 1866 per il matrimonio di Antonio  
Fogazzaro colla contessa Rita Valmarana, l'uno e l'altra discepoli del poeta.

Lo Zanella avrebbe desiderato scrivere apposita poesia per il lieto avvenimento, "ma i grandi fatti—egli dice nella lettera dedicatoria—che si compiono in Europa; e questa quanto sospirata, altrettanto meravigliosa liberazione della Venezia, hanno talmente commosso l'animo mio, che non ha nè tempo, nè voglia di porsi allo studio. Vi offro invece questi pochi versi, che aveva fra le mie carte, scritti in tempo che la verità non si potea mostrare se non velata". 88

Both Zanella and Carducci (cf. p.223) viewed the events of their own

87. Salinari, p. 705.

88. Poesie (1928), p.76.

age through the historical perspective of the past and with a sense of hope for the future.

Calcaterra has very aptly assessed the value of the ode and its place in its historical context:

L'ode ha ... intendimenti sociali e umanitari, come altri canti dello Zanella. Sotto l'aspetto artistico ha la forma di "visione", che è un modo di comporre spesso usato nella nostra letteratura. Nei tempi moderni fu caro al Settecento e anche al romanticismo. La visione dello Zanella, più che arcaica, è romantica, potremmo anzi dire per alcuni aspetti romanzesca, e ha una sua accensione immaginosa, in cui alcune strofe, bellissime, danno un singolar rilievo all'infinito e all'inconscio. È dello Zanella, cioè originale, quel senso di un tempo che fluisce perenne e ci porta obliosi sulle sue onde taciturne. 89

Zanella's quasi-religious appreciation of country life finds expression in the deceptively simple poem, Le campane de' villaggi 1879,

Campane de' villaggi!  
Al povero colono  
De' dì festivi sull'attesa aurora  
Nel duro letto coricato ancora,  
Come torna giocondo il vostro suono  
Che dell'usato Sol previene i raggi,  
Campane de' villaggi!

Campane de' villaggi!  
Il triplice concento  
Passa rombando nella buia stanza:  
Poi rapido dilegua in lontananza  
E maggior torna col tornar del vento,  
Che fra le cime sibila de' faggi,  
Campane de' villaggi!

Campane de' villaggi!  
Con voi per una porta  
Entrano i sogni dell'età più cara.  
Scorge il buon vecchio un primo sguardo, un'ara,  
Una schiva fanciulla, or donna accorta,  
Che di figli il fe' lieto onesti e saggi,  
Campane de' villaggi!

Campane de' villaggi!  
Come operose amiche  
Che l'una l'altra al mattutin lavoro  
Svegliando va, voi vi svegliate in coro,  
Voci squillanti dalle torri antiche,  
Perchè l'uom torni all'opra e s'avvantaggi:  
Campane de' villaggi!

Campane de' villaggi!  
Il suono, a guisa d'onda  
Lustral, sulle campagne ampie si spande  
E le terre santifica, che grande  
Dall'estremo orizzonte il Sol feconda,  
L'aria infiammando co' nascenti raggi,  
Campane de' villaggi!



which is enriched by its literary antecedents and anticipates not only the tone and mood of many of the Astichello sonnets 1880-1887—"Composta ne' primi tempi della dimora del poeta nella sua villa all'Astichello"<sup>90</sup>—but also a similar, recurring theme in Pascoli.

As has already been seen in preceding chapters, particularly 2 and 4, the religious exaltation of Nature and the countryside in Zanella's poetry would seem to have been influenced by Cowper, Rousseau, Madame de Staël and Gabriele Rossetti.<sup>91</sup>

It is also interesting to note how Zanella's co-regionist, Ippolito Nievo, also recognised the intimate connection between the lives of the peasants and their village church ( as in his Novelliere campagnuolo ):

... questi racconti tendono ad una storia completa del personaggio ... dalla nascita alla morte ... l'eterna vicenda umana che si lega e s'intreccia con quella delle case, simboli delle comunità familiari, con quelle delle chiese e dei campanili, simboli delle comunità paesane, con quelle delle coltivazioni ... 92

This poem has an interesting link with Gray's Elegy and Zanella's translation<sup>93</sup> of it, which failed to give an adequate idea of the stylistic qualities of the original.

Thus the striking imagery of, "The breezy call of incense-breathing morn," l.17, is translated as, "Brezza odorata di nascente giorno,"<sup>94</sup> l.17. The word "incense" imbues the hard lives of the poor peasants with a quality of sanctity and worth which Zanella's rendering completely fails to transmit. In addition, the idea of the "incense-breathing morn" calling the peasants to their work has religious overtones, like a church bell calling the faithful to prayer, which Zanella does not convey. Similarly he does not give the idea of the way these men enjoyed life, despite its hardships. Thus l.27, (especially "jocund"), "How jocund did they drive their team afield!", seems to be virtually ignored.

It is almost as if some of the omissions of Zanella's version of Gray's Elegy found their way into Le campane de' villaggi and fused with the lightness and delicacy of Leopardi's idylls.

It is particularly noteworthy how the omitted epithet, "jocund", almost seems to belatedly re-emerge in the poem of 1878 as "giocondo", l.5, which is rare in Zanella's poetry.

In the hint of realism in l.4, "... duro letto ...", is to be found the only trace of the gravity and austerity of the English work.

90. Poesie (1928), p.261.

91. Cf. pp.24;36;159,160.

92. Romagnoli, p.111.

93. Zanella translated Gray's Elegy in 1869 (cf. Greenwood, pp. 327,328).

94. G.Zanella, Versioni poetiche di Giacomo Zanella con prefazione di Ettore Romagnoli, Firenze, 1921, Vol.2, p.4, l.1.

The Leopardian reminiscences include the following:

... sibilando il vento, Le ricordanze, l.69,

and

... del vento,  
Che fra le cime sibila ... Le campane de' villaggi, ll.12,13;  
quando ...  
l'uomo ...  
... torna all'opre? ... La quiete dopo la tempesta, ll.28-30

and

Perchè l'uom torni all'opra ... Le campane de' villaggi, l.27;  
la gioventù ...  
... per le vie si spande; Il passero solitario, ll.33,34

and

... sulle campagne ampie si spande Le campane de' villaggi, l.31;  
... il Sol che nasce Le ricordanze, l.63,  
... il sole,  
... folgorando ...  
con sue fiamme ... Il tramonto della luna, ll.58-60,

and

Dall'estremo orizzonte il Sol feconda,  
L'aria infiammando co' nascenti raggi, Le campane de' villaggi  
ll.33,34.

As Calcaterra has indicated:

Nel canto, vivido d'immagini, i versi, risonanti di accenti e rime, riecheggiano l'onda aerea dello scampanare. 95

This is particularly true—the repetition of the first and last lines of each strofa is an almost onomatopoeic rendition of the ringing of the bells which symbolise the importance of the church for the whole community throughout the lives of its individual members—of the second strofa. The three words of l.9, "Il triplice concerto", referring to the "triple" sound are seemingly illustrated by the three syllables of "rombando" l.10 and the tripartite "division" of the rest of the verse: l.10, l.11 and ll.12-14. The alternating increase and decrease in the sound of the bells is heightened by the use of settenari and endecasillabi, in the unusual rhyme-scheme, abCCBAa, whose "echoing" effect (ab ... BA ...) is stressed by the gradually-fading settenario ( ... a).

The construction of the poem is also noteworthy—each strofa provides a compact, vivid tableau—for while the first, third and fourth strofa indicate the significance of the church (symbolised by the bells) in country life, the second and fifth seem to concentrate on the actual sound itself. The former, with its aural imagery, almost illustrates the nature of the actual, physical, material ringing, while the latter, with its fusion of aural and visual imagery and the spiritual significance of the

sound of the bells, is a summation and exaltation of the whole work.

The felicitous combination of settenari and endecasillabi also contributes to the effectiveness of the poem and particularly to the impact of the final strofa, in which the rapid, agile pace of the shorter metrical form helps to attenuate the solemnity and dignity conveyed by the eleven-syllable lines, ll.31-34, without trivialising them. The inherent fluency of the endecasillabi helps to convey the impression of the ringing of the bells wafting gently over the countryside, whose vast expanses are highlighted by the sheer length of the eleven-syllable lines.

The imagery of ll.29-35 also provides an interesting thematic interplay, for while the earth is spiritually sanctified by "Il suono ..." l.30,<sup>96</sup> it is materially blessed by the sun's rays.

Thematic overtones from this poem occur in Pascoli, as may be seen in the Canti di Castelvecchio.<sup>97</sup>

In 1882, Zanella composed the ode, Assisi, partly as an act of gratitude towards the Franciscans and partly as an occasional composition.<sup>98</sup>

As Calcaterra has indicated: "Ogni strofe è dall'artista colorita come una miniatura; e così deve essere riguardata nella lettura".<sup>99</sup>

Certainly within the compact framework of the sestine the poet has appropriately adapted the settenari to deal with different themes and moods.

Thus, for example, he conveys the stark, dramatic single-mindedness of the way of life of St. Francis in the opening strofe,

Dall'Appennin selvoso  
 Insolita una voce  
 Levossi: "Avventuroso  
 Chi per seguir la Croce  
 Lascia il paterno albergo  
 E volge al mondo il tergo.

Mortal grandezza è vana;  
 Infido laccio è l'oro;  
 Un pomo, una fontana  
 Sono miglior tesoro;  
 D'un regno è sulla soglia  
 Chi per Gesù si spoglia."

ll.1-12,

96. The way in which the ringing of the bells seems to convey a blessing or prayer to the countryside finds an echo in Carducci, La Chiesa di Polenta, ll.109-112: "... la campana squilli/ammonitrice: il campanil risorto/canti di clivo in clivo a la campagna/Ave Maria".

97. E.g. Il poeta solitario (ll.25-28); La canzone del girarrosto (ll.57-61); Il viatico (ll.1-8); Il sogno della vergine (ll.76-80); Le rane (ll.35-38); La messa (ll.1-3, 25-30).

98. Poesie (1928), p.266: "Scritta pel centenario della nascita di San Francesco d'Assisi, che giustamente, scriveva lo Zanella, fu detto il più poetico di tutti i Santi. Nei mali che lo avevano afflitto, dice nei Ricordi il Lampertico, il poeta avea trovato nella carità de' Francescani molti conforti: anzi si era nell'ottobre 1874, ascritto ai Terziari".

99. Poesie scelte (1957), p.119.



pays tribute to the Saint's love of nature,

Trattenean l'aure il volo:  
Sull'omero del Santo  
Posato l'usignuolo  
Accompagnava il canto  
Che il Sol fratel, sorelle  
Care dicea le stelle;

E le montagne e l'onde  
De' mari e de' torrenti,  
Agresti fiori e fronde,  
Insetti, uccelli, armenti  
Chiamava in coro alterno  
A bendir l'Eterno.

11.19-30,

and his lack of guile and ambition,

Non ei dell'acre ingegno  
All'invida parola  
Fe' temerario segno  
La porpora o la stola;  
Ne' di nefarie imprese  
Furor ne' volghi accese;

11.31-36.

In spite of the rather conventional and hackneyed imagery, the following lines,

Ove dan ombra i pini  
Il fraticello assiso  
Sentia de' Serafini  
L'ala ventargli in viso;  
E d'arpe e di lontane  
Lire melodi arcane;

Pie visioni, amori  
Celesti ancor spiranti  
Di Giotto ne' colori  
E ne' siderei canti  
Del Ghibellin che all'Arno  
Pace chiedeva indarno.

11.55-66,

do imbue the Saint's closeness to Heaven with an appropriately delicate and ethereal quality heightened by the vezzeggiativo, "fraticello", 1.56. There is a certain appropriateness in Zanella's linking the works of Giotto and Dante with heavenly visions, since it is a recurring theme in his poetry that a truly great artist is able to get very near to God when he emulates the Creator by creating a work of art.

Zanella concludes by acknowledging the way in which the Franciscans have spread Christianity and civilization all over the world.

Despite its Classical elegance, the lightness so often associated with sestine, and the inherently fluent, agile pace of the settenari, this poem has a heavy, rather academic quality, which is of course aggravated by the obviousness of the stylistic devices.

(IV) ASTICHELLO

The sonnets of Astichello merit a section to themselves, not only because they are amongst Zanella's best works, but also because they virtually constitute, both thematically and stylistically, a recapitulation of his poetic output, with its predominantly diachronic links. That this section should be included in this chapter is due to two main factors: the presence of the clash between spirituality and materialism, and, even more crucially, the spiritual unity of Zanella's vision in Astichello and its important religious foundations.

Following the composition of Le campane de' villaggi in 1879, Zanella's poetic output up to his death in 1888 found its most felicitous and important expression in the Astichello sonnets—"...Sono l'ultima primavera poetica dello Zanella. Sbocciano, a sentir lui, come fiori di ripa dalla mestizia della sua vita ... Ma in gran parte sono miniature di artista peritissimo".<sup>100</sup>

They had been anticipated in theme, tone and mood, by the sonnets of Passeggio solitario 1869—in which the poet had in fact expressed the fervent hope that he would one day be able to lead a peaceful life in a small villa in the country—while the return to the sonnet form had already been undertaken by Prati (Psiche, 1876) and Carducci.

After referring to this, Petronio adds:

L'Astichello, proprio come Psiche per il Prati, corrisponde ad un affinamento della tecnica dello scrittore, ma, nello stesso tempo, ad una cristallizzazione del suo mondo poetico. Più che mai lo Zanella è ora incapace di comprendere la società moderna in tutti i suoi aspetti, e ideologici—positivismo, socialismo—e tecnici, ed alla civiltà trionfante oppone il mondo dei campi, arcadicamente immaginato felice, l'immobile vita dei contadini, la loro illetterata saggezza: un mondo qualunquistico, gretto, e, in fondo in fondo, tutto letterario. E appunto per questa fondamentale letterarietà e grettezza del suo mondo interiore, la lirica dello Zanella non diviene mai, nell'Astichello, poesia del passato, nostalgia delle cose semplici, polemica viva e poesia, e non si libera nemmeno, come pur accade al Prati di Iside, in vaghe immaginazioni fantastiche, ma resta quadretto di genere e inerte sermoneggiare, dalla scrittura scialba nella sua linda pulizia formale. 101

While the question of Zanella's alleged "detachment" or "retreat" from the contemporary world has already been dealt with in the preceding chapter (pp. 220-223), it would be interesting at this stage, before considering Petronio's views on Astichello, to take into account the very different assessments of Calcaterra—

100. Poesie scelte (1957), p.123.

101. Petronio, p.521.

Di aria, luce, ombra sono tessuti questi sonetti e ondeggi-  
no tra la dolcezza lirica, che la quiete dà al poeta, e la  
contemplazione serena dei sogni e delle vicende, per cui egli  
è passato, non senza assaporare spesso il dolore. Ritornano  
nella solitaria stanza le memorie soavi e quelle dolenti, si  
riabbelliscono le immagini degli anni primi, si riac-  
cende come per riflesso il raggio della fanciullezza, spen-  
sierata nel sole, e si intreccia con la poesia degli anni  
declinati in un diafano orizzonte che sconfinava con l'infinito— 102

and Momigliano:

I temi della sua poesia sono svariati: filantropici, scien-  
tifici, religiosi, idillici. Ma in tutti si sente la presen-  
za di uno spirito contemplativo, di uno sguardo che conside-  
ra e va a fondo. Anche i migliori sonetti dell'Astichello pre-  
suppongono quest'atteggiamento dello Zanella che costituisce  
la fisionomia della sua lirica. Ritraggono la campagna vicen-  
tina, dov'egli era nato: ma la pacatezza che ne spira, non è  
quella convenzionale della poesia idillica; è quella dello  
spirito che il silenzio delle cose invita a internarsi in se  
stesso. Tali i sonetti "Calda è la notte". "Agili nubi", "Tra  
le chiome de' pioppi". 103

Although there are of course elements of truth in all three critical judge-  
ments, the writer feels that a close examination of Astichello tends to  
support the last two rather than that of Petronio.

How the latter can claim that "... la lirica dello Zanella non diviene  
mai, nell'Astichello, poesia del passato, nostalgia delle cose semplici,  
polemica viva e poesia ..." is difficult to understand, when one considers  
the almost Leopardian nostalgia for childhood, sonnet LXI, ll.12-14; the  
fusion of childhood images and recollections with those of his last years,  
sonnet XXXV; and the many instances of the poet's appreciation of the  
wonders of Nature.

Pasquazi also compares Astichello and Prati's Psiche,

Ultime manifestazioni artistiche dei due poeti, entrambe le  
raccolte scaturiscono da uno stato d'animo e da un gusto ana-  
loghi, per concretarsi talora in una identità sorprendente di  
atteggiamenti, motivi e figurazioni. Quando in Psiche leggiam-  
mo: "Un picciol borgo, una casetta bianca/Coronata di verde  
in riva a un fiume/Altro la mia non chiede anima stanca"; op-  
pure: "Or ... pellegrin del mondo e stranio a tutto,/Son d'un  
naufrago l'ombra a chi mi guardi"; e ancora: "Sotto un'elce po-  
sar, tristo nè lieto/Del mio destino; e non contar gl'istanti;/  
E i profumi spirar del ginepreto;/E le rosee seguir nuvole er-  
ranti"; come non pensare alla bianca villetta sulle rive del-  
l'Astichello, ove un altro poeta, "naufrago" anch'egli, rassere-  
nava l'anima nella visione della libera e multiforme natura?  
Gli è che anche Psiche nasce dalla delusione, da una sorta di  
acre distacco dagli uomini (sia pure raggiunto per vie e ra-  
gioni diverse), e nella storia della poesia del Prati rappre-  
senta, come l'Astichello in quella dello Zanella, l'abbandono  
dell'arte di grandi imprese e il ritorno ad un mondo minuto,  
familiare e frammentario (per l'Astichello la frammentarietà  
è però, come vedremo, più esterna che sostanziale). Ritorno



che si attuò nelle forme del neoclassicismo, che allora tornava ad albeggiare, con forme diverse da quelle del sec. XVIII, sull'orizzonte letterario. 104

Nevertheless, the present writer feels that the similarities are more external and superficial than might appear from the above quotation. It is noteworthy that Pasquazi himself seems to implicitly reach this same conclusion, although he begins by seeing both works as representing "... due momenti di quel primo accostarsi della seconda generazione romantica alle forme del neoclassicismo ...". 105

If one considers this above phrase and the last sentence of the preceding quotation, one is immediately struck by the fact that Zanella cannot really be regarded as being part of the "seconda generazione romantica". Even though the themes he dealt with were essentially "Romantic", in terms of the definition given in Chapter (2), pp.13, 14, he almost invariably adopted a Classical style, derived, in many ways, from Parini not only in the context of a theoretical inspiration, but also in terms of a practical application. It is precisely this Classical, stylistic "continuity", both in Zanella's poetica and poetry, which tends to negate the whole idea of his "returning" to neoclassicismo and, consequently, of being considered a Parnassian, as De Lollis,<sup>106</sup> amongst others, suggested.

Baldacci has presented this line of reasoning with great clarity:

La lezione di Orazio, sia attraverso l'esempio dell'abate Parini, sia nella linea di continuità ... dell'educazione culturale-umanistica degli istituti religiosi, condiziona il particolare parnassianesimo dello Zanella, che col vero Parnasse non ha niente a che fare: lo Zanella infatti non è un nostalgico rievocatore della forma classica nella sua suggestione pura di bellezza, ma è un classico in ritardo, o meglio classicista ... 107

As Pasquazi himself points out,

Ma il neoclassicismo dello Zanella non fu parnassianesimo, cioè nostalgia, rimpianto, esotismo, sospiro dell'era greca ... anzi, il poeta si dichiara del tutto alieno da quella accademica reviviscenza di un mondo abolito:

"Se della Luna il raggio che trapela  
Tra pioppo e pioppo e la corrente imbianca  
D'una Naiade il dorso non rivela,  
  
Non rimpiango l'Olimpo; e m'è ventura  
Pascer la mente, di sognar già stanca,  
Nella schietta beltà della natura". [sonnet, 11.9-14]

Versi in cui evidenti sono i sottintesi polemici e così penetrati di sottile ironia. 108

104. Pasquazi (1961), p.2793.

105. Ibid., p.2793.

106. C.De Lollis, Saggi sulla forma poetica italiana dell'Ottocento, editi a cura di B.Croce, Bari, 1929, pp.240-267.

107. Baldacci, p.XXXIV.

108. Pasquazi (1961), pp.2793,2794.

After adding that neither Zanella's "decoro formale" nor his adoption of the sonnet can be attributed to the influence of the Parnasse—since the former is not merely evident in Astichello but throughout his poetic output, while the latter is a homage to "... una forma classica della poesia italiana ..."—he reaches the important conclusion that,

Dove poi lo Zanella si allontana decisamente dai parnassiani, assumendo rispetto agli ideali di quella scuola, una posizione antitetica, è nel sentimento della natura. La natura dei parnassiani ... era quella pagana di Rousseau, che s'immaginava negata dal cristianesimo; quella fissata, con immutabili caratteri d'azzurra e solare serenità ... di Théophile Gautier, di Louis Ménard e di Leconte de Lisle; quella invocata con molti sospiri dal Baudelaire; era, entro certi limiti, la "santa natura" del Carducci in contrasto con la presunta tetragine del mondo cristiano. 109

for it has to be borne in mind that

... quel che più conta rilevare, in contrapposizione ai parnassiani, è il sentimento schiettamente cristiano della natura nello Zanella. 110

It would be fair to conclude that, since the divergences between Zanella and the Parnassians also constitute fundamental differences between Astichello and Prati's Psiche, the similarities between these two collections of sonnets are superficial and external. As stated earlier, the evidence provided by Pasquazi would tend to implicitly support this view.

He goes on to demonstrate both the spiritual unity of Zanella's vision in Astichello,

Al positivismo, che aveva spezzato l'unità del mondo reale, riducendo la significazione delle cose al loro aspetto quantitativo materiale, lo Zanella aveva reagito in nome di una verità che fosse scientifica e religiosa ad un tempo ("Varcando quaggiù sorelle/Sapienza e Scienza", aveva detto nell'ode A mia madre), ma ora comprende che necessaria premessa a tale armonia era la restaurazione di quell'unità che il positivismo aveva frantumato. Lo intuirà il poeta al cospetto della natura, vedendo le cose e ascoltandole vivere: "Come sillaba a sillaba nel verso/Va succedendo in tuono or alto or grave/Il concento così dell'universo/Sotto le man di Lui, che n'ha la chiave,/Ne' secoli risuona uno e diverso" (son. XXXVII). Visione unitaria, dunque, o meglio (con parola agostiniana), "sinfonica" dell'universo. 111

and its important religious foundations,

Nell'Astichello la visione religiosa della natura è essenziale: Iddio è "manifesto in ogni parte" (son. XVIII), è presente dove "esala aura de' fiori" (son. XXII), il Suo volere "ai venti e all'acqua impera" (son. XXVIII); la natura è "d'ogni bellezza augusta madre" (son. LXXXIII), madre "onnipotente, antica ... immortale" (son. II); senso, infine, dell'anima delle cose, già così pieno nella lezione delle parabole e degli episodi evangelici. 112

109. Ibid., p.2795.

110. Ibid., p.2798.

111. Ibid., pp.2798, 2799.

112. Ibid., p.2799.

From Pasquazi's excellent summation of this line of argument,

Per questa religiosità di cui respira in varia misura, non è difficile riconoscere nell'Astichello, oltre l'esterna frammentarietà, una sostanziale unità spirituale. I novantuno sonetti risultano, infatti, come le molteplici variazioni di un tema unico, che, arricchendosi di elementi e spunti nuovi, tende via via a completarsi. Il fondo è sempre il medesimo, si tratti di aspetti georgici o di temi religiosi, di quadretti agresti o di spunti sociali, canti il poeta gioie e dolori dell'umana vita o rievocazioni favole e leggende: sempre, fra la sua anima e ciò che vede e ritrae, è una velatura solenne di religiosità. 113

as well as the views of Momigliano and Calcaterra, it would seem clear that Petronio—"... per questa fondamentale letterarietà e grettezza del suo mondo interiore, la lirica dello Zanella ... nell'Astichello ... resta quadretto di genere e inerte sermoneggiare ..." )—<sup>114</sup> has failed to grasp the importance of Zanella's depth of vision, which gains in perspective and clarity precisely because of the poet's relative "detachment", appreciation of Nature and "nostalgia delle cose semplici ...".<sup>115</sup> Once again it is Pasquazi who reaches the heart of the matter as he shows how Zanella, in wishing to convey

... la vocazione, l'anelito dell'uomo alla pienezza della libertà, che non è nella "selva oscura" degli innumerevoli problemi scientifici e comunque umani: ora si avvede ch'essa consiste precisamente nel disciogliersi da essi e nell'aprirsi fiduciosamente al dono di Dio. Lo Zanella comprende ora che può trovare la sua "quiete" in un ritorno alla semplicità della natura ... E ritrova la poesia a lui più congeniale, una poesia peraltro non insensibile alla contingenza storica, né alle istanze religiose, ma attraverso le umili cose, nelle quali i grandi problemi traspaiono senza cozzare e le verità più profonde vengono intuite senza essere definite: quelle umili cose che il Pascoli chiamerà "myricae", mostrando un'ispirazione affine a quella dello Zanella. 116

Flora has also referred to the way in which Zanella, particularly in Astichello, would seem to be anticipating Pascoli,<sup>117</sup> while Momigliano has indicated, albeit with regard to Zanella's poetic output as a whole, its "continuity" with "... la classicità della forma, più o meno dimenticata dopo la poesia del Leopardi e del Manzoni".<sup>118</sup>

It would seem as though, with the notable exception of the above-mentioned assessments, Zanella's diachronic "links" with Leopardi—to a lesser extent, Manzoni—and Pascoli have not been as fully appreciated as the synchronic, alleged debt to Prati (Psiche) and the Parnassians.

Apart from the strong affinity between the final lines of sonnet I,

Naufrago anch'io del mondo e di me stesso  
 Possa qui ber l'oblio dell'universo!

113. Ibid., pp.2799, 2800.

114. Petronio, p.521.

115. Ibid., p.521.

116. Pasquazi (1961), pp.2791,2792.

117. Flora, op. cit., p.640.

118. Momigliano, p.510.



and the closing lines of Leopardi's L'infinito,

... Così tra questa  
immensità s'annega il pensier mio:  
e il naufragar m'è dolce in questo mare.

there are numerous instances of Zanella's idyllic evocation of the countryside which are very reminiscent of the tone and mood of the Leopardian idylls. In addition there are many phrases and expressions which have Leopardian overtones.

Thus, for example, the opening line of sonnet XII, "Calda è la notte ...", echoes l.1 of La sera del dì di festa. "Dolce e chiara è la notte ...", while there is a thematic link between ll.9-14 of sonnet LXXVI,

Vola il tempo così: così mi svelle  
Seco portando l'imbianchita chioma  
E m'insolca di rughe aspre la pelle.

Ei le frondi si porta, inane sòma,  
Ma questo capo eretto invêr le stelle  
D'umana possa spregiator non doma.

and ll.304-310 of La ginestra,

... E piegherai  
sotto il fascio mortal non renitente  
il tuo capo innocente:  
ma non piegato insino allora indarno  
codardamente supplicando innanzi  
al futuro oppressor; ma non eretto  
con forsennato orgoglio inver le stelle,

where, despite the obvious differences in tone and emphasis, both poets are paying tribute to Man's courage and indomitable spirit in the face of the physically superior forces of Nature. There is an even greater similarity between Zanella and Leopardi in their attitude to youth. If one considers sonnet XVII,

Tra le chiome de' pioppi entro la stanza  
Lampeggia il sole, e d'ombre irrequiete  
Con tremolo riverbero una danza  
Disegna sul candor della parete.

Tal l'infiammata giovanil speranza  
Ne' recessi dell'anima una rete  
M'ordìa di rosee larve! Or sol m'avanza  
Il pensier che i fuggiti estri ripete

Melanconicamente; e non è poco  
Il suo stupor, se dopo sparsi al vento  
Tanti sogni superbi e tanto foco

Di poesia dagli anni inertì spento,  
Volontario romito in questo loco  
Fra pochi arbori e fior vivo contento.

one can see how a simple, everyday occurrence drawn from Nature comes to symbolise the "death" of the poet's youthful hopes—"giovanil speranza", l.5; "rosee larve", l.7; "Tanti superbi sogni ...", l.11, are all intensified by their illustrious precedents:

- O speranze, speranze; ameni inganni  
della mia prima età! 11.77,78
- ... o mie speranze antiche, 1.88, Le ricordanze;
- la speme giovanil ...  
Sopra un basso rilievo antico sepolcrale, 1.60;
- ... le beate  
larve e l'antico error ...  
Nelle nozze della sorella Paolina, 11.2,3;
- ... tutto ...  
è tal che sogna e fola  
fa parer la speranza ... 11.36-38,
- ... sogni leggiadri ... 1.91,
- ... dolci sogni ... 1.106, Ad Angelo Mai;
- ... perir gl'inganni e il sogno  
della mia fanciullezza ... 11.64,65,
- ... dilettoni errori, 1.69, Ultimo canto di Saffo;

("i'dilettoni error' sono le dolci illusioni, motivo dominante in ogni poesia leopardiana")<sup>119</sup>—just as Il tramonto della luna symbolises not only the passing of youth, but also of youthful hopes and dreams,

tal si dilegua, e tale  
lascia l'età mortale  
la giovinezza. In fuga  
van l'ombra e le sembianze  
dei dilettoni inganni; e vengon meno  
le lontane speranze, Il tramonto della luna, 11.20-25.

There is also in sonnet XVII, as in Leopardi's poetry, the sense of disillusionment resulting inevitably from the discrepancy between, on the one hand, the high expectations of Zanella's "rosee larve" and Leopardi's "beate/larve", and, on the other, the disappointing subsequent reality.

Zanella's references to childhood memories and his lost youth ("Giovanil ricordanza" 1.4, "verdi anni miei", 1.5, sonnet LXVIII; "I miei verdi fuggiti anni ...", 1.8, sonnet XX)—cf. "verd'anni", Ultimo canto di Saffo, 1.50—recur in Astichello.

While Zanella's use of the epithet "matrigna" in 1.3 of sonnet LXXXVII: "E l'oziosa terra, aspra matrigna," would seem to be echoing Leopardi's reference to Nature, "madre è di parto e di voler matrigna", in 1.125 of La ginestra, there are several instances of more superficial overtones as in the following examples: "candide ninfe", 1.3, sonnet IV and 1.23, Alla Primavera; "Egro mortal", 1.9, sonnet XXXII and 1.31, Il sogno; "l'erma torre", 1.2, sonnet LIV and "erme/torri", 11.2,3, All'Italia; "sudata arte", 1.12, sonnet LXXI and "le sudate carte", 1.16, A Silvia; "un pastor errante", 1.2, sonnet LXXVII and Canto notturno di un pastore errante dell'Asia; as well as, "l'affannosa cura", 1.7, sonnet LXXVII, which is greatly enriched by its Leopardian associations.

<sup>119</sup>. G. Leopardi, I Canti, a cura di Luigi Russo, Firenze, 1962, p.198.

As was seen in l.l of sonnet XII and the opening line of La sera del dì di festa (cf. p.313), both poets were fascinated by the night. This is also evident if one compares ll.1-4, sonnet LXXIII,

Nell'ampia tua caliginosa veste,  
Notte, non solo fiorellini e frondi,  
Ruscelli e prati involvi, ma foreste  
E villaggi e montagne in un confondi.

with the following passage:

Il L. amò tutti i miti notturni. "Le parole 'notte', 'notturmo' ecc., le descrizioni della notte ecc., sono poeticissime, perchè, la notte confondendo gli oggetti, l'animo non ne concepisce che un'immagine vaga, indistinta, incompleta, sì di essa, che di quanto ella contiene ..." (Zib., I, 1150, 28 settembre 1821). 120

Baldacci has reconnected sonnet LXXIII, "Nell'ampia tua caliginosa veste," with the Italian tradition,

Queste lodi della notte, di origine ellenistico-virgiliana, hanno una tradizione nella poesia italiana: si ricordi il sonetto di Michelangelo: "O notte, o dolce tempo benchè nero". 121

There would seem to be an interesting Manzonian reminiscence in the final terzina of sonnet XIV,

Sempre nuove ed antiche. In simil forma  
Passan quaggiuso le prosapie umane  
Ed alla vostra egual lasciano un'orma.

where the poet compares the way in which both the clouds and successive generations seem to pass without leaving any visible trace of their having even existed. Archibald Colquhoun gives Guglielmo Alberti's interpretation of I promessi sposo:

"Renzo and Lucia ... represent the vast anonymous mass towards which Manzoni had always felt himself drawn in his study of his story, the millions that historical records utterly ignore." 122

and then Manzoni's introduction to Adelchi, in which he had said,

Un'immensa moltitudine di uomini, una serie di generazioni, che passa sulla terra, sulla sua terra, inosservata, senza lasciarci traccia, è un tristo ma importante fenomeno. 123

Despite the much lighter tone of Zanella's verses—one can, perhaps, precisely because of his comparison with Manzoni, better appreciate Petronio's strictures: "Al solito, trae dallo spettacolo della natura una trita moralità: così passano le schiatte umane, dileguandosi, come le nubi, senza lasciare traccia del loro passaggio"—<sup>124</sup> there would seem to be an affinity with this Manzonian theme. For Baldacci, the above terzina

120. Ibid., p.193.

121. Baldacci, p.744.

122. A. Manzoni, The Betrothed (I promessi sposi), translated with a preface by Archibald Colquhoun, London, 1965, p.xii.

123. A. Manzoni, Liriche, tragedie e prose, a cura di Luigi Russo, Firenze, 1971, p.286.

124. Petronio, p.525.



will find an echo in Pascoli, "... è lo stesso motivo del Naufrago del Pascoli".<sup>125</sup>

Certainly, as has already been noted, the idyllic tone and mood of Astichello would seem to be reflected in so much of Pascoli's poetry, particularly Myricae, 1891, as in the following instances:

e per tutto nel cielo sonoro  
saliva un cantare lontano. In campagna, Alba, ll.15,16,

Ho nell'orecchio un turbinò di squilli,  
forse campani di lontana mandra;  
e, tra l'azzurro penduli, gli strilli  
della calandra.

In campagna, Dall'argine, ll.5-8.

which seem to be full of resonances from Le campane de' villaggi 1879 and, for example, ll.12-14 of sonnet VI,

Con la pia squilla, che i defunti piagne,  
L'ultima voce nella vasta e bruna  
Quiete si perdea delle campagne.

In sonnet XLIX,

Passi, o mostro fumante, e coll'acuto  
Tuo sibilo schernir sembri il colono,  
Che sulla marra trafelato e pronò  
Chiede alla gleba l'annual tributo.

A me, che sotto il vecchio olmo seduto  
Il freno a' multiformi estri abbandono,  
Rompi l'alta quiete e come in suono  
Di protratta ironia mandi un saluto.

Passa, alato Tifeo: convalli e monti  
Supera: annoda opposte genti e d'oro  
Apri al cupido volgo intatte fonti;

Ma gli rammenta che vapor fugace  
Son del paro i suoi dì; nè v'ha tesoro  
Che d'un campestre asil valga la pace.

Zanella contrasts agriculture and the industrialization, represented by a train, which is increasing all the time. This basic theme of a train passing through peaceful countryside also occurs in the Canti di Castelvecchio, as for example, In viaggio, ll.1-5; Notte d'inverno, ll.4-11, as well as Carducci's ode, Alla stazione in una mattina d'autunno (included in the first edition of the Odi barbare of 1877 and therefore pre-dating the publication of the first fifty sonnets of Astichello in 1884), as may be seen in ll.29-36:

Già il mostro, conscio di sua metallica  
anima, sbuffa, crolla, ansa, i fiammei  
occhi sbarra; immane pe'l buio  
gitta il fischio che sfida lo spazio.

Va l'empio mostro; con traino orribile  
sbattendo l'ale gli amor miei portasi.  
Ahi, la bianca faccia e 'l bel velo  
salutando scompar ne la tenebra.

<sup>125</sup>. Baldacci, p.737.

Although there would seem to be superficial instances of Carduccian reminiscences in Astichello—as in the following examples: ll.7,8 of sonnet LXXXVI, "Ed alle spose sbigottite il vinto/Nemico e le città rase dicea;" could have been echoing ll.73,74 of Agl'Italiani (from Juvenilia, published in 1871), "A le pie mogli dissero le dure/Fortune de le pugne ...", while, "A mezzo solco ..." l.1, sonnet LIII, had been anticipated in l.62 of Alle fonti del Clitumno—the most important example of Carducci's influence<sup>126</sup> is in sonnet XC,

Solinga nell'ardor meridiano  
 La campagna tacea: l'adulta spica  
 Lieve ondeggiando nell'immenso piano  
 Sul gracil si reggea stelo a fatica.

Non Satiri bicorni, non Silvano,  
 Che in quest'ora atterrian la gente antica,  
 Ma Ruth vider quest'occhi, la pudica  
 Spigolatrice, fra il maturo grano

Alta e bella passar. Si confondea  
 Colle spighe la chioma: l'azzurro  
 Fiore del ciano nelle luci avea:

Ma sulle guance, che celar volea  
 Inchinandosi a terra, il porporino  
 Fiammeggiar del papavero ridea.

which seems to be echoing Idillio maremmano,

Com'eri bella, o giovinetta, quando  
 Tra l'ondeggiar de' lunghi solchi uscivi  
 Un tuo serto di fiori in man recando,

Alta e ridente, e sotto i cigli vivi  
 Di selvatico fuoco lampeggiante  
 Grande e profondo l'occhio azzurro aprivi!

Come 'l ciano seren tra 'l biondeggiante  
 Or de le spiche, tra la chioma flava  
 Fioria quell'occhio azzurro; e a te d'avante

La grande estate, e intorno, fiammeggiava;  
 Sparso tra' verdi rami il sol ridea  
 Del melogran, che rosso scintillava. 11.16-27.

It would not be unreasonable to suggest that the idyllic, religious tone of the closing lines of La Chiesa di Polenta,

Un oblio lene de la faticosa  
 vita, un pensoso sospirar quiete,  
 una soave volontà di pianto  
 l'anime invade.

Taccion le fiere e gli uomini e le cose,  
 roseo 'l tramonto ne l'azzurro sfuma,  
 mormoran gli alti vertici ondeggianti  
 Ave Maria. 11.121-128,

126. Monastra, p.32: "In genere si è parlato di una suggestione zanelliana su Carducci (così per es. Baldini), ma in realtà la cronologia ci autorizza a rovesciare tale rapporto".

could have been inspired by Astichello bearing in mind the dates of publication of these sonnets.<sup>127</sup>

There are interesting echoes of Gray's Elegy in sonnet LIV—

Dell'antica Badia più non si addita  
 Che l'erma torre. Quando è mane o sera,  
 Il bronzo più non chiama alla preghiera  
 Sotto l'absida eccelsa il cenobita;  
 Ma con lo squillo antelucan la vita  
 Sveglia ne' campi; e quando il dì si annera,  
 Di zappatori faticosa schiera  
 Al frugal desco e all'aspra coltre invita.  
 Miseri! Coll'albor della dimane  
 Voi rassegnati tornerete al vostro  
 Lavoro, all'aspra coltre, al poco pane;  
 Ed il vostro sudor non fia men santo  
 Di quel che un tempo risonò nel chiostro  
 Mattutino e notturno austero canto.

in which Zanella has captured the gravity and austerity of the English poem, as well as a recognition of the hardships of the peasants' lives (their early rising, frugal meals—both in l.8 above and in his translation<sup>128</sup> of Gray's Elegy, l.22, Zanella refers to "frugal desco"—uncomfortable beds and very hard work) and an appreciation of the value of "their useful toil"—and in sonnet LXV,

Notturmo abitator dell'erma torre,  
 Che due ciuffi hai per serto e d'oro gli occhi,  
 Con bianca barba, che al petto ti scorre,  
 Come si addice al re de' grandi allocchi; 11.1-4,  
 ... Lenta e rubiconda  
 Si levava la luna alla marina;  
 Ed io t'intesi dall'aerea gronda  
 Comosso salutar la tua regina. 11.9-12,

which is reminiscent of the third verse of the Elegy,

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tower  
 The moping owl does to the moon complain  
 Of such as, wandering near her secret bower,  
 Molest her ancient solitary reign. 11.9-12.

As was noted with regard to Le campane de' villaggi (p.304), it is almost as if some of the "deficiencies" or omissions of his translation of Gray's famous work had belatedly found their way into Zanella's poetry.

Apart from the fundamental importance of religion in Astichello, as indicated by Pasquazi and as is evident from some of the sonnets which have already been considered, the clash between "spirituality" and "materialism" is also prominent.

127. All but eleven—none of which dealt with religious themes—were published by 1889, either separately or in collected form.

128. G.Zanella, Versioni poetiche di Giacomo Zanella con prefazione di Ettore Romagnoli, Firenze, 1921, Vol.2, p.3



Thus, in sonnet XXII, Zanella exultantly reaffirms his faith and hope in the ultimate victory of Christ. Despite all their efforts to exclude God from the various aspects of life, such as, the law courts and schools, the materialists and atheists cannot succeed, because: "Vive il grande Proscritto ... " l.l. He will return to demolish the "... tenebrose fole/D'atei dottor", or of a "Tronfio sofista", by means of the very wonders of Nature, which testify to the miracle of Creation.

The contemporary interest in this whole question is reflected in the following comments by Enrico Bettazzi: "Il verso 'Vive il grande Proscritto' fa riscontro a quello 'Dunque morì l'Eterno!' di Domenico Gnoli nell'ode Alle Grazie ..." <sup>129</sup>

The tone becomes more polemical in sonnets XXX,XXXI and XLVI, where Zanella attacks the anticlerical atheism being taught in the schools.

Will the peasant in future still believe in God and an afterlife? Will he continue to see God's power in the wonders of Nature? (Sonnet XXX).

Faith brought comfort to alleviate life's trials and sorrows, ll.9-11, while positivism wants to provide a materialistic, earthly paradise to replace spiritual values, ll.12-14, sonnet XXXI.

But Zanella's polemical bitterness reaches a climax in sonnet XLVI:

Insegnavi al villan che non a caso  
Fu fatto il mondo; che il Signor governa  
Quanto creò; che non conosce occaso  
L'anima al pianto o al godimento eterna,

Vecchio maestro, cogli occhiali al naso  
Che a' nuovi dommi non ti fur lucerna:  
A dritto or sei sul lastrico rimaso,  
Misero, e rodi un osso alla taverna.

Favola Iddio: favola inferno e cielo:  
Tutto di tutti: chi possiede, un ladro:  
Un eroe, se lo strozza, il mercenario,

Questo s'insegna con laudabil zelo  
Dal novellino dottorel leggiadro,  
Che per bontà s'accomoda al salario.

in which the slower, more dignified pace of the first quartina imbues the traditional tenets of Christianity with reasonable, favourable overtones, while the febrile pace of ll.9-11 makes the modern doctrines of atheistic materialism seem very superficial and ridiculous— "...('chi possiede, un ladro') riecheggia ironicamente la frase, allora famosa, di Proudhon: 'La proprietà è un furto'". <sup>130</sup>

Zanella seems to be pointing to a basic conclusion which had been very well expressed by Nievo in his Frammento sulla rivoluzione nazionale, 1859-1860. His advice to the bourgeois establishment, with regard to the ways in which the plight of the peasants could be alleviated, had included

129. Poesie (1928), p.345.

130. Petronio, p.529.

the following sentiments:

Costretti a lasciargli la maggior parte della sua miseria, lasciategli quella speranza che gli fa vedere in questa la promessa di una felicità eterna. Se è un'illusione è sublime d'eroismo, è provvidenziale rimedio della natura a mali ineluttabili.

Siate filosofi, panteisti, atei, se credete; ma siate in pari tempo retti estimatori del vostro secolo e delle condizioni altrui sì materiali che morali. Consentite con me che non avete altro bene in vostra balla da compensare il popolo della perdita della sua fede, che non avete altro freno da sopperire alla mancanza della legge divina. Lasciategli e questa e quella. Potrete sperimentare la vostra forza persuasiva in altri conati più utili, più giusti. 131

It had been noted in the preceding chapter (pp.250-1) that Zanella's poetry retraces many of the evolutionary stages in la linea del realismo, however, Zanella's realistic vein, not surprisingly, becomes accentuated in Astichello and the poems he composed during the same period, 1880-1887. This whole question is closely bound up with the significance of the sonnet form in Astichello, which has been very lucidly dealt with by Cusatelli.

He sees the fact that, in Zanella, Classicism and Realism co-exist in an unstable equilibrium, so that they attenuate and moderate each other, as being of fundamental importance. Thus, Zanella has the ability to mediate between "vita concreta e astrazione artistica". The realism of Manzoni's great work stimulated Zanella to try and find an ever closer link with reality, without, however, having to renounce "... premesse classicistiche". He stresses Zanella's particular contribution and the importance of Astichello, in which he achieved "quella tonalità 'media' di realismo", which had been sought in vain by many contemporary poets: a realism equally tending towards an elegiac evocation of the countryside and humanitarian considerations, expressed with sober Classicism, style and metre being orthodox, but open to modern problems and themes. Cusatelli then assesses the significance of the sonnet form in Astichello, showing it to be a further instance of the co-existence of Classicism and Realism in Zanella. The use of the sonnet, the most illustrious Italian metrical form, was a homage to tradition. Whilst being closed and organic, the sonnet is the most susceptible to becoming "immagine completa e perfetta di un momento del reale". In addition, while allowing a wide range of expression, the sonnet acted as a guarantee for the "coscienza del classicista" against the possible danger that "la materia esistenziale trabocasse rovinosamente dal crogiuolo". 132

The contrast between Classicism and Realism in Zanella becomes even greater when one compares, for example, his Latin poem, Carmen alcaicum (published with the first fifty sonnets of Astichello in 1884), with the

131. Romagnoli, p.140.

132. Cusatelli, pp.559, 560.

realistic vein which runs through his poetry. In this Latin poem, after mentioning the restful, consoling effect of the countryside, he stresses his love of poetry, in general, and his liking of, and reliance upon, Virgil's poetry, in particular. In sonnet LVI of Astichello, Classical Mythology and the practical necessities of earning a living from the soil, come face to face. From considering a forge near Vicenza, the poet's mind turns to the Cyclops and Vulcan, and then to other figures of Classical Mythology: Jupiter, Venus and Achilles. However, none of these mythological figures is involved in the life of the peasant, who merely asks for: "Vome-ri e rastrì a debellar la terra." l.14. It is in sonnet XXIV of Astichello that there is a clash between Classical Literature and Realismo.<sup>133</sup> Zanella contrasts the harsh reality of country life with the picture presented by Virgil and Theocritus:

...                    la lieta,  
Placida, agitata, vita avventurosa  
Del vostro Coridone e di Dameta.                    ll.12-14.

Enrico Bettazzi quotes Zanella's own comment on this sonnet:

Accompagnando a Vittoria Aganoor nel 1883 il sonetto, "veda —soggiungeva— come sono sulla via del verismo!" 134

In fact, in several poems there are some striking analogies with Verismo. Thus, in Risposta d'un contadino che emigra 1877, the starkness of the description of poverty the decline of the aristocracy; its strength in maintaining its position and the status quo; and, the growing resentment of the poor and the oppressed, which could lead to violence and bloodshed: these are all ingredients which could have come straight of Verga's works. It is interesting to note that in this poem there is the expression "nero il pan" l.84, and, in Il Piccolo Calabrese 1871, "Un nero pan" l.685: Pane nero being, of course, the title of one of Verga's stories.

The sombre, fatalistic tone of the poem, Corrado 1885, with its insistence upon an inescapable, final tragedy is reminiscent of Verga. Corrado, like Verga's character, Mazzarò, from the story, La roba, is a peasant who becomes rich and has a purely materialistic outlook on life, giving no importance to spiritual or religious values. Perhaps there is also a certain similarity between Corrado and Mastro don Gesualdo inasmuch as they both send their daughters to be educated, hoping eventually to raise their social status, by making the girls marry into wealthy and influential families.

Amori contadineschi 1887 (the story is derived from Serafino Amabile

133. As already indicated (Ch.3, p.72 n.52) and illustrated (Ch.5, p.219, n.123), the term, Realismo, when applied to Zanella, refers only to the thematic context—with its attempt to get closer to reality—and not to any stylistic considerations, since Zanella never really abandons his Classical, stylistic framework.

134. Poesie (1928), p.345.



Guastalla's book Le Parità o le Storie morali de' nostri villani, Ragusa, 1884)<sup>135</sup> reminds one, to a certain extent, of the story, Gli orfani, from Verga's Novelle rusticane, since both deal with love, self-interest and economic considerations. Thus, Zanella comments on the way a peasant loves: "... dell'amor la gentilezza ignora/E l'affetto dall'utile misura." ll.8,9.

In Gli orfani, the young widower, Compare Meno, after remembering how good and unselfish his wife has been, concludes: "Non ha bisogno di messe e di rosari, quella santa! I denari del prete sarebbero buttati via".<sup>136</sup>

While, on hearing of Matilde's illness, Michele shows himself to be heartless and selfish—why spend money on medicines for his wife, when she is suffering from an incurable disease and will soon be dead anyway? ll.104-112. Zanella comments ironically on Michele's attitude: "E non men sulla sua, che sulla sorte/Di lei s'inteneriva ..." ll.119,120.

Both Compare Meno and Michele are worried about who will look after them and their children and run their homes. Michele, in fact, even goes so far as to ask his wife whom he should marry after her death, she wants him to choose. He decides on a girl called Geltrude. Matilde asks her to treat her daughter, Rosina, as if she were her own daughter. She also asks that Geltrude and Rosina should attend Mass for her every Saturday, and on "... il giorno/ ... de' morti ..." (ll.178,179) visit her grave, leave flowers and pray for her.

It should be borne in mind, however, that while Michele appears to be virtually a symbolic, two-dimensional character, Verga has given a greater depth of characterisation to his presentation of Compare Meno who has a real and genuine love for his wife.

While Cusatelli<sup>137</sup> stresses the influence of Manzoni on Zanella, Pasquazi refers to an affinity between Zanella's social concern and that of the "... così detta 'letteratura campagnuola' e ... quella volta a prospettare concreti problemi sociali (Percoto, Carcano, Nievo)".<sup>138</sup>

However, bearing in mind Zanella's realistic social concern—the plight of the peasants, emigration and parliamentary corruption (cf. pp. 221-223) — his reflecting so much of la linea del realismo, and, of course, the evidence presented on pp. 320-322, the present writer feels that Zanella's own particular form of Realismo represents a more advanced stage than that suggested by Pasquazi.

It seems singularly appropriate that in the final image of the final sonnet, XCI, of Astichello, Zanella should be anticipating Decadentismo,

135. Ibid., p.525.

136. G.Verga, Novelle rusticane, Gli orfani, p.279, from the collection Tutte le novelle, Milano, 1971.

137. Cusatelli, p.560.

138. Pasquazi (1961), p.2781.

as Pasquazi has so aptly shown:

Non sorprenderà allora quell'ultima immagine dell'Astichello, così malinconicamente romantica che avrebbe fatto sussultare il Carducci, nella quale lo Zanella si raffigura:

"Io son l'antico salice, che il piede  
Bagna nel fiume ...  
... che spoglio di verzura invecchio".

Il poeta dell'aurea purezza e nobiltà di stile, che aveva accolta e propugnata l'estetita classica, che nella fase declinante del romanticismo aveva iniziato il ritorno al classicismo, chiude così la sua opera con un'immagine decadente, che il Carducci aveva adottato a simboleggiare quelle "forme crepuscolari" quali erano, a suo giudizio, i romantici. Gli è che nella produzione poetica zanelliana, per alcuni aspetti nuova e vitale, si annunciano motivi, note e cadenze, che troveranno poi sviluppo a maturazione nella lirica pascoliana e nel decadentismo. 139

The sonnets of Astichello may therefore be said to constitute, in effect, a recapitulation of Zanella's poetic output. Apart from the thematic distillation of so many of the subjects Zanella dealt with throughout his life, Astichello also testifies to the essentially diachronic orientation of his links with other poets, such as Gray, Manzoni, Leopardi and Pascoli, as well as his correspondence with so much of la linea del realismo, with, of course, the notable exception of the Scapigliati, (both in poetry and prose).

It is evident, from the preceding examination of the poems in which the theme of "spirituality and materialism" emerges, that the contrasting "optimistic" and "pessimistic" strands are interwoven in such a way that there is no dramatic change in Zanella's attitude. In other words, apart from what has already been said—namely, that his youthful optimism turned to disillusionment towards the end of his life—it is very difficult to see any particular, decisive turning point. The "optimistic" strand recurs at intervals, whilst Zanella's worst fears about positivism can be found early on in his poetic output. If anything, the hardening of his attitude towards positivism, in the last years of his life, was more of a defensive reaction, a consolidation of his basic stand, rather than a change in his viewpoint.

Thus, the relationship between God and Man not only underpins the whole gamut of Zanella's religious and spiritual values, but also provides an important key to an understanding of his opposition to various forms of positivism. For example, whilst atheism absolutely denies the existence of God, the Theory of Evolution, or so Zanella felt, does so implicitly. For if Man has not been created by God, but has evolved in a purely "material"

way from lower forms, this would tend to negate his "spiritual" dimension —his immortal soul and his eternal destiny. Zanella was favourably inclined towards scientific progress, scientific knowledge, technology and industrialisation, as long as they were viewed with a sense of proportion, as "tools" to be used with "Sapienza", in order to improve mankind's lot and to give greater glory to God, by helping Man to reach a better understanding of the marvels and complexities of Creation and the Universe. However, when Zanella thought that Science and all its concomitant aspects, instead of fulfilling these above-mentioned functions, were making Man proud and arrogant—to such an extent that he felt he could do anything and resolve any problem, as well as sweeping away religion, which he regarded as mere superstition—Zanella naturally attacked positivism, in its various forms, not only because it was attempting to destroy Religion and undermine his religious and spiritual values, but also because he felt that it was threatening the whole fabric of society.

Although, as Maria Sticco has pointed out—

Lo Zanella esce da uno di quei seminarî veneti che impensierivano il governo austriaco per le loro idee giobertine e per i loro entusiasmi quarantotteschi, ed appartiene a quella schiera nobilissima di sacerdoti, di cui è capo il Rosmini, che vissero il dramma del Risorgimento con animo di cattolici e d'italiani. Ma se la sua giovinezza fiorisce con la primavera della Patria, la sua maturità coincide con lo sfiamento letterario e l'ondata materialistica dei primi anni della nuova Italia. Lo Zanella vive nel trapasso fra l'età del Rosmini e l'età dell'Ardigò, e mentre conserva fervidi gl'ideali e le malinconie della prima, si apre vigoroso alle scoperte e alle audacie della nuova, ma non tanto da non sentirne i pericoli, a cui reagisce con tutta la nobiltà della sua arte, la quale acquista un significato speciale nella storia della spiritualità italiana per essere egli sacerdote. . . .

Il Parini (qui si fa questione di spiritualità, non d'arte) era sacerdote per le circostanze e poeta per vocazione; lo Zanella è sacerdote e poeta per vocazione; ma il sacerdote non abbandona mai il poeta a se stesso, quindi tutta la sua poesia s'ispira alla fede, una fede diritta e semplice, che, nonostante la cultura, mantiene la linea materna e trova la sua propria via nella spiritualità di S. Francesco, così aperta alla natura, alla vita, alla simpatia umana. Questa spiritualità, riconoscibile nelle opere dello Zanella, gli fu conforto grande nelle ore buie. Notevole una cosa: benchè la religione sia sostrato di tutte le sue liriche, fra tante, quelle d'argomento sacro sono poche, e tra le poche, una sola è tutta d'intimità religiosa, senza spunti sociali: Dopo una lettura della Imitazione di Cristo. E questo perchè lo Zanella aveva più il temperamento dell'apostolo che del mistico... Ultimo della schiera gloriosa degli scrittori cattolici del Risorgimento, lo Zanella crede, come tutti i neoguelfi, che non vi sia progresso fuori della civiltà cristiana, che tutte le eresie e le deviazioni filosofiche vengano d'Oltralpe, e difende tenacemente l'indipendenza del pensiero italiano—<sup>140</sup>



Zanella was firmly tied to the Romantic "spirituality" of the first half of the nineteenth century, it should also be remembered that he was, to certain extent, anticipating Decadentismo, both in terms of its fundamental background,

L'antefatto ideologico del decadentismo è la crisi del positivismo e delle poetiche che ad esso si erano collegate. Il positivismo aveva affermato la priorità della scienza come chiave per la conoscenza e il possesso della natura... E poiché si basava su una fondamentale fiducia nelle possibilità razionali dell'uomo, il positivismo poteva realizzarsi, sul piano poetico, tanto nel realismo, in un contatto empirico, cioè, di volta in volta rinnovato, con il reale, quanto nel classicismo, che del reale adottava un'interpretazione già collaudata dalla tradizione e canonizzata in forme stilistiche universalmente valide. Ma dagli schemi del positivismo restava completamente esclusa la dimensione irrazionale, quella che il romanticismo aveva acquistato in modo irrevocabile alla cultura e alle arti del tempo moderno. Così, ad un certo punto, tutta una serie di esigenze d'indole religiosa, etica ed estetica, cominciarono a premere per un superamento delle posizioni positivistiche, e intanto, all'iniziale culto incondizionato per la scienza venivano subentrando atteggiamenti più cauti e controllati ... profonda sfiducia nei mezzi di conoscenza a disposizione dell'uomo, e una inclinazione mistica verso i grandi segreti dell'universo. 141

and the essential characteristics of its poetica,

... il punto centrale del sistema decadentistico è l'estetismo, che ... consentiva la definitiva assimilazione nella nuova dimensione culturale tanto delle insostituibili istituzioni del romanticismo, grazie al prevalente irrazionalismo, quanto del classicismo, che vedeva lusingata la sua concezione dello stile come canone inalterabile del bello. 142

It would therefore be possible to regard Zanella, in the broadest possible terms, as an "undercurrent of spirituality" during the Age of Positivism, linking the "Romanticism" of the first half of the nineteenth century with Decadentismo.

In more specific terms, he could also be seen as an integral part of the nineteenth-century, Italian, Christian tradition.<sup>143</sup> Thus he is not only the heir of Parini, Manzoni, Gioberti and Rosmini, but is a contemporary

141. Cusatelli, p.597. (Cf. also Scritti vari, p.197: "Per quanto una filosofia, detta positiva, siasi studiata di limitare le nostre ricerche ai soli fatti sensibili; per quanto siasi provata di staccare l'attenzione dell'uomo dall'idea per ridurlo a contentarsi dell'apparenza, sente l'uomo intorno a sè qualche cosa di arcano e d'indefinibile, della cui realtà non è meno certo, che della presenza degli oggetti, i quali tocca con mano").

142. Ibid., p.598.

143. Maria Sticco sees the combination of religious and patriotic sentiments in Zanella's verses also finding expression in other Catholic poets—"Nella lirica degli altri poeti cattolici dal Grossi al Parzanese, dal Carrer al Carcano, dal Regaldi alla Franceschi Ferrucci, vibrano con arte minore le stesse corde" (Sticco, p.321).

of Tommaseo ("Un senso grandioso e romantico del tempo che passa e dell'eternità e dell'universalità della vita ebbero così il Tommaseo come lo Zanella: e fra La mia lampada e Una foglia del primo e Sopra una conchiglia fossile e La veglia del secondo non c'è una grande diversità di spiriti. La poesia scientifica, la conciliazione fra scienza e fede, di cui si vide un rappresentante originale nello Zanella, si collega con l'ispirazione religiosa, panteistica e già vagamente scientifica del Tommaseo. Passando dall'uno all'altro si sente un'austerità di spiriti per questo riguardo affini."),<sup>144</sup> and precedes Fogazzaro ("Lo Zanella ... parve ai contemporanei conciliare i miti scientificisti del secolo con la fede, anticipando così il modernismo del suo discepolo Fogazzaro"),<sup>145</sup> Giulio Salvadori ("Sul piano stilistico l'impianto fondamentale resta carducciano (del Carducci poeta della storia), ma a questo si associano molti altri modelli, come il Manzoni degli Inni sacri, il Leopardi delle canzoni maggiori, e lo Zanella ... Più di tutto notevoli, anche se scarse, appaiono le anticipazioni del misticismo pascoliano, in quanto confermano che Salvadori elaborava i materiali del classicismo cristiano restando, in ogni momento, nella situazione di un decadente:")<sup>146</sup> and Remigio Zena ("... L'apostolo (1901), un romanzo ambientato nella Roma di Leone XIII ... ha un certo valore documentario data anche la singolarità dell'autore cattolico in un mondo letterario sostanzialmente laico, spesso con punte anticlericali, e sia pure percorso da una esigenza di vago spiritualismo. Inquietudini che si esprimono in tutta l'opera del Fogazzaro per culminare, a distanza di pochi anni dall'Apostolo, nel Santo.").<sup>147</sup>

This chapter confirms that Zanella can, to a great extent, be viewed as an intermediary "link", not only in the context of the Classical, stylistic tradition from Parini to Carducci, but also in terms of la linea del realismo (as is particularly evident in the clash between the Classical trend and the realistic vein in Astichello), as well as la linea del pathos, from Leopardi to Pascoli.

144. Momigliano, pp.508, 509.

145. Petronio, p.460.

146. Cusatelli, pp.612, 613.

147. Cattaneo, p.390.

## CHAPTER (7): CONCLUSION

It now remains in this final chapter to draw together the various strands and the evidence which has been accumulated in order to assess the correspondence between Zanella's poetica and poetry, its degree of development and wide range of themes, as well as Zanella's position in his historical context, bearing in mind the relevant impact of his life, educational and regional background, the spirit of the age in which he lived and the contribution of previous critical studies.

Whilst wishing to avoid any unduly simplistic keys to an understanding and evaluation of the significance of Zanella's poetry, one cannot help being struck by the series of dualities which seem to recur throughout a study of his life, poetica and poetic output, such as style and content, "Classicism" and "Romanticism", "Spirituality" and "Materialism", Science and Faith, Church and State, God and Man, Man and Nature, Nature and Society.

One can see how the poet's "Romantic" concern with religion and the many aspects of the life of the individual—as seen in Chapter 3, in terms of his appreciation of love, marriage, the family unit and friendship, as well as the recurring themes of death, the immortality of the soul and re-union with his loved ones in the afterlife—would have been influenced by his own, personal, close-knit family background and the strong link between his love for his mother and for the faith she had taught him. Analogous themes occur frequently, in broad terms, in Manzoni, Pellico and the memoirs which enshrined the values and aspirations of the Risorgimento.

From his education at Vicenza, particularly in the seminary, Zanella received a very deep grounding in the Classics and in the technical "ti-rocinio poetico"<sup>1</sup> which he was later to appreciate so greatly. Both in his poetica and throughout the decades in which he wrote his verses, he never abandoned, either in theory or in practice, his advocacy of a Classical style. It was also in the liberal climate of the Vicenza seminary that he espoused the moderate, Catholic, patriotic, neo-Guelf cause (cf. Gioberti's Primato morale e civile degli Italiani) and was introduced to recent and contemporary Italian writers such as, Mamiani, Leopardi, Alfieri, Parini, Monti, Foscolo, Manzoni and Pindemonte. This contact with these writers laid the foundations of Zanella's ever-greater appreciation of Pre-Romanticism.<sup>2</sup>

The regional background of the Veneto could only have helped to confirm Zanella's religious faith and his adherence to the Classical tradition,<sup>3</sup> while his concern with the plight of the peasants and his portrayal of country-life would seem to have been influenced by the Romantic, pre-veristic, Venetian tradition—Lorenzo Crico, Francesco Dall'Ongaro, Caterina

1. Poesie (1928), p. XLII.

2. Cf. pp. 12, 13.

3. Pasquazi (1967), p. 101.



Percoto, Nievo and Luigia Codemo.<sup>4</sup>

The distinction between style and content is not only evident in Zanella's critical assessment of so many writers, but emerges forcefully in his poetica, which has its basic, theoretical formulation, Chénier's dictum, "Sur des penses nouveaux faisons des vers antiques", and as its ideal, practical exemplification, Parini's poetry. Zanella's poetica may essentially be said to consist of a predominantly Romantic content, influenced only to a minor degree by Classicism and positivism, within a Classical, stylistic framework. The latter was very strongly inspired by the Classicism of Parini (and Foscolo), and, whilst having certain affinities with Leopardi, it anticipated certain aspects of Pascoli and the "restaurazione classicistica" of Carducci, even though "con altra ideologia e con altri spiriti".<sup>5</sup>

As was seen in Chapter (2), Zanella's poetica was characterised by the progression from Classicism, or a position which was "classicistica", through Pre-Romanticism<sup>6</sup> to Romanticism<sup>7</sup> itself. In his poetry, this development—which was, in effect, an attempt to get closer to reality—went further and, particularly in the works of his last decade, reflected thematic analogies with Verga.<sup>8</sup>

Lampertico, through a series of comparisons<sup>9</sup> between a few of Zanella's early poems and some late ones, had attempted, in effect, to demonstrate the virtually "static" nature of Zanella's poetic output over forty years. While this may be said to have a certain validity, in broad terms, such as the fundamental outlines of "Romantic" content and a Classical style, it would seem to overlook the development in Zanella's poetry, not only with regard to his evolution towards an ever-greater contact with reality, as he virtually retraces many of the evolutionary stages in la linea del realismo, but also in terms of his anticipation of Pascoli and Decadentismo.

Philosophically, as the heir to Parini, Manzoni, Gioberti and Rosmini, Zanella may be regarded, during the Age of Positivism, as an "undercurrent of spirituality", connecting the "spiritualistic" backcloth of the Romanticism of the first half of the nineteenth century with certain fundamental aspects of Decadentismo.<sup>10</sup>

For Petronio, Zanella, particularly with regard to the sonnets of

4. Vittorio Rossi (Rumor (1928), p.65) has described Zanella as "Incarnazione perfetta del romanticismo veneto...o...'romanticismo classicheggiante'...".

5. Petronio, p.509.

6. Cf. Ch. 2, p.12, n.4.

7. Cf. Ch. 2, pp.13, 14.

8. Cf. Ch. 6, pp. 321-2.

9. Cf. Ch. 3, pp.49, 50.

10. Cf. Ch.6, pp.323 - 5.

Astichello, is out of touch with the prevailing spirit of his age—namely positivism, with all its ramifications—and is firmly rooted to the past.<sup>11</sup> Although this assessment has a certain validity, it represents only half the true picture. Baldacci, on the other hand, provides a very apt view of Zanella when he describes him as "... strano poeta d'avanguardia e passatista nello stesso tempo ...",<sup>12</sup> for Zanella was indeed firmly tied to the past, but also anticipated the future. Even though, in attempting to assess Zanella's position in his historical context, the diachronic dimension may be found to be more prominent than the synchronic, it has to be admitted that he did, in fact, through his poetry, reflect a not insignificant strand of the national mood between the 1860s and the 1880s, apart from his great interest in many contemporary problems—the emigration of the Irish; Italy's struggle for independence and unity; the poverty of the peasants; relations between Church and State—and historical events—the opening of the Suez Canal; the Franco-Prussian War of 1870.

In relation to his contemporaries, Zanella, because of his concern with social problems and his awareness of "... l'insufficienza degli ideali romantici praticati" as well as "la recondita tara della scienza positivista...", was classified, by Baldacci,<sup>13</sup> amongst those poets who dealt with "la poesia della nuova Italia" or "della nazione italiana"—including, for example, Costantino Nigra, Felice Cavallotti, Mario Rapisardi, Olindo Guerrini and Giuseppe Aurelio Costanzo.

After the publication of the first edition of Zanella's Versi in 1868, he was "... acclamato della nuova Italia poeta principe".<sup>14</sup> This was partly due to Zanella's attempts to reconcile Church and State, and Science and Faith, as well as his moderate, liberal, progressive Catholicism. In other words, Zanella was very much in harmony with the "official", cultural background and its fundamental "stable equilibrium" between "spirituality" (Christian, moralising, Romantic, "spiritualistic", Risorgimento values) and "materialism" (nascent positivism, tremendous enthusiasm and optimism in scientific advances and man's ingenuity to resolve social problems). Inevitably, by the 1880s, Zanella experienced bitter disillusionment—precipitated by various factors including: Science's inability to resolve many problems, while the initial stages of industrialisation were creating new ones; the worsening condition of the peasants and the resulting problem of emigration; as well as the depressing political and socio-economic back-cloth characterised by widespread corruption in parliamentary, financial and banking circles—which, in many ways, anticipated the crisis of confidence or Mal du siècle, at the end of the nineteenth century. Since the decline of Risorgimento values had been correspondingly matched

11. Petronio, p. 521. 12. Baldacci, p. XXXV. 13. Ibid., pp. XXXV, XXXI. 14. Mazzoni, p. 1381.

by the rise of positivism, scientific materialism, atheism and anticlericalism, the state of harmonious coexistence between "spirituality" and "materialism" had been negated.

Under these circumstances, Zanella's "pessimism" and disillusionment are neither surprising nor unique, especially when one remembers that the Church, contemporary literature and journalism were all concerned with social injustices, as well as the dishonesty and corruption in the political and financial institutions.<sup>15</sup>

The fundamental outlines of "Classical" style and "Romantic" content not only characterise Zanella's poetic output as a whole, but are particularly marked in the sonnets of Astichello, whose illustrious, traditional format provides a stylistic "safeguard" within which the poet can freely allow the "dual" nature of Romanticism to express itself in terms of Realismo and Decadentismo.<sup>16</sup>

In relation to his own immediate contemporaries, Zanella's position was almost completely antithetical to that of the Scapigliati, while, like most of the Italian poets of the second half of the nineteenth century, he was opposed to the excesses of the so-called secondo romanticismo of Prati and Aleardi.<sup>17</sup> As Momigliano has pointed out, there are some interesting affinities between Zanella and Tommaseo—including a Classical style, religious and scientific themes and a certain austere, moralising tone, as well as "Un senso grandioso e romantico del tempo che passa e dell'eternità e dell'universalità della vita ...".<sup>18</sup>

Nevertheless, it is primarily in a "vertical" perspective that Zanella's significance—as an "evolutionary link"—really becomes clear, almost in the sense that he "raccoglie e irradia tendenze diverse",<sup>19</sup> whether in terms of his attitude towards patriotism and colonialism, his social concern, his cosmic vision, his "links" with Leopardi and Pascoli, his view of love, his Christianity or his treatment of the theme of Nature.

Thus, for example, Zanella's patriotism is firmly tied to the Risorgimento ideals of Foscolo, Mazzini and Gioberti with their implicit rejection of colonialism. On the one occasion (cf. Il lavoro, Chapter 5, pp.192-195), when Zanella does appear to condone it, it is not from a desire for imperial grandeur, but as an emotional response to the problem of emigration. Seeing colonialism as a solution to emigration foreshadows the emergence of a similar attitude, at a later date, in Pascoli.

15. Cf. Ch.5, pp.221,222.

16. U.Bosco, Realismo romantico, Caltanissetta-Roma, 1959, p.78.

17. There are some striking similarities between Zanella and his co-regionists, Prati and Aleardi, which have been noted in the course of the thesis. However they are not really relevant in the overall picture of Zanella's poetic orientation.

18. Momigliano, p.508.

19. As has been said of Tommaseo—Sticco, p.266.



Zanella's social concern—in the Christian, moralising tradition of Parini and Manzoni—was not only reflected in his Parinian contrasts,<sup>20</sup> but overlapped, to a certain extent, with his attempt to get closer to reality. In this regard, he was, of course, influenced by Manzoni's treatment of, and concern for, il mondo degli umili, the works of Grossi and Manzoni's followers, the articles in Rivista Europea of Tenca, Correnti and Carcano, as well as the latter's novels, and the writers of the Romantic, pre-veristic, Venetian tradition: Lorenzo Crico, Francesco Dall'Ongaro, Caterina Percoto, Luigia Codemo, and, of course, Ippolito Nievo—both Nievo and Zanella deal with the whole gamut of human existence from childhood to old age. Zanella's presentation of bucolic domesticity mixed with elements of realism (cf. Domenico o le memorie della fanciullezza, 1871) is reminiscent of the poetry of the Idillio borghese and would appear to be anticipating certain features of the work of the verista, Ildelfonso Nieri (1853-1920). Similarly the second half of Due vite 1862 and sonnet LXVII, Astichello, with their almost idyllic tableaux of rural, bucolic charm and contentment, are not only typical of much poetry of the second half of the nineteenth century, but also represent a transitional stage between the idealised images of the Romantics and the starkness of Verga's Verismo. In broad terms, there is also a "transitional" element in Sopra un anello portante incisi un cuore, un'ancora e una croce 1869, with its combination of Romantic sentimentality and a form of sombre, pre-veristic, pessimistic realism. Thematic—not stylistic—analogy between Zanella's own particular type of Realismo—as in Risposta d'un contadino che emigra 1877, Astichello 1880-1887, Corrado 1885 and Amori contadineschi 1887—and that of Verga were noted in Chapter (6), pp. 321-2.

The cosmic vision of Sopra una conchiglia fossile nel mio studio, 1864, would seem to have been influenced by the poetry of Mascheroni and Monti, while Zanella's own unique fusion of an all-embracing view of Man's destiny, Christianity and nineteenth-century optimism might be considered as finding an interesting parallel with Tommaseo's "religiosità cosmica" (Poesie, 1872), as well as having an impact on Fogazzaro's extension of the Theory of Evolution from the material plane to the spiritual (cf. Ascensioni umane).

By analogy, Zanella, for example, in La veglia 1864, and Microscopio e telescopio 1866, could be said to fit into another diachronic current, when he echoes Leopardi's tone of enquiry about life and the universe (Canto notturno di un pastore errante dell'Asia) and anticipates Pascoli's almost mystical sense of wonder at the immensity of the universe.

20. Cf. Ch. 3, pp. 70-1; Ch. 4, p. 151; Ch. 5, p. 202.

Zanella's many similarities with Leopardi include the following: his ability to give everyday words a poetic quality (cf. pp. 78; 129); his idyllic evocation of nature and the countryside; his nostalgia not only for a bygone, mythical "Golden Age" and its *favole antiche*, but also for the high hopes and care-free happiness of childhood—(an attempt to escape from harsh reality in both poets?); describing a woman's beauty or appearance in terms of the natural scene (cf. Silvia and Nerina merging with the countryside, and Zanella's *Le palme fossili*, 1877, p. 127); concern with adolescent's view of life and love; from a common human experience and the poet's own particular experience, drawing a universally applicable conclusion (cf. *Il passero solitario* and Zanella's *Voci secrete* 1850, and *La veglia* 1864); as well as the analogy between Zanella's *Per certi filologi tedeschi* and Leopardi's *Paralipomeni*—in both works patriotism expresses itself through an ironic, satirical attack on German philology.

Zanella's "links" with Pascoli include: descriptions of natural detail, much greater in the latter; an appreciation of family life and a simple domestic scene; the themes of death and separation from loved ones, with the desire to be reunited in the afterlife; attributing an almost mystical (Pascoli) and religious (Zanella) value to sunsets, sunrises and the beauty of the countryside.<sup>21</sup>

Both Zanella and Pascoli would seem to have been influenced by *A Silvia*, with its presentation of a woman happily working, sewing and singing at home.

Zanella's position as an intermediary "link" between Leopardi and Pascoli finds an interesting "crystallisation" in stylistic terms, as he reflects—albeit in a mediocre way, in a "minor" key—Leopardi's Classical limpidity and foreshadows Pascoli's impressionistic conciseness.

Zanella's view of love in terms of "spirituality" and "materialism"—very well illustrated in the fundamental clash between "spirit" and "senses", experienced by Ippolito, in *Corrado* 1885 (cf. pp. 65-6)—would seem to be echoing those of Tommaseo (*Fede e bellezza*, 1838) and Fogazzaro (*Malombra*, 1881), while anticipating that of Remigio Zena (*L'apostolo*, 1901).

Apart from his position in the Christian tradition—coming between Parini, Manzoni, Gioberti, Rosmini and Tommaseo, on the one hand, and Fogazzaro, Giulio Salvadori and Remigio Zena, on the other—referred to in the preceding chapter (cf. pp. 325, 326), another example of Zanella's "intermediary" position in nineteenth-century poetry is to be found in his view of Nature, which was not only influenced by Classical (Virgil and Horace), Pre-Romantic (Rousseau, Madame de Staël and Cowper) and

21. Cf., for example, Ch. 3, p. 115, n. 139 and p. 77, n. 62.

"Romantic" (Leopardi and Rossetti) writers, but had certain affinities with Carducci<sup>22</sup> and anticipated Pascoli.

Consequently, so many of the themes dealt with by Zanella both echo and anticipate various facets of the two main currents of Romanticism—la linea del realismo, with the notable exception of the Scapigliati, and la linea del pathos from Leopardi to Pascoli—which would ultimately lead to Verismo and Decadentismo.

Zanella's Classical style, whose distinctive hallmark has been described by Momigliano as a "compressed vitality" "... che solo un classico robusto poteva rinchiudere in un angusto scenario",<sup>23</sup> was strongly influenced by Parini, and, to a lesser extent, Foscolo, bypassed what Zanella saw as the laxity of the Romantics, and, in the post-Romantic crisis of form, offered, in a minor key, a possible solution which, through a return to Classicism, anticipated Carducci, but was, not surprisingly, overshadowed by "la soluzione carducciana, ben altrimenti plastica e sonante".<sup>24</sup>

With regard to the intrinsic value of Zanella's verses, the most fundamental distinction to be made is between those compositions which were included in the various editions of his poetry and those which were published separately as occasional poems. The former were of course of a much higher standard. Zanella himself selected what he regarded as his best works and included them in the fourth (1885) edition of his verses.

His poetry can be qualitatively divided into three categories: his most famous works, such as Sopra una conchiglia fossile nel mio studio, La veglia, Egoismo e carità and the Astichello sonnets, which have received high critical acclaim, and deservedly so, when one considers not only their individual, particular merits, but also the "compressed vitality" of Zanella's elegant, Classical style; his most rhetorical compositions (including many dealing with political and social themes and being very didactic and moralising, as well as those characterised by polemical bitterness), in which the obviousness of the stylistic devices reduces their effectiveness; and an "intermediate" group of underrated poems,<sup>25</sup> which have not received

22. Cf. Ch. 5, p. 205.

23. Momigliano, p. 510.

24. Cusatelli, p. 562.

25. Voci secrete, Il sonno, Microscopio e telescopio, Alle acque minerali di Recoaro, Sulle rovine di un antico convento nei colli Euganei, Passeggio solitario, Dopo una lettura della "Imitazione di Cristo", Il mezzogiorno in campagna, La guerra nel settembre 1870, Per il monumento dei caduti nella battaglia di Monte Berico il 10 giugno 1848, Ora meridiana a Recoaro, Dopo un duello, Le catacombe di Roma, Il grido di Venezia, Risposta d'un contadino che emigra, Per certi filologi tedeschi, In morte di Filomena Statella De Mari Duchessa di Castellana, Le campane de' villaggi, A Leone XIII.



the due recognition of their worth.

Both Pasquazi<sup>26</sup> and Bosco<sup>27</sup> have regarded the works of Foscolo, Manzoni, Leopardi and Carducci as owing their greatness, in large measure, to their adherence to the essential spirit of Chénier's formula.

This provides an interesting criterion by which to assess Zanella. As un grande minore, he would seem to occupy an "intermediate" position between the major and minor poets of nineteenth-century Italy.

I hope that this thesis has succeeded in providing a more comprehensive, overall view of Zanella's poetry and its inherent value, and also in demonstrating his historical significance as, arguably, the most important of the minor poets in the intervening years between the two great trilogies of nineteenth-century, Italian poetry.

26. Pasquazi (1961). pp.2778, 2779.

27. Bosco, op. cit., p.41.

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