

Edwin Morgan and Glasgow

Masami Nakao

In the 1960's Edwin Morgan began to write poems about Glasgow. It was a time in which great changes were taking place in the city. The slum properties at the centre of the city were being demolished, and Glasgow was about to be renewed. It was also a time of great changes for the poet himself. This paper is an attempt to explore the poet's ideas about change and about the relation between the city and himself. For that purpose, I shall discuss some of the "Glasgow Sonnets" and other poems concerning the city.

The first of the ten "Glasgow Sonnets" begins with a rather realistic description of the desolate landscape of the Glasgow slums :

A mean wind wanders through the backcourt trash.
Hackles on puddles rise, old mattresses
puff briefly and subside. Play-fortresses
of brick and bric-a-brac spill out some ash.¹⁾

These lines, however, contain some thematic significance for the sequence. The wind is "mean" in the sense that it is cold, nasty and hostile to the people of this poverty-stricken area. Throughout the sequence, images of coldness are repeatedly used to represent the miserable conditions in these

Edwin Morgan and Glasgow

tenements. The windows are “not glazed,” (iii, l. 10) “the cooker/without pipes,” (iii, ll. 10–11) and “coats keep the evil cold out less and less.” (ii, l. 14) “Mean” here may also echo the use of the word in the expression, the “mean streets” of a city.²⁾ Blown by the “mean” and debasing “wind” of the time, the city exposes its ugliness, its darker side.

The wind blows on “mattresses,” which seem to have been discarded when their former owners left the area. Mattresses are, of course, objects which offer peaceful sleep, and providing rest is one of the chief functions of the places where we live. In that sense, what is endangered by the wind is peaceful home and rest. The other objects are “play-fortresses/of brick and bric-a-brac.” A fortress is something to protect one from harm from the outer world. Again, the safety and peace within a place to live is suggested. But the fortresses are “play-fortresses,” and they are made of “bric-a-brac.” They are not real fortresses but are of makeshift material. Thus the fortresses are left here helpless not only because of the “mean wind” as a destructive force from the external world, but also because of its innate defects.

The defects are probably the ones that can be applied to the 19th century buildings in Glasgow depicted in “Sonnet vii”:

... the sandblaster’s grout
multiply pink piebald facades to pout
at sticky-fingered mock-Venetianists.
Prop up’s the motto. Splint the dying age.
Never displease the watchers from the grave.
(ll. 6–10)

The facade of a building is here compared to a badly made-up face. The

buildings put on a show of antique styles, such as Venetian or Gothic, but they do not belong to the age and place in which the styles were established. The motto, "Prop up," represents the unnatural sustainment of what should not exist in that particular place and time. These buildings are "double fake" (l. 13) in the poet's words because, in contradiction to the grand facades, they are empty inside. Again the image of deceptive ornamentation of human parts appears: "a wig's the thing to beat both beard and shave." (vii, l. 14) The device is neither "beard," natural growth, nor "shave," total clearance. The fortresses in "Sonnet i" are made of "bricks and bric-a-brac," an assortment of antique ornaments. And they are "play-fortresses" that lack a life within to protect. Decorating the buildings is nothing but deceit if it is not integrated with the life of people who occupy the buildings. Though the "mother and daughter" in "Sonnet i" are, of course, forced to live in terrible conditions, they are called the "last mistresses" (i, l. 7) by the poet and thus given a measure of dignity.

Another example of inconsistency between the space and the people who occupy that space is the "garden cities" in "Sonnet viii." (l. 10) Based on the "overspill" (l. 9) policy, slum property was demolished throughout the British Isles after the Second World War, and the overspilt residents were not rehoused within the city but in newly built towns, such as East Kilbride, Cumbernauld, and Glenrothes. The towns were artificial products prepared by the government for the purpose of receiving those people. They were advertised as "garden cities," (l. 10) suggesting a combination of nature and urban facilities. The poet resents the idea as "the flimsiest oxymoron to distil to." (l. 11) He sees this as a distillation to get rid of the poor districts with their people. A city has its own development, so that it cannot be cultivated in a hothouse. The idea

Edwin Morgan and Glasgow

of the city that Morgan presents as a counterpart is the world of “ukiyo-e.”

... Let bus and car
and hurrying umbrellas keep their skill to
feed ukiyo-e beyond Lochnagar. (ll. 12-14)

Lochnagar represents the beauty of a wild landscape with its Byronic association.³⁾ The poet in conversation explained that, against this, he contrasted the urban world, the world of activity and bustle that was recorded in Japanese wood block prints.⁴⁾ We may perhaps think of some of Hiroshige’s city scenes.⁵⁾ In Glasgow the people are hurrying about their own concerns. The buses and the cars probably fill the busy streets, and the city must have its own environmental problems. At the beginning of “Sonnet vii,” the poet writes

Environmentalists, ecologists
and conservationists are fine no doubt.
Pedestrianization will come out
fighting, riverside walks march off the lists,
pigeons and starlings be somnambulists
in far-off suburbs, ... (ll. 1-6)

What “environmentalists, ecologists / and conservationists” insist must then be right, and “no doubt” urban problems should be solved. But when it becomes a perfectionistic purification, it altogether robs the city of the life that is inherent in it. “The pigeons and starlings” are city birds, and even if they were transferred to the better environment of the suburbs, they would dream of their lives in the crowded city. The poet is suspicious

Edwin Morgan and Glasgow

about the overall policy. He seems to ask: If the people are excluded from the picture of the cleaned up area, whose city is it?

At the same time, however, he is well aware of the miserable conditions of the tenements. The block in "Sonnet i" has "no windows left to smash" (l. 5) up to the third floor, and it is described as a "black block condemned to stand, not crash." (l. 8) Standing itself is debasing for such a desolate property. In "Sonnet iii," an episode is described which emphasises the "mean"-ness of the spirit that permeates the area. An agent is renting, or even trying to sell the "tenement due for demolition." (l. 1) He says "it's no legal," (l. 4) and admits that he is not authorised to deal with the property. Moreover, he is deceitful about the bad condition of the building, deliberately remaining silent about the "foul crumbling stairwell, windows wired / not glazed, the damp from the canal, the cooker / without pipes, packs of rats . . .," (ll. 9-11) and so on. Even so, a family with five children accept this offer because they have no alternative. They have to find a place to live, a place to make their "home." The agent says, "I say / for eight hundred pounds it's yours." (ll. 6-7) It is *not* legally theirs. Nor is the agent entitled to decide the ownership. Here the poet asks again: Whose house is it? Whose city is it? Officially, the property belongs to the municipal corporation. But how about the life in it? If the corporation tries to take hold of the life of the people, to which it is not entitled, is it not doing something much like what the crooked agent does?

In order to explore the poet's ideas about this problem, I should like to consider another Glasgow poem by Morgan: "The Starlings in George Square."⁶⁾ It is a poem written in a much lighter mood, about a large flock of starlings which somehow settled in George Square at the centre of Glasgow and perplexed the people in the surrounding offices.

Edwin Morgan and Glasgow

The first section depicts the spectacle of George Square at sundown: “The darkening roofscape stirs — / thick — alive with starlings” (ll. 2-3) The birds are already a part of the “roofscape”—they are no passers-by but components of George Square, just like the buildings around it. The people described here are “the homeward hurrying crowds.” (l. 11) Again, the theme of “home” appears. The people have their “homes” ahead of them. The father-son relationship in the next line also emphasises the image of home or family.

A man looks up and points
smiling to his son beside him
wide-eyed at the clamour on these cliffs —
(ll. 12-14)

It is the father who directs the boy’s attention to these birds. The boy, on the other hand, is “wide-eyed at the clamour.” The word “clamour” abstracts the voices of the birds, and the boy does not know how to respond to the overwhelming sound. The father leads him to acknowledge the origin of the sound, and through his smile in doing so, he offers relief to the boy. As a result, the boy comes to know that he does not have to be guarded against these creatures. It is then that the “clamour” unfolds a variety of notes to his ears:

it sinks, shrills out in waves,
levels to a happy murmur,
scatters in swooping arcs,
a stab of confused sweetness
that pierces the boy like a story,

Edwin Morgan and Glasgow

a story more than a song.

(ll. 15-20)

The boy recognises “a story” in the voices. Birds can “sing,” as it were, but here, it is “a story more than a song.” A story requires a language to tell it. A song does have its language, but it can also be a scat, a series of pleasant sounds. If the boy recognises a story in the starlings’ voices, that means he hears the words, the language of the birds. And that makes the experience an unforgettable one for him.

The second section deals with language in a different way. This section is divided into three stanzas, and each stanza depicts a scene from one of the buildings facing George Square: the City Chambers, the General Post Office, and the City Information Bureau. In the City Chambers, the Councillors sit “with rubber plugs in their ears” (l. 2) rejecting not only the birds’ voices but also the human voices that reach them. The Lord Provost, who is a woman here (as is often the case in Glasgow,) cannot “hear herself think.” (l. 7) Human language is endangered by interference from another kind of voice. Each of the three stanzas has “What’s that?” and the line above repeated at the end, to signify the incompleteness of the communication. “Each telephone booth” at the General Post Office is compared to “an aviary,” (l. 10) which suggests that both telephones and birds are involved in complex forms of communication. No doubt the booths are surrounded by the birds, and the situation is reversed if a man tries to use the phone. Instead of birds, men seem to be kept in aviaries surrounded by birds, not by men. If someone is speaking on the phone, we take it for granted that he is talking to an invisible person on the other end of the line. But the picture could also be seen as a man chirruping to himself like a bird in an aviary.

In contrast with people hurrying homeward, the people here are on business, and they need to be as efficient as they can. The confusion of language is potentially a serious problem because language for them should be functional. They are perplexed because they cannot permit the intrusion of any external language, any language other than their own. The third stanza is especially interesting in that the birds' language seems to permeate the human language :

I'm sorry I can't quite chirrup did you twit —

No I wanted to twee but perhaps you can't cheep —

(ll. 16-17)

This may remind us of one of Morgan's "Science Fiction" poems, "The First Men on Mercury," where the languages of the men and of the Mercurians merge in the course of their dialogue until the two interchange with each other at the end. This, too, is an encounter between two different modes of being.

In the third section, various means of getting rid of the starlings are comically depicted, and the people in the offices finally decide to let the starlings be and to protect themselves with repellent. The human beings are "locked in" and "encased." (ll. 13 and 14) Like a bird in a cage, the Lord Provost "sings" (l. 15) in her mansion. This is at least a "humanitarian" (l. 13) solution in the sense that they do not "kill them [the birds]," (l. 10) but Morgan seems to suggest more:

I wonder if we really deserve starlings?

There is something to be said for the joyous messengers
that we repel in our indignant orderliness. (ll. 18-20)

Edwin Morgan and Glasgow

We do not usually see the matter in this way. We might wonder if the starlings deserve so much attention, so much trouble. But, here, he asks if *we* deserve the starlings. Again, the human perspective is made relative: we are not the one and only component of the city but only one of its components. And the bureaucratic attitude of separating different ways of being and trying to avoid mixture is expressed as “indignant orderliness.” The same kind of attitude can be seen in the ideas behind the demolition of the slums and the “overspill” of the poor to the new towns in the suburbs. The poet suggests that

... some day we'll decipher that sweet frenzied whistling
as they wheel and settle along our hard roofs
and take those grey buttresses for home.

(ll. 22-24)

The starlings “settle” and “take [the] buttresses for home.” So it is their home. Just as the people hurry home in Section I, the starlings find George Square their own home. And then the poet reflects that people might “decipher” the birds’ language. Just as the boy learnt intuitively, the birds have their own stories. They are “messengers” in that sense, and also in the sense that they “lift up the eyes” (l. 21) of people and initiate them into a completely different view of things.

The poet seems to imply that the city consists of various elements, good or bad, beautiful or ugly, and so on, and it cannot be “orderly” according to the view of one authority. The city belongs to those who live in it, whatever views they have, human or birds’. In a poem entitled “The Demolishers,” Morgan compares a city to a gigantic sea monster.⁷

Edwin Morgan and Glasgow

... roof by roof the intricate patterns of protection,
like red scales and grey scales
of a creature breathing and growing,
its clusters of active cells and its hidden life
massing and stirring, a thousandfold,
a hundred thousandfold, a millionfold,
great webs of shops and banks and homes and smoke and souls.

(ll. 7-13)

And its Protean character is emphasised in the following lists of adjectives and verbs.

It lives with those who live in it,
sparkling, arrogant, delicate, dull, shabby, decaying,
a hundred storeys or falling asleep.
Its life shifts, moves, migrates, returns,
the winking lights of its speeded-up history
like a message always changing and always the same.

(ll. 23-28)

The identity of a city is composed of the lives of those within it, and the adjectives attached to it are sometimes contradictory. But the complexity is its life. A city itself is thus a living creature.

We have seen that "Glasgow Sonnet vii" presented the city in physical terms, using metaphors of make-up and a wig. "Sonnet ix" also describes the city as a living creature:

It groans and shakes, contracts and grows again.

Edwin Morgan and Glasgow

Its giant broken shoulders shrug off rain.
It digs its pits to a shauchling refrain.
Roadworks and graveyards like their gallus men.

(ll. 1-4)

Its shoulders are “broken” because of the demolition going on, and the pits all over the roads cause “shauchling,” or shambling. The city is injured by the change. The “roadworks” are connected with “graveyards” through the image of “gallus men,” or the physical labourers digging pits. But, at the same time, the “graveyards” like to gulp down the robust lives. Images of death and suffering flow into the following lines :

It fattens fires and murders in a pen
and lets them out in flaps and squalls of pain.

(ll. 5-6)

The demolition is an effort to cremate some part of the city’s life and it may well cause pain for the people. The confusion and the screaming pain are there as part of the changing scene. And the city itself is hoisting its fist in rage. Ironically the fist is “bleary” because it is also in the process of being remade. (l. 8) The change is painful for the city, too. But the poet is not pessimistic about its results :

... barricaded windows be the best
to see from till the shops, the ships, the trust
return like thunder. Give the Clyde the rest.
Man and the sea make cities as they must.

(ll. 10-14)

Edwin Morgan and Glasgow

The “barricaded windows” belong to the old buildings to be torn down, but this has not yet been done. And from these windows you cannot see well what is happening or what is going to happen. But the trade and industry somehow come back “like thunder.” If you leave things to the Clyde, the poet says, they should be all right. This view may seem a little too optimistic, considering that the Clyde is shivering and helpless in “Sonnet iv,” after petroleum resources have been discovered in East Scotland. Rather, the poet seems to be ready to accept whatever future “man and the sea” lead the city into. Well aware of the pain and desolation in the present, the poet can still be optimistic, not because the future promises an “orderly” and idealistic society, but because he assumes whatever is included in the city is a part of its life.

In order to explore the poet’s feelings behind this acceptance, we must turn to another poem: “For Bonfires.”⁸⁾ Here, the demolition is captured almost as a kind of ritual. The three parts that make up the poem refer to three occasions for making bonfires. The first is the fire of a gardener.

The leaves are gathered, the trees are dying
for a time. (ll. 1-2)

Here there is death, but it is just “for a time,” so that the seasonal myth of regeneration is emphasised from the beginning. The circle that the dog draws (ll. 6-7) is a part of the ritual. The gardener who conducts the ritual is “drifting / ghostly,” (ll. 8-9) assuming some superhuman charm. The beating of hands (l. 9) adds to the ritual, and the “cloud / of breath” (ll. 9-10) produced there makes a contrast with the “streaks of ash” (l. 8) in which he stands, signifying life in contention with death.

Edwin Morgan and Glasgow

The second section describes “happy demolition men.” (l. 1) The hoarded site is called “an island in the city,” (l. 1) because it is a space where the city is in a different state from the surrounding area, where everyday urban life is going on. It belongs neither to the old and discarded nor to the newly born. The demolition men are “happy,” and their liveliness is emphasised by a series of actions expressed in present participles: “trailing,” “kicking,” “smoking,” “leaning,” “putting,” “whistling,” “slamming,” “rattling,” and so on. (ll. 3-8) Here the image of death is not so much emphasised in the work. On the contrary, their task is

... slowly stacking ang building
their rubbish into a total bonfire.
(ll. 15-16)

The work is not portrayed as destruction but as building. And what is built there is a “total bonfire,” something complete in itself. But again, a bonfire is not a new building. It is “total” only in the process of renewal. An Irishman’s figure is described as “a beautiful arc,” as if it were a part of a perfected piece of architecture. (ll. 17-18) But, it is not. The arc exists only for a moment in the man’s working; that is, only while the demolition is on. Again, a list of objects to be burnt is given. It is so much detailed that we are drawn back to the life before demolition:

... — old doors,
old beams, boxes, window-frames,
a rag doll, sacks, flex, old newspapers,
burst shelves, a shoe, old dusters, rags of
wall paper roses. (ll. 21-25)

Edwin Morgan and Glasgow

As in "Glasgow Sonnets," the poet does have a lingering attachment to the life before demolition. However poor and miserable, life is life, and it has its own dignity. Yet the demolition men seem to be as carefree as ever. They "stand round,/and cheer the tenement to smoke." (ll. 25-26) In their magic circle, all the details of life are concentrated into one word, "tenement," and then, to "smoke," another breath ascending after death.

The third section is a personal bonfire made from old letters. The "leaves" (l. 3) of the letters, of course, remind us of the leaves of trees in the first section. But these leaves seem to resist destruction with their "claws" scraping the bucket "like a living thing." (ll. 3-4) The life of what is dying is given more and more emphasis as the sections proceed. But, towards the end,

the black pages fuse
to a single whispering mass
threaded by dying tracks of gold.

(ll. 7-9)

The pages, each of which must have been full of stories and voices different from one another, now fuse into "a single . . . mass," just as the objects bearing stories of the lives in the demolished buildings came to converge in the indifferent title, "tenement," and then to "smoke" in Section II. The mass is still "whispering" its last words. The "tracks of gold," which might refer to some pattern on the letter paper, also signify the valuable history of personal friendships and other human relationships around the poet. But the poet waits until they are "cold" and "quickly draw[s] breath" (ll. 11 and 13) — inhaling new life after the death of his former self. The same ritual of regeneration can be traced in the three bonfires.

Edwin Morgan and Glasgow

And here, the poet's ambivalent feeling towards the city's renewal overlaps with his feeling towards the renewal of his own self. We can see that the city is not just buildings to Morgan; it is far more importantly living things that inhabit an environment. The fact that Morgan is confronting the renewal of the city in physical terms is also connected in some way to his personal self-renewal.

In 1968 Morgan published a collection entitled *The Second Life*. In the title poem,⁹⁾ the poet is in an exalted mood and seems to identify his own "renewed self" with that of the city. Although he writes

The caked layers of grime
grow warm, like homely coats.

(ll. 54-55)

and acknowledges the difficulty in discarding the old and familiar life, he declares "Slip out of darkness, it is time." (l. 61) The season is spring, and the time for taking off winter coats. Certainly this represents one side of the poet's feeling in the 1960's. In one of his interviews, he characterises the decade as "a kind of liberating period."¹⁰⁾ Yet we have also seen that Morgan saw the city as badly wounded.

In *Sonnets from Scotland*, which was published in 1984 and belongs to a slightly later period, there is a sonnet entitled "The Poet in the City."¹¹⁾ The poem seems to reflect more fully the relation between the poet's self-image and his image of Glasgow.

Rain stockaded Glasgow; we paused, changed gears,
found him solitary but cheerful in
Anniesland, with the cheerfulness you'd win,

Edwin Morgan and Glasgow

we imagined, through schiltrons of banked fears.

(ll. 1-4)

Rain is one of the recurrent images when the poet writes about Glasgow. In "Glasgow Sonnet iv," the rain is on "the wrecker's ball," (l. 13) a tool for the demolition. Glasgow is described as a "greeting" (l. 14) city, the word "greeting" meaning lamenting or weeping in Scots. The rain is the tears of the city's lamentation. The people making up the scene of city life, *ukiyo-e*, in "Sonnet viii" have "umbrellas" (l. 13) in order to be prepared for the rain. The city itself "shrug [s] off rain" with its broken shoulders. ("Sonnet ix," l. 2) While the ascending smoke is a symbol of the sublimation of the past, the rain descending ceaselessly is a symbol of the desolation that is inseparable from change.

Here in "The Poet in the City," Glasgow is confined in rain. The word "stockade" gives a curious military air to the line. If the city is "stockade[d]" by the rain, the rain at the same time protects the city, which has discarded its "play-fortresses" as useless. While what is supposed to give protection to the lives in the city does not function properly, the atmosphere of desolation paradoxically does this. The poem has other such military expressions, too: "Schiltrons," "spears," and "ranks." ("Forced" could be taken as a kindred word.) (ll. 4-6) A "schiltron" is a close compact body of troops, originally synonymous with the Greek *Testudo*, a body of men protected by locked shields like the shell of a tortoise.¹²⁾ In this poem, the "schiltron" is made up of "banked fears." As the city is protected by the rain, so "the poet" is shielded by fears.

The poem consists of more than three persons: "the poet," referred to as "he," and "we," the observers. Presumably "the poet" is Edwin Morgan himself working at his flat in Anniesland. Then, who are *we*?

Edwin Morgan and Glasgow

The first person plural is very different from "the poet": these people are not "solitary," and are in a car, which is not affected by the falling rain. And "the poet's" mind is not completely known to them, since they can only "imagine" the source of his "cheerfulness." Yet, at the same time, if we consider the insight that they show in their imagining, it would be unnatural to assume this to be a realistic representation of "the poet's" friends happening to see him. The first person plural seems to represent some part of Morgan's own innumerable personae, either in his poetry or in real life. That "we" are in a car "chang[ing] gears" suggests that this is the part of Morgan equipped with modern facilities, ready to accept "change."

"The poet," on the other hand, was in the rain as his wet coat tells us; and after drying it up on a peg, he is going out again. (ll. 7-8) Unlike the men in the car, "the poet" exposes himself directly to the city and its atmosphere. And, at the same time, he looks at "gulls" intently, and beyond them to the invisible sea that only the gulls can smell. (ll. 8-11) This is his "dream/of freedom with all guilts all fears unfelt." (ll. 13-14) Edwin Morgan seems to have a Romantic aspiration towards far-away places, as we may guess from the variety of locales his poems employ. And freedom is a part of his aspiration. Behind this lies the poet's sense of confinement, if we think of some of his love poems which take place in a room, while the speaker imagines the two lovers flying away.¹³⁾ But the confinement is made by the "schiltrons of . . . fears" that actually protect himself. Consequently, "the poet" cannot gain freedom without getting injured; he can only "dream" of it. And yet, he is "cheerful." Instead of going out to seek the bird-like freedom, "the poet" chooses to remain within his guilts and fears and to absorb himself into the city and its desolation.

Edwin Morgan and Glasgow

Edwin Morgan is often considered to believe in the power of change, to take "sides with the bulldozer."¹⁴ Yet, his sympathy also lies with the life that preceded demolition, and he knows the groans and screams that the injured city utters in the process of change. The poet can be optimistic about the city not because its future is guaranteed by renovation but because he believes that its life will be preserved on the condition that it alters its shape and figure according to the changes it experiences. The desolation and the unhealable wounds that accompany the change are part of its life, which exists accepting every life that comes to seek it as a home. And the poet is all the more penetrating about it because he himself assumes various guises in writing poetry, takes in various lives in doing so, and still maintains a solitary and vulnerable self within it. This double mode of being is essential to the poet, and he sees something similar in Glasgow.

When we consider these poems, then, with their rich and fascinating picture of Glasgow at an important moment of change and development, we might be surprised at Morgan's apparent acceptance of so much that is on the surface ugly or destructive. What I have tried to show in this paper is that Morgan himself is so closely identified with the city that he has been able to accept its different and contradictory faces in the same way that he accepts his own changing self. And behind all this lies the poet's basic trust in life.

Notes

- 1) *Collected Poems* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1990), p. 289, ll. 1-4. Henceforth all the quotations from the poems of Morgan are from this edition, which will be cited as *CP*.
- 2) We may also remember the title of a popular novel located in the area, *No Mean City: A Story of the Glasgow Slums* (1935).

Edwin Morgan and Glasgow

- 3) Byron, George Gordon, Lord. *Poetical Works* (London: O. U. P., 1967), p. 29, "Lachin y Gair."
- 4) See also Douglas Dunn, "Morgan's Sonnets" in *About Edwin Morgan*, Robert Crawford and Hamish Whyte, eds., (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 1990), pp. 78-79.
- 5) For example, scenes from *Toto Meisho* (Famous Sceneries of Edo) or *Naniwa Meisho Zue* (Famous Sceneries of Naniwa.)
- 6) *CP*, p. 165.
- 7) *CP*, p. 578.
- 8) *CP*, p. 242.
- 9) *CP*, p. 180.
- 10) Edwin Morgan, *Nothing Not Giving Messages: Reflections on Work and Life*, Hamish Whyte, ed., (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1990), p. 130.
- 11) *CP*, p. 451.
- 12) The word "schiltron" is enlisted in the *Oxford English Dictionary* under the spelling "sheltron." The old spelling Morgan uses is the one used in Holinshed's *Chronicles*, where the word is regarded as belonging to the Scots.
- 13) See, for example, *CP*, p. 233, "Floating off to Timor."
- 14) Robert Crawford, "'to change / the unchangeable' - The Whole Morgan" in Crawford and Whyte, p. 18.

This paper was read at The British Council English Literature Seminar in Hakone, Sept. 24-25, 1992. I should like to express my gratitude to the poet Edwin Morgan, who kindly granted me an interview, and Profs. Douglas Dunn, George and Clair Hughes for their valuable comments at the Seminar.