

# THEORIA

G. M. Trevelyan, O.M.—A Tribute  
A. W. REES

The Democratic Experiment in Europe  
LORD EUSTACE PERCY

Drama in the University  
PHYLLIS WARNER

Georg Simmel and Totalitarian Integration  
K. J. NEWMAN

Een Middeleeuws Volksliedje als Spiegel van zijn tijd  
E. ENDT

Poetry and Actuality  
W. H. GARDNER

Shakespeare's Influence on German Drama  
M. SCHMIDT-JHMS

Foreigners in South African Archaeology  
O. DAVIES

The Poets' Poet  
CHRISTINA VAN HEYNINGEN

Some Thoughts on the Verse and Poetry of  
Lucretius, Book III  
B. H. FARRER

Speech Training and Practical Criticism  
ELIZABETH SNEDDON

The Idea of a University  
A SYMPOSIUM



1949  
1950  
1950



# **BOOKS FOR EVERYMAN**

**THE QUINTESSENCE OF G.B.S.**

The wit and wisdom of Bernard Shaw  
**18/-**

**SHAW** by C. E. M. Joad **13/6**

**DELIGHT.** Essays in brief by  
J. B. Priestley **10/6**

**DICKENS:** His character, comedy and  
career **23/-**

**ON THE HILL.** A book of new verse by  
John Masefield **8/6**

**TEACH THEM TO LIVE** by James  
Hemming. Describes a challenging  
venture in educational research **11/-**

**TEXT BOOKS AS USED AT N.U.C.  
ON HAND THROUGHOUT THE YEAR**

---

**ADAMS & CO. LTD.**

**Durban's Leading Booksellers and Stationers**

**341 WEST STREET - DURBAN**

**P.O. BOX 466**



*Johann Wolfgang Goethe*  
1749—1832

# THEORIA

## A Journal of Studies

OF THE ARTS FACULTY

University of Natal

### Contents

G. M. Trevelyn, O.M.—A Tribute—A. W. REES ... ..	1
The Democratic Experiment in Europe—LORD EUSTACE PERCY ... ..	10
Drama in the University—PHYLLIS WARNER ... ..	23
Georg Simmel and Totalitarian Integration—K. J. NEWMAN	39
Een Middeleeuws Volksliedje als Spiegel van zijn tijd—E. ENDT	48
Poetry and Actuality—W. H. GARDNER ... ..	59
Shakespeare's Influence on German Drama—M. SCHMIDT-JHMS ... ..	74
Foreigners in South African Archaeology—O. DAVIES ... ..	88
The Poets' Poet—CHRISTINA VAN HEYNINGEN ... ..	93
Some Thoughts on the Verse and Poetry of Lucretius, Book III —B. H. FARRER ... ..	101
Speech Training and Practical Criticism — ELIZABETH SNEDDON ... ..	105
The Idea of a University—A SUMPOSIUM ... ..	115

SHUTER & SHOOTER

Publishers

PIETERMARTZBURG

1950

## *Foreword*

By a fortunate coincidence, we celebrate the inauguration of the University of Natal in the same year as the two hundredth anniversary of the birth of Goethe.

Although we cannot hope today, weighed down as we are with the burden of specialised knowledge, to achieve the same comprehensive vision as the great humanists of the past, we can still recognize the aim that they followed, and seek in our own way to emulate them. In particular we can attempt to see where our own specialisations fit into the general pattern of thought, and we can make clear both to ourselves and to others what it is that we are trying to do in our studies.

It is to this task of clarifying and explaining that *Theoria* is devoted. The articles that follow are, therefore, not to be regarded in the main as specialist contributions directed to the specialist—the place for such discussions is elsewhere—but as a part of the necessary and much neglected task of humane criticism.

G.H.D.

# G. M. TREVELYAN, O.M.

## A Tribute

George Macaulay Trevelyan has taken leave of his public.<sup>1</sup> At seventy three he admits that he is no longer able to sustain the prolonged effort involved in the preparation of a another major historical work. The news will be received with regret by the general reader as well as by the specialist student, because Trevelyan's writings have had a wide appeal. Many cultivated men and women find the school history book an object of continuing distaste, which they are only too anxious to forget. Yet Trevelyan has succeeded in writing no fewer than three thoroughly popular text books: *England under the Stuarts*, *British History in the Nineteenth Century* and the *History of England*, respectively. Who else among contemporary English historians could have written a best-seller on six centuries of English social history from Chaucer to Victoria? This, his last major work, has sold 392,000 copies to date, although publication in the United Kingdom was delayed four years until 1944, owing to the war-time scarcity of paper.

That G. M. Trevelyan should have succeeded in gaining such a reading public becomes significant when it is realised that for over fifty years he has consciously resisted a strong movement supported by leading historians in many lands towards a history exclusively scientific.

'I have been not an original but a traditional kind of historian', he writes. 'The best that can be said of me is that I tried to keep up to date a family tradition as to the relation of history to literature.'

This 'family tradition' was shaped by his great-uncle, Lord Macaulay, whose biographer, his own father (Sir George Otto Trevelyan) became. In this autobiography

---

<sup>1</sup>G. M. Trevelyan, *An Autobiography and Other Essays*. Longmans, 1949.

Trevelyan pays tribute to George Townshend Warner who, at Harrow, first supplemented for him the 'sweet cake' of Gibbon, Carlyle and Macaulay, with the sterner diet of scientific history in the form of Bishop Stubbs's *Constitutional History of England*: but he still recalls the rage in which, as a freshman, he left the house of the dying Seeley, then Regius Professor of History at Cambridge, after an interview in which the old man read him a stern lecture on the merits of history as a science, adding, for good measure, that his three idols were charlatans.

Trevelyan's first stay at Cambridge lasted from 1893 to 1903, a period in which F. W. Maitland, Archdeacon Cunningham and Lord Acton (who succeeded Seeley in 1895) laid the foundations of a notable school of history. That Macaulay would have been a better historian had he been privileged to study at Trinity towards the end of the nineteenth century, instead of at its beginning, is one of the opinions expressed in the autobiography. When Bury arrived to take over the Regius Professorship in 1903, it was time for Trevelyan to leave.

Bury's pronouncement in the celebrated Inaugural Lecture of that year, that history was a science, nothing more and nothing less, could hardly have appealed to a young don whose ambition it was to write 'literary history'. In an article entitled 'Clio, the Muse,' first published in the *Independent Review*, Trevelyan joined issue with Bury immediately, and to this day his convictions have not changed. Whilst admitting that in the selection of evidence, the historian needs a 'scientific approach', Trevelyan has always maintained, and demonstrated in his own works, that in the interpretation of historical material, and in its transcription into literary form, the historian is primarily an artist and a philosopher.

He is somewhat harsh with the pioneers of the 'scientific history' in England when he attributes their efforts, in the eighties and nineties, firstly, to a determination to 'stiffen up' history as a 'subject' in University examinations: secondly, to the deplorable readiness of the English to discard their national traditions (except in politics) in favour of those foreign countries (in this case, Germany): and thirdly, to the great success achieved by

natural and physical scientists in their particular fields of study. With 'Man' as his subject, however, the historian can never make of his work an exact science. Man is too various, too variable, too conflicting, too spiritual for any scientific analysis. The methods of natural science cannot prove effective in historical work, if only because history, as Trevelyan insists, is too often 'a matter of rough guessing from all the available facts'. It deals with intellectual and spiritual fancies which cannot be subjected to any analysis that can be called scientific.

His own approach to history is vividly expressed in the following passages. The first is taken from the autobiography.

'The poetry of history lies in the quasi-miraculous fact that once, on this earth, once, on this familiar spot of ground, walked other men and women, as actual as we are today, thinking their own thoughts, swayed by their own passions, but now all gone, one generation vanishing after another, gone as utterly as we ourselves shall shortly be gone like ghost at cock-crow. This is the most familiar and certain fact about life, but it is also the most poetical, and the knowledge of it has never ceased to entrance me, and to throw a halo of poetry round the dustiest record that Dryasdust can bring to light'.

The second is from a lecture delivered in 1945, to the British National Book League, and reprinted in this volume with the title 'History and the Reader'.

'The motive of history is at bottom poetic. The patient scholar, wearing out his life in scientific historical research, and the reader more idly turning the pages of history, are both enthralled by the mystery of time, by the mystery of all things, by the succession of the ages and generations'.

From boyhood Trevelyan was equipped with a lively imagination upon which he drew, when interpreting the past, because the historian must free himself from that 'present' in which he lives and works, and 'step inside' the minds of men and women, long dead, and endeavour to see their lives and face their problems, as they themselves saw them, forgetting his own knowledge in each case, of what actually came after. For Trevelyan, as for R. G. Collingwood, this is the only correct way of thinking



'historically', and of avoiding what Collingwood dismisses as 'scissors and paste' history.

Like all creative artists, Trevelyan has a 'range' marked out for him by his experience, his training and his imagination. To indicate the limits of this range is not to criticise the achievement of the artist within it: more frequently, it facilitates true appreciation and understanding.

The first limitation in Trevelyan's case arises from the fact that he has no philosophy to bring to the interpretation of human affairs, whether in the present or in the past. History is therefore for him, as a whole, 'a shapeless affair' and in selecting within it a period on which his own gifts can be fully employed, he has always demanded two things; first, that it should have a 'clear-cut happy ending', and second, 'artistic unity'. The general histories which Trevelyan has written, we owe primarily to the suggestions and promptings of the House of Longmans, which published for Macaulay, as for Trevelyan's father. It is rather the Garibaldi trilogy, and the three works on England in the reign of Queen Anne, which Trevelyan would submit as his principal contributions to English historical literature.

He left Cambridge after the Lent Term of 1903 because he had a feeling that, as he states, 'if I wanted to write literary history I should do so in more spiritual freedom away from the critical atmosphere of Cambridge scholarship. Since Seeley's death, every historian at Cambridge had been very kind to me. And yet—and yet—I feared the impalpable restrictions of the Cambridge ethos . . . The wise Henry Sidgwick said to me that if I wanted to write books as my chief work in life I had better not stay too long in academic circles'.

Garibaldi was a subject made to his hand. Here was all the poetry and adventure he could desire, with a happy ending for a country which excited and retained the warm-hearted sympathies of Victorian England. It was a country in which he had also freely indulged his passion for walking. As a wedding present he had received from Bernard Pares the *Memoirs of Garibaldi*, and a copy of Belluzi's *Ritirata di Garibaldi nel 1849*.

'I began one day to turn over the pages, and was

suddenly enthralled by the story of the retreat from Rome to the Adriatic, over mountains which I had traversed in my solitary walks; the scene and spirit of that desperate venture, led by that unique man, flashed upon my mind's eye'.

He devoted the whole of the year 1906 to writing the story of Garibaldi's retreat, following it up with the volumes on the Sicilian expedition, and the decisive events of 1860. *Garibaldi and the Thousand* was published in 1909, and *Garibaldi and the Making of Italy* in 1911.

The works on England in Anne's Reign belong to a much more mature period. They were written in the 1930's when Trevelyan was back once more in Cambridge, but now as Regius Professor, having succeeded Bury in 1928. As these three histories are likely to be acclaimed in the future as his most scholarly achievements, it is instructive to learn the reasons for the particular choice of subject.

'Ever since, thirty years before', he explains in his autobiography, 'I had taken the war of the Spanish Succession as a special subject in the Tripos, I had dreamed of telling the story of Queen Anne's reign. The idea of taking up the tale where my great-uncle's history had broken off, was perhaps, a fancy at the back of my consciousness. But I was more seriously attracted by the dramatic unity and separateness of the period from 1702-14 . . . the interplay and mutual dependence of foreign and domestic, religious and political, English and Scottish, civil and military affairs; the economic background and the social scene and their political outcome; the series of dramatic changes of issue, like a five-act drama, leading up to the climax of the trumpets proclaiming King George. I always liked military history, and the Marlborough wars are one of its greatest themes: I always liked Scottish history, and the Union of 1707 was its turning point'.

Trevelyan was not alone at that time in his investigations into the reign of Anne, for in the 1930's, owing to the exigencies of Conservative Party Politics, Mr. Winston Churchill was preoccupying himself with the life of his great ancestor Marlborough. Trevelyan does not bear his fellow-historian any grudge for having denied him access to the Churchill Papers at Blenheim Palace. Mr. Churchill,

of course, made amends in 1940, when as Prime Minister he was able to invite the retiring Regius Professor of History at Cambridge to become the Master of Trinity College, the 'family' college.

A second limit of the 'range' of Trevelyan's artistry as an interpreter of the past, is imposed by his 'paganism'. When he heard at the tender age of thirteen that Darwin had disproved the early Books of the Bible, he shed his Christian beliefs once and for all. At Cambridge, although the battles with 'clericalism' had been fought in the seventies and eighties and won with the abolition of religious tests, there was an unmistakable leave-over in the nineties which fortified his own antipathy towards organised religion. He has since had no direct personal experience of the power of the Christian belief and ethics over individual action and thought. For Christianity he has been content to substitute an eclectic religion and philosophy based primarily on the English poets and a love of nature as illustrated by the essays on 'Natural Beauty' and on 'Religion and Poetry' in this book. Trevelyan may grasp intellectually the principles upon which the personal religion of a man like Cromwell was based, but he is incapable of understanding just what a continuing sense of sin, and of personal worthlessness, except when redeemed by God's grace, really meant to the Protector. If the Essay on Cromwell in this volume is unconvincing, it is because Trevelyan is writing outside his range. The religious enthusiasm of Oliver and of his intimates, and their uninhibited outbursts of weeping at Prayer Meetings are incomprehensible, if not slightly reprehensible, to him and he can but invite his readers to avert their eyes, as he does his own, when he is obliged to witness such untoward behaviour in strong men. Trevelyan's humanism and rationalism, his tolerance and his reluctance to pronounce moral judgment, enable him to bring a balanced and objective outlook to bear on most aspects of human relations in the past, but they disqualify him as a reliable interpreter of any deeply and specifically Christian manifestations in past human behaviour. He cannot possibly 'step inside' a mind like that of Cromwell, for example. More generally, he admits that he has always thought that 'some knowledge of the Bible is necessary

to an understanding of English history. Certainly, the intensive study of that book by many hundreds of thousands of persons otherwise unlearned had more to do with the character, the mind and the imaginative power of our ancestors than we moderns can always understand'. Yet for Trevelyan, the Bible is only literature, although of a high order, whereas it is absolutely certain that the 'intensive private study' to which he refers, was never a mere exercise in literary appreciation. He claims that in spite of his unbelief, he has retained 'an understanding of the beauty and tenderness of religious feelings, at any rate in their Protestant manifestations', a confession which destroys far more confidence in him than it creates.

A third limitation is perhaps less evident. Archdeacon Cunningham had established economic history as an academic study in the Cambridge history school before Trevelyan began his student career there; but fascinated as he was at all times with the poetry and drama of the past, it is not surprising that he should show little genuine interest in the economic aspect of history. It is to the 'social' rather than to the 'economic' problems of any past age that he is drawn, and his approach even to social history is qualified by the fact that he is only really curious as to what opportunities, what stimulants, and what liberties 'for the development of a man's faculties and for his enjoyment of life, were available to folk in the various regions and epochs of the past'.

Apart from the works on Garibaldi, Trevelyan is exclusively a writer of English history. His insistence upon 'artistic unity' in the periods of which he writes, combined with his Whig antipathy towards that particular type of organised religion known as the Roman Church, explain in part why he has found little to inspire him even in the history of his own country, *before* the Age of Wycliffe, and *after* that of Victoria. The twentieth century is proving to be a 'shapeless affair', and the course of events since 1914 have outraged the humanism of such a Victorian Liberal and intellectual as the Master of Trinity. These 'times of troubles', which recur in human history and which an historian like Toynbee takes in his stride, cannot fail to bewilder a rationalist like Trevelyan. Yet it cannot be said that he has no message for a period like

our own, which he believes is witnessing the fall of European civilisation. He would agree with Collingwood, that as a more intelligent handling of human relations is alone likely to avert a complete disaster, what is most urgently needed now is more true historical knowledge. In a presidential address to the British Historical Association in 1947 on 'Bias in History' which is reprinted in this book, Trevelyan discusses what he understands by true historical knowledge. As history is an interpretation of human affairs, the element of opinion (or bias) will constantly intrude. It is the duty of the historian to make it the right kind of opinion, 'broad, all-embracing, philosophic—not a narrow kind that excludes half or more of reality', which tends to be the case in those countries where history is the handmaid of propaganda, or the instrument of government.

The case for more historical knowledge now is argued in the following paragraphs:

'You cannot understand your own country, still less any other, unless you know something of its history. You cannot even understand your own personal opinions, prejudices and emotional reactions, unless you know what is your heritage as an Englishman, and how it has come down to you . . .

In this stage of the world, when many nations are brought into close and vital contact for good and evil, it is essential as never before, that their gross ignorance of one another should be diminished, that they should begin to understand a little of one another's historical experience and resulting mentality. It is a fault of the English to expect the people of other countries to react as they do themselves to political and international situations . . . You cannot understand the French unless you know something of the French Revolution . . . or the Germans without knowing something of the historical relation of the German to his government, and of the German government to the Army, and of the whole nation to military ideals, which became in Bismark's day as potent and as precious to them as Parliamentary institutions (and freedom to do what we like) have become to us English. You cannot understand the Russians, unless you have some conception of the long centuries during which they were hammered into the sense of community and of absolutism by the continual blows of Tartar and Teuton invasion . . .

We are always expecting other countries to "play the game" as we play it . . . but they insist on following their own harsher traditions. The present is always taking us by surprise (as it did in 1914 and in 1938-39) because we do not sufficiently know and consider the past'.

Great artists in other spheres have been known to treat themselves to more than one public farewell, but Trevelyan's autobiography closes with an incident, the account of which suggests somewhat conclusively that the Master of Trinity is not one of these. On 3rd June, 1947, Trinity College celebrated the Fourth Centenary of its Foundation by Henry VIII, and Their Majesties the King and Queen attended the ceremonies. The autobiography concludes with these words:

'When George VI and Queen Elizabeth drove across the Great Court to the Lodge in their open motor car, as Victoria and Prince Albert had driven in their horsed carriage a hundred years before, and when the twelve trumpeters on the roof of the Great Gate proclaimed their entry, it was clear to all the world that England and Trinity had survived the war'.

Here, 'on a perfect summer day', was a royal occasion, pregnant with the continuity of English history, and charged with all the drama and pageantry so dear to its principal figure. The trumpets for King George which sounded in Trinity College on that day saluted the happy ending of a most distinguished career to which that historic episode gave at the same time artistic unity. The rest must be silence.

A. W. REES.

# THE DEMOCRATIC EXPERIMENT IN EUROPE

*(A Lecture delivered by the Rt. Hon. Lord Eustace Percy, P.C., LL.D., at the Inauguration of the University of Natal.)*

I have been moved to lecture on this subject because there is one very odd thing, it seems to me, about University tendencies—at least, in my own country, today. There never was a time when social science played a larger part in University study, and yet there never was a time when the most important—as it seems to me—of all social studies, namely the philosophy and analysis of forms of government, was so much neglected.

Our forefathers, whether they were right or whether they were wrong, usually had some sort of philosophy of government, but we tend to dismiss the whole problem of how law should be made and enforced. We prefer to study some vague entity called 'society', instead of studying the State, the organisation of which makes all the difference between liberty and tyranny.

The trouble about political philosophy is that it is easier to live under a government and to take part in the working of a political society than to define its nature, to classify its principles or detect its results: and that, I think, is where the function of the historian comes in. All governments profess the same intentions, but those professions may have little to do with their real character. The Papacy throughout the ages, has professed to be the 'servant of the servants of God', but we know that Papal government has not always lived up to that ideal. It is the historian who ought to be able to distinguish between good and bad by tracing the results of political beliefs and forms of government. That, at least, is the attempt I am going to make here this afternoon.

When that great historian, the late Herbert Fisher,

wrote his *History of Europe*, he entitled its third book *The Liberal Experiment*. Well, I am calling it 'The Democratic Experiment.' We cover the same period, the 150 years from the French Revolution to our own day, and you will see, I hope, in the course of my remarks, that I am attempting to use the word 'democracy' for the form of government inaugurated by the French Revolution—that is to say, that form of government which claims that sovereignty is vested in the citizens, or in other words, that the authority of governments is derived from the governed.

When, on a late August day in 1789, the States General at Versailles voted in their 'Declaration of the Rights of Man' the statement that 'the principle of all sovereignty resides essentially in the nation: no body and no individual can exercise any authority which does not emanate expressly from the nation', the authors of that Declaration did not formulate a wholly new doctrine, but they created a new kind of State. The doctrine probably goes back to the very origins of human community life. It is certainly as old as Athens and Rome—but in the 1,400 years since Europe adopted the Christian religion it had never before been seriously asserted as a constitutional principle. For Christianity had introduced a new factor into political thought. It had formulated as revealed truth what had previously been no more than a tentative hope, except, perhaps, in the thought of an obscure people in Palestine; the belief in a law-giving God and in a divine purpose worked out in human history. Since then, every political affirmation had involved a corresponding religious affirmation—or denial. The political idea of popular sovereignty had become inseparable from the religious idea of the 'inner light': that God's revelation of His law and purpose is conveyed solely and directly to each individual soul. From that affirmation, Christendom had always shrunk as from a heresy. In the Middle Ages, men like Marsilius, writing of the struggle between the Emperor and the Pope, might indeed refer in political pamphlets to the 'general body of the citizens', as the source of political authority; but the mediaeval mind is best represented in the formula of the great school man Nicolas of Cusa, of the 14th century, and who would say no more than that a govern-



ment's exercise of its authority 'is to be counted as divine when it proceeds from the general consent of its subjects'. And, after the Reformation, the Huguenot formula was very similar: 'Princes are chosen by God, but are established by the people. . . . When a prince is appointed there is made between him and the people a covenant to the effect that obedience is to be rendered to him and so long as he governs well'. That doctrine is a doctrine of a conditional right, no less divine, in the citizen to rebel on just occasion. That formula passed from Europe to Puritan New England and thence was written into the American Declaration of Independence. The formula of the drafters of that Declaration, only some 15 years before the French Revolution, was that, in order to secure to all men their equal right to 'life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness', 'governments are instituted among men deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed'. That formula expresses, as well as any form of words can do, the distinctive 19th century conception, both of constitutional monarchy as practised in England and sporadically imitated in other European countries, and of constitutional republicanism as hammered out by the United States in the successive furnaces of rebellion and civil war.

You will observe that this formula leaves the ultimate source of political authority undefined and its content simply to state the purpose of such authority and to limit its exercise. It is the parent of all those conceptions of government by which we of the British Commonwealth of Nations and of Western Europe and the United States live and move and have our being. It indicates a belief in the lawful transmission of authority in a state from generation to generation, and in a long and continuous process by which law—common law, constitutional law and judge-made law—must be gradually worked out. When things go wrong, the process may have to be interrupted by some form of reformation or revolution, but emergencies must not be allowed to obscure the normal character of good government. We owe to this formula, or to the thoughts which prompted it, the whole idea of what we, in the English-speaking or Dutch-speaking world, think of as 'democracy', but what I prefer to call the 'free parliamentary government', For between that form of government and the type of

democracy created by the French Revolution, there is no connection or likeness at all. Again, it is for the historian to trace the course of that new type and to record the fruits by which we know it.

Let us see, then, what has been the character of this State, based upon the idea of popular sovereignty. Let us see what its results were in France itself, 150 years ago, and let us glance as we go along at some of its subsequent consequences in Europe down to the present day. In the first place, I must begin by a bald and rather startling statement. The dogma of popular sovereignty has proved itself to be wholly incompatible with Christianity.

It is compatible with only one form of religion and that form is definitely not Christian. Of that religion, Rousseau was the prophet. Rousseau not only gave a new twist to the old political doctrine of the 'Social Contract'; he also founded that doctrine, clearly, explicitly and inseparably, on a new formulation of the religious doctrine of the 'inner light'. Any State, he asserted, existed solely by virtue of an act of association executed by all its citizens. Sovereignty in the State, therefore, vested by right in the whole body of citizens who were enabled to exercise it directly at all times by an instinctive knowledge of natural law, implanted by a Supreme Being in the mind of every man, and expressing itself inevitably in the 'general will' of all citizens. 'Has he not,' said Rousseau's Savoyard Vicar of this Supreme Being: 'has he not bestowed on me conscience to love the good, reason to ascertain it, freedom to choose it'? And since this faith in a personal revelation was the only fundamental law, it must be specially promulgated and enforced by the State. Belief in a God and in the rewards and punishments of a future life must be compulsory on all citizens, not as religious dogmas, but as 'sentiments of sociability' without which respect for the sanctity of the Social Contract would be insecure. And so the Declaration of August 27, 1789, was solemnly stated by its authors to be made 'in the presence of the Supreme Being'.

Since this Being is not much more than a personification of the democratic State, he can personify Marx's determinism as easily as Rousseau's law of nature, or Mazzini's idea of God as expressing Himself through

nations. But one thing he cannot be: he cannot be the Christian God. For a compulsory sentiment of sociability must expressly exclude any religion which teaches a divided loyalty, or a dual standard of conduct. To Marx and Rousseau alike, the belief, fundamental to Christianity from its earliest days, in a citizenship in heaven transcending the citizenships of earth must be the most unsocial of all possible sentiments and, rejecting that, they reject the only sure safeguard of religious freedom in any form. The logic of the democratic argument could not in 1789 or 1848, and cannot now, tolerate any Church which is more or other than a domestic chaplain to the State. Hence a century and a half of conflict between the Revolution and the Church, from the Civil Constitution of the Clergy of May, 1790, to the persecutions and anathemas of our own day.

Secondly the doctrine of popular sovereignty has proved itself incompatible not only with religious liberty, but with all forms of corporate franchises and freedoms.

The sovereign people cannot abdicate any of their private functions in favour of a corporation, whether it be private or municipal. Local government in the English sense becomes impossible and so does any system of independent schools or autonomous universities. Hence the tragic failure of the Liberal Catholic movement in France in the years before the Revolution of 1848. The policy of the leaders of that movement, of Montalembert and Lacordaire, was to claim for the Church and for Church schools no secular liberties other than those which could be rightly claimed for all forms of free association between citizens, but they found, to their cost, that the whole idea of free association was incompatible, in all spheres, with the doctrine of popular sovereignty. In fact, a State based upon that doctrine is inevitably a totalitarian State. It is the paradox of revolutionary democracy that, while it usually draws its impulse from a passionate desire to emancipate the individual, the form of government, to which its logic commits it is incompatible with any form of individual freedom. For members of the gregarious human race can enjoy individual freedoms only in association with their fellows. It has been often said that the French Revolution was a movement of individualism, to be distinguished

sharply from the socialist movement of the 19th century; but, in fact, the development from Jacobinism to both Fascism and Bolshevism is direct and unbroken and determined not by what they desire, but by what they believe, not by their aspirations, but by the creed that they profess. Hence the potential power of a University, whose members, whether senior or junior, are pledged to the pursuit of truth as the only thing that matters. Universities stand for the unpalatable truth that it is what men believe that damns or saves them. In all matters, not only in terms of religion, men must be justified by their faith.

And now, a third characteristic of revolutionary democracy: Such a democracy must tend to live, not by reason, but by enthusiasm. A people claiming to be sovereign must not only, in the words of Edmund Burke, 'form itself into a mass which has a true political personality'; it must assert that it is already such a mass. From the outset it must demonstrate that it is united enough to execute an act of association and to govern. Under all other theories of politics, national unity is the product of a national habit of government; under the theory of popular sovereignty, national unity must itself create that habit. A people must rush into union or remain in anarchy. This contrast between the slowly ripening fruit of old experience and what Danton called 'the bronze seething and foaming and purifying itself in the cauldron' was the whole burden of Burke's famous indictment of the Revolution. The strength of that indictment does not lie merely in the fact that a hectic search for unity must entail mob violence and legalised terror; it lies in the more fundamental fact that a people thus summoned to demonstrate their unity as the precondition of their liberty, must regard enthusiasm as the first duty of citizenship. The efficient action of the cauldron depends wholly on its temperature. We miss the point if we laugh off, as mere posturing, the rhetoric of revolutionary orators or the jargon of revolutionary mob of leaders. All this was the deliberate and necessary blast of the furnace. Robespierre's programme of 'Terror sustaining Virtue' was perfectly logical in that context. In a hundred reports to the French Convention in the latter months of 1792, the first months of the Republic, 'the people' meant, quite soberly and by definition, any active body of individuals

in a rage, in contrast to all quiescent and, therefore, presumably luke-warm citizens.

The passion which unites the oppressed against their oppressors is as old as history: but the attempted transfiguration of this natural passion of vengeance into a creative political virtue, to be carefully inculcated and fostered, was the most characteristic feature of the French Revolution and has been, perhaps, its most lasting effect. It came to be a sufficient justification of any body politic that, in Louis Blanc's phrase about the Paris Commune of 1792, it 'breathes heroism'. In the atmosphere of revolutionary propaganda, as Guizot wrote in his memoirs, 'insult becomes a routine and fury a habit'. Sixty years after the first revolution, watching the mobs of Paris invading the National Assembly of 1848, de Tocqueville remarked that they seemed, without serious intent, to be play-acting a fury which they had learnt to regard as revolutionary good form. Later, Renan, a scholar almost of our own day, could soberly define a 'nation' as a union formed by any group of people 'in the heart of their heart'. This tradition of enthusiasm was to reappear in the Socialist language of 'comradeship', and was to be reincarnated in every European movement of liberation, from Mazzini's Young Italy of 1831 to the Fascist and Communist Youth of the 1930's. And today the same tradition of enthusiasm echoes in the eulogies we sometimes hear of the 'democratic fervour' exhibited by the adherents of revolutionary governments in Eastern Europe.

We know what that 'democratic fervour' means. We recognise too well the routine of insult and the habit of fury in a good number of political utterances of the present day. The only thing that has changed in the last 150 years is the technique of producing this kind of enthusiasm. It has changed in two ways—one obvious, and one much more subtle and dangerous.

Obviously it has changed by the substitution of organised government publicity for the tumult and shouting of mob leaders. The gradations of this change can be traced—it is very amusing to trace them—through the bulletins of Napoleon I and the speeches of Napoleon III to the broadcasting of Goebbels and the Kremlin. But, much more dangerously, it has changed by the enlistment of the

processes of universal public education in the task of unifying and activating the 'general will' of the sovereign people. If there is a 'general will', the revolutionary State must make very sure it exercises a monopoly of education and that that monopoly is consciously directed to producing the right kind of citizen with the right kind of will and opinion. Hence, the invariable characteristic of revolutionary democracy is its attempt to establish a complete monopoly of education.

You can trace that process from the Napoleonic 'University' right down down to the more extremist policies of our own day in every country, the unification of all schools into what the French call the *ecole unique* and the Germans the *Einheitschule*. This whole idea was summed up in the Hitlerian phrase of *Gleichschaltung*. Indeed, a monopoly of education, directed to the moulding of the 'general will' of the sovereign people, is a peculiar German addition to the original French doctrine of popular sovereignty, and one German in particular may be conveniently taken as the prophet of what is really a new mysticism or religion of education; the ex-Jacobin, Fichte Grum, whose *Address to the German Nation* in 1810, it may be useful to quote. To him the nation is the incarnation of all human hopes of immortality; patriotism, therefore, is 'not the spirit of a calm civic love of the constitution and the laws, but the devouring flame of that higher love of one's native country which sees the nation as the garment of the Eternal'. To kindle that flame is the sole function of the State: 'The State is but the means to the higher end of an eternal education: the progressive and symmetrical development of the purity of human nature in this nation'. That is *Gleichschaltung* 150 years before the word was invented. And again, in a phrase much more startling, which, to a Christian, has all the implications of blasphemy: 'Progress is the perfect education by which the nation is made Man'.

I pass to a fourth characteristic of revolutionary democracy: the doctrine of popular sovereignty is incompatible with the idea of settled law.

In the logic of popular sovereignty it stands to reason that patriotism can be bounded by no law. Law is the command of a sovereign; but there has never been any

lawful sovereign save the people, and until a people has been fused into unity, it cannot exercise its sovereignty. Even when fusion has been achieved, a sovereign people must not allow its own decrees of yesterday to limit its freedom to meet the needs of today. Old fixed law was a usurpation; new fixed law would be an abdication. Thus, the incompatibility of unmixed democracy with settled law, which Aristotle detected as its chief vice, has become, in the eyes of the preachers of the doctrine of popular sovereignty, its fundamental virtue. In the language of the Revolution, the people must indeed love justice, but justice itself can be only an instinctive emotion. At the trial of King Louis XVI in December, 1792, Robespierre, the lawyer, told the convention: 'You are not judges; you are and can be only statesmen', and in that particular constitutional connection he was quite right. But in the logic of popular sovereignty that advice must be applied to the judgement of all causes even remotely affecting public policy: hence the methods of 'justice' with which we have become too familiar in Europe in recent years.

The 'Republic One and Indivisible', as proclaimed in September, 1792, could tolerate no distinction between executive and judicial functions, and it could hardly have any use at all for a legislature. Moreover, an elected legislature is the worst possible mirror of the general will of a sovereign people, because it inevitably represents contradictory schools of thought and sectional interests, and its debates must seem a constant mockery of the national unity which it claims to embody. Hence, the most clearly marked feature of the French Revolution: the unpopularity and evanescence of successive legislative bodies. Least of all could the Republic find use for a fixed constitution. In the winter of 1789-90 the National Assembly became increasingly unpopular as soon as it began seriously to act as a constituent assembly; in 1794-5 the Convention, addressing itself to the same task, trembled constantly on the verge of dissolution.

In particular, a state based upon the theory of popular sovereignty faces an almost impossible task in trying to create any kind of efficient executive. A state is governed by its executive; the executive may be controlled by the legislature, but men are well or ill governed according to

the methods by which the executive enforces law and order.

At first, the French revolutionary democracy, like all its successors, sought to create an executive by creating a caucus, the directorate of a single party formed to embody the enthusiasm of the citizens and to express the popular will which is the manifestation of that enthusiasm. The club type of party which characterised the French Revolution was only a rudimentary form of the single party of the modern totalitarian State, but it was its parent and direct progenitor. Yet, of course, the effort to turn a caucus into an executive government is hopeless. You can trace the same failure in the early days of the Hitler revolution, when the party had, to some extent, to be crushed before the Hitler dictatorship could be introduced. The revolutionary democratic state can attain efficiency only by becoming a dictatorship state. The only possible expression of the united 'general will' of a sovereign people is the single will of a single man.

That was Napoleon's great contribution to the development of the doctrine of popular sovereignty. He, in many ways, perpetuated the kind of constitution evolved by the Revolution itself; but he added to it the invention of the plebiscite and the plebiscitory dictatorship. There is one way of reconciling popular sovereignty with a strong executive which has a deadly logic in it. Let the sovereign people embody their will to action, not in a system of constitutional law, but in one man, not once for all, but periodically as that man's purposes develop and as he re-submits them afresh to the people's judgment. We can trace this kind of dictatorship directly down to our own day. Napoleon I got his mandate renewed on four distinct occasions, Napoleon III on three and Hitler whenever it suited him.

And now to sum up. I have tried, in this lecture, to sketch some at least of the typical characteristics of a political creed and of the form of government towards which that creed inevitably impels its votaries. The creed that the people is sovereign is lightly professed today by millions who regard with horror the form of government produced by that creed and who do not realise the connection between the two.



Indeed we are all open in some measure to this accusation. We are all in the habit of calling our system of constitutional parliamentary government 'democracy', and thinking that there is no difference between it and the kind of government which has grown in Europe out of republican forms into the form of a barbarous dictatorship. We use the word 'democracy' equally for the two things until we forget that, with all our traditions, we have to deal today with a form of democracy which is a direct contradiction of those traditions and a direct threat to the survival of all the liberties to which we have grown so accustomed that we take them for granted. We are all tarred with this brush. For there is so much in the creed of popular sovereignty, and even in its practice which seems to a generous mind more admirable than the confusions and debates of parliamentary government under any form of 'mixed' constitution. The demand for simple and effective administration, directed to the reform of social evils, seems a just demand in the face of the thousand vested interests, public and private, which grow and multiply in any society which is based upon the principles of individual liberty and freedom of association. Still more, what I have described as the irrepressible conflict between pure democracy and the Christian faith is hardly ever a clear issue. Of all the tragedies of European history, the greatest has surely been the long process by which the Christian Church came so to twist its original principle of otherworldliness as to substitute for the dualism between an earthly and a heavenly citizenship the conflict between two earthly centres of allegiance, secular and ecclesiastical. It is against that distortion of Christian truth, embodied in the Gallican Catholic Church of 18th century France and the ultramontane Roman Catholic Church of the mid-nineteenth century, that the democratic movement in Europe has been, above all, a revolt, and the same distortion obscures the same issue today. Knowing this, most of us have sought the same kind of reconciliation between Christianity and revolutionary democracy as was preached by an Italian Cardinal in a Christmas sermon in 1797, when the French armies had overrun North and Central Italy: 'The democratic rule now introduced among us is not opposed to the Gospel; it demands, on the contrary, the lofty virtues that are only to

be attained in the school of Jesus Christ'. But that preacher was to become Pope Pius VII, and was to test the possibilities of such a reconciliation, first in his Concordat with Napoleon, and then in years of persecution and imprisonment. Charity can reconcile divergences of practice, but it cannot reconcile opposing creeds. Democratic politics, to the extent that they are democratic in the revolutionary sense, are and must be total politics, just as war waged by such democracies must be total war.

If I speak thus to a University audience it is certainly from no desire to tempt my University colleagues to take sides in the party politics of the day. If there is one thing worse than a political Church, it is a political University. After all, we of the University communities, whether we be 'dons' or students, are not, as such, I think, good judges of statecraft. But we are, or should be, good judges of historical fact and philosophical truth. Still less have I emphasised the conflict between the tendencies of pure democracy and the principles of the Christian faith from any desire to enlist the sanctions of religion in a political contest. To do that would be to intensify once again those distortions of Christian truth which have so constantly in history confused the relations of Church and State to the profit of revolutionaries. God must be worshipped for His own sake, not as a convenient political ally.

I am afraid that our modern Universities have not been fulfilling that function. I think that the light-headed liberalism of Oxford in my day, 40-odd years ago, amiable though it was, fringed dangerously upon an attitude of mind, the later developments of which in Europe have earned the terrible name of 'la trahison des clercs'. We, at Oxford, were taught a proper contempt for our great-grandfathers, to whom 'Democracy' was a word of ill-omen and 'The Revolution' a nightmare of evil. But our great-grandfathers, if less amiable than we as politicians, were, after all, more nearly right as philosophers.

Government is not an affair of sentiments or attitudes, but of truth and falsehood. The history of political institutions is not one of gradual evolution; but one of catastrophe. We, who have inherited the free parliamentary traditions of England and the Netherlands, have a deposit, as it were, of verified truth which can be rationalised into

a coherent alternative to the crude simplicities of democracy and dictatorships. But we have neglected that task of rationalisation. We have been too content to live our social life by instinct and to misdescribe the principles, by which in fact we live, in the language of their very opposites. If the Universities of the Western World have one duty more urgent than another, it is, I believe, to restore political philosophy and jurisprudence to their old place at the centre of a liberal education.

## DRAMA IN THE UNIVERSITY

Drama is a special problem in English studies for the obvious reason that plays are meant to be played, not read, and students are intended to study, not act. The acting of plays involves many things that are clearly not the study of literature, such as voice production, miming, stage design, even dressmaking.

In English universities the departments ignore this problem because in practice the theatres supplement the work of the universities. This is a solution of a kind but I think it has resulted in an artificial separation of the literary value of a play from its theatrical value. Students think of a play as a textbook and a play on the stage as two different forms of art. People speak of a play as "good theatre" and as "good literature" as though they were two different things.

Here in South Africa where there is almost no professional theatre we are less likely to confuse plays seen with plays read. Our danger, perhaps, is to assume that plays exist only in books. It is in an effort to overcome this difficulty that some universities have established departments of drama, in others staff and students struggle through productions of their own, of varying merit. These are usually, but not invariably, produced in the departments of English and the unfortunate members of the staff find themselves in the triple rôle of lecturers in drama, producers of plays and moderators of dramatic criticism—an ambitious life for an essentially modest and retiring race.

The problem of drama in the university is largely a practical one, but before I discuss it I should like to talk about the nature of drama itself, as I think that this illuminates our problems, if it does not solve them.

Drama differs from other forms of literature in that in a play the ideas of the author, his particular understanding of experience, is conveyed through direct action.

It is not enough to say that a play is concerned with the element of conflict in life; most literature is concerned with conflict, but a play is the actual *moment* of clash and the degree to which thought and feeling are transmuted into action is the degree to which the drama is successful. For purposes of criticism we may discuss theme, plot, characterisation, suspense etc., but this is for convenience, and can be misleading. These things are inseparable. Together they are the action. They make a chemical, not a physical compound. If the meaning of a play, and by meaning I intend the author's individual perception of some aspect of experience which will illuminate that experience for us, if the meaning is contained in an odd speech here and there, if it does not motivate every speech, every movement, every event, then there is something wrong with the play. A play then is this meaning (call it theme, significance, anything you like—for the purposes of this talk I shall call it meaning) materialised in action (external expression in speech and movement) which makes a direct assault upon the eye and the ear. It is meant to be seen and heard, not read.

It is perhaps because of the essential nature of drama that it is at once easy and difficult to teach. It is difficult because not being trained actors and producers, and being in a class room and not on a stage, we are automatically deprived of half the equipment we need, and it is easy to teach because of the natural human love of symbolising in action, partially apprehended conflicts of experience. It is because the Ancient Greek plays externalised certain inevitable situations in human relationships and obscure feelings about them that *Oedipus* is a household word in a psychology-conscious generation. It is perhaps because the story of *Deirdre of the Sorrows* demonstrates so clearly the choice between a passionate, exalted but brief life and a secure sane and long life, that the writers of the Celtic revival turned again and again to this story and that every adolescent makes an immediate response to it. But there is no need to elaborate the reasons why students like drama. We all acknowledge in our teaching that young people can respond more easily to ideas and values perceived in terms of action than to a more abstract medium. This is why we often begin teaching poetry to children in its most dramatic

form, the ballad. It is not only the narrative which attracts children in a ballad, or even a fairy story; if it were they would be content to hear it only once. I think it is chiefly the dramatic quality, the use of dialogue (Who's been eating my porridge?), the action (I hacked him in pieces sma'), and the vivid scenic quality (the sails were o' the taffetic, the masts o' beaten gold!).

The teaching of drama is then not only valuable because much of the greatest poetry in English is contained in the plays but because, in spite of the difficulties, it is a ready means of unlocking the imagination. There is, of course, no need to make a case for the inclusion of drama in the curriculum, it is already there, but if we agree that the willing response to it is due to the essential nature of drama itself, this expressing of the meaning through action which makes a direct assault upon the senses, then it follows that in the lecture room we will come closest to the meaning when we can stimulate the imagination to supply sound and vision.

Moreover, if a play is thought and feeling understood through action, then there can be no essential difference between a so-called academic or literary approach to a play and a so-called practical or dramatic approach to a play. The business of the person who guides the reading of a play is to realise as vividly as possible the full meaning of the play. He cannot do this without seeing in the imagination the action of the play. The task of the producer of a play is to organise the action, this he cannot do without understanding the meaning of which the action is the expression. If I may parody T. S. Eliot: "Action is meaning and meaning is action". If you want the right action, you must have the right meaning. Because the essence of drama is meaning in action then a play is dramatic to the extent that its meaning has been understood and conveyed, and is undramatic when the meaning is obscured.

Everyone would agree that acting and producing, like teaching, are interpretive arts. The test of good acting is that you should not be aware that it is acting but should suspend disbelief. The test of good production is that you should not be aware of production, but should be

wholly absorbed in meaning. I imagine that the test of the good conducting of an orchestra is *not* that you should recognise the virtuosity of the players but that you should be most completely aware of the music. If the difficulty of the lecturer is to establish this primary contact between reader and play, the difficulty of the producer is to prevent interference with it. Interference of any sort obscures meaning. This interference, to be practical, can be caused by many things, by inadequate acting, by inefficient stage managing, the wrong clothes, the wrong lights, but it can also be caused by things which are good in themselves but destructive in their effect such as too-spectacular setting or lighting which distracts attention from or dwarfs the performers. Yeats, in his advice to the Abbey Theatre, said, "Just as it is necessary to simplify gesture that it may accompany speech without being its rival, it is necessary to simplify both the form and colour of scenery and costume."

Interference between the audience and the play, if it is not due to inefficient but to misdirected production, can only be prevented if the aim of the producer is concentrated upon turning the total meaning into action. In the same way, there can be interference between the play and the student in a classroom. It can be created if the teacher is not really interested in the play as a whole but uses it for some issue in which he is interested, such as the private life of the author, his psychological state, the conditions of language at the time, or the state of morals. These things, like lighting and setting on the stage, should help the meaning but if they are pursued as ends in themselves they drop like a curtain between the student and play, just as on the stage, setting pursued as an end in itself, as it was by Gordon Craig, cuts off the audience from a play.

I think that it is the function of the university, both in teaching plays and in all dramatic activity to demonstrate that the meaning and the action of a play are one. I say that it is the function of the university because it is in the university that the meaning of plays—or if you prefer it, their value as literature—is important. To understand as fully as possible the meaning of a play means in the first place to group the general issues which are involved. For example,

in *King Lear*, we all know that we have a conflict between good and evil conceived with what Granville Baker calls "megalithic grandeur", that the savage and lustful elements of man's nature assault and batter natural piety and innocence. But this is only the beginning of understanding. That the task of producing or acting in a play forces the imagination to work with greater accuracy and vividness, and assists in bringing out the meaning of a play, is the claim of people who advocate the production of plays in the university. I am not going to support this point of view unconditionally, but I do want to state its case more fully. The degree to which we should try to act plays in the university is a practical problem with which we are all faced. It is true that as soon as you begin to produce or to act you are forced to a more concentrated study of meaning, because as people move about either the movement must arise from the words and emphasise the meaning or the movement is merely distracting, is a kind of interference. So you cannot move at all until you have begun to understand the words. An actor does not make certain movements because a producer thinks that a certain grouping looks decorative. He moves because the feeling of the lines impels him to move. I should like to illustrate this, if I may, from my own experience. I apologise for doing this. Some years ago I played Regan in *King Lear*. When the movement of the play was being worked out, there was some discussion as to how the sisters should behave when they are received in audience by the king at the beginning of the play. It was discussed whether both Goneril and Regan should make similar movements, since both represent evil as opposed to the virtue of Cordelia. That Cordelia should stand and walk and look differently from her sisters was, of course, obvious. The answer to this practical problem of movement lay in the text. If you compare the speeches of the two sisters, Goneril speaks first and gives details of the measure of her love saying that Lear is:

*'Dearer than eyesight, space and liberty,*

*Beyond what can be valued, rich and rare,*

*No less than life, with grace, health, beauty, honour'.*

Regan is not nearly as specific. She is clearly imitating her sister and trying to do better. She says:



*'I am made of that selfsame metal as my sister  
And prize me at her worth. In my true heart  
I find she names my very deed of love:  
Only she comes too short, that I profess  
Myself an enemy to all other joys  
Which the most precious square of sense possesses  
And I find I am alone felicitate  
In your dear Highness love'.*

Clearly, if Goneril curtsseys low, Regan will curtsy six inches lower.

This may seem a very slight thing but what is true of this detail is true of the whole individual and group movement of a play. This dependence of movement and gesture upon meaning is true also of speech. Words which are spoken in a play, or for that matter in real life, are only a small part of the thought. They arise in fact not only from thought but from the vast underground of experience. If one man says of another: "I don't like him", the range of meaning of these words is unlimited. It may be spoken of someone just met and hardly noticed. "I don't like him." It may be spoken to cover a long gnawing hate. "I don't like him." In a play the actor cannot say words significantly until he has expanded the thought and not only the thought, but attempted to explore the emotional background, until, in fact, he not only understands why the words were said but feels in himself that no other words could have been said, by that person at that time. Then they will "sit trippingly on the tongue". I have always found this process a slow one.

I received confirmation of this point of view from the recent production in Johannesburg of *Romeo and Juliet*. The producer had less than one month in which to produce this play with amateurs. The robust and vigorous aspects of the play were more successfully conveyed than the grief and tragedy. More than that, Juliet said some lines with so much naturalness and conviction that they had an almost startling validity. They caused a shock of recognition. By this I mean that inner awareness of essential verity, not previously foreseeable, but now triumphantly acknowledged, which is part of aesthetic experience. But other lines

sounded mechanical and in some there was only the superficial meaning. For example, in the scene between Juliet and the nurse, where the nurse advises Juliet to give up Romeo and marry Paris, I was particularly disappointed. At this point, the nurse, hitherto a kindly if coarse-grained woman, carries lack of sensibility to a point at which it becomes not merely a lack of fine or delicate feeling but a positive evil. Here, crudeness of understanding becomes, as it always must, brutality. When she is gone, Juliet refers to her as "ancient damnation". Those words are an angry repudiation of the values which the nurse now represents, but in this production I felt only the distress of Juliet. If the full implication of the words is felt by the audience, then Juliet is isolated, not merely by circumstances, which would be merely melodramatic, but by her character and values, which is tragic. Perhaps this particular Juliet, given longer, would have achieved this.

I remember in the case of Regan that it was as though the meaning of the words gradually grew below the level of consciousness and points would suddenly emerge in my mind. It was long after I had been familiar with the words of Regan that any but the superficial differences between her and Goneril occurred to me. For example, in the first scene she says to Goneril and Lear: "Tis the infirmity of his age", and she later says to Lear, "Sir, you are old", and "I pray you, Sir, being weak, seem so". This harping on the age and infirmity of Lear comes always from Regan, never from Goneril. It clearly underlines Cordelia's later words:

*'these white flakes did challenge pity of them  
Was this a face to be oppos'd against the jarring winds?'*

I could not say these lines of Regan's with conviction until I realised that Regan has an almost physical revulsion from age and weakness, qualities which a woman would normally protect, while on the other hand, with a distorted femininity, she worships with abasement youth and strength. Her lust for Edmund is not because, like Goneril, an ambitious woman would dominate a powerful man (Goneril married Albany), but because she would be dominated by a powerful man (she married Cornwall). Her passion is always more physical, her jealousy more vivid:

*'I am doubtful that you have been conjunct  
'And bosom'd with her as far as we call hers'*

—words which Goneril would never use. She is also humiliated and desperate before Edmund:

*'Dear my lord, be not familiar with her'.*

This gives Regan enough of the quality of a woman to make her ten times more dreadful than if she were altogether a monster. The link between ordinary humanity and the distilled evil of the play is necessary to the horror and to the tragedy, so that the detailed understanding of every word is not only necessary for the individual acting but for the total pattern of the play.

Two points arise from what I have said about *King Lear*, which I shall discuss later when I come to the practical problems of drama in the university. One is that at any rate, to me personally, understanding comes very slowly, and the second is that I obviously know this play much better for having acted in it. In connection with this, I do believe that if movement and gesture arise directly out of the words, they themselves also help the actor to realise the fuller meaning. If a man shakes his fist because he is angry the actual movement will release in him more anger.

It is not only individual movement and speech which depend immediately upon meaning, but all the other aspects of production such as large-scale movements, grouping, changes in pace, building up of climaxes, etc. It is not possible for one person to control the interpretation of a play and another the production. I mean that it is not possible for a professional producer to polish up the work of lecturers or professors. I am not saying that there cannot be collaboration; but interpretation is revealed in every practical detail.

But if an understanding of the meaning is necessary to the production of a play, it obviously does not follow that having this understanding will enable you to produce it. I wish it did. In the first place, there are obviously certain practical aspects of production which people learn with experience, as for example that the natural movements of actors have to be disciplined, until a single effective gesture remains, that the eye needs variety if it is not to be satiated, and that therefore certain grouping must neither be repeated

Althuy vander geymy vuy may  
Oerf ondy was gey sijn liefst sergysse  
De moymen stal hy niet vuy may  
sijn lief vuy vande dan vuy yve  
Vuy nez hy rust  
for ruste lief  
te geyten al viden in omethen  
mies hontet for vuy dery manne may  
Althaz als hy slapey roupt niet my  
Din dier hy ondy hy doct my sione  
en hy niet wist dat durt my vuy  
als vuy vuy may gey huy huy  
hy vuy slydich  
al vuy huy huy  
vuy vuy sion for gey vuy vuy  
mies hontet for vuy dery manne may  
Din lief hy en vuy althuy dery may  
hy vuy slapt hy vuy ondy vuy  
als vuy vuy vuy vuy vuy  
vuy vuy vuy vuy vuy vuy vuy  
vuy vuy huy huy  
dery ondy vuy  
hy vuy vuy vuy vuy vuy  
mies hontet for vuy dery manne may

Reproductie van het (ernstig beschadigde) handschrift van het „Caermen”.

Reproduction of the (seriously damaged) manuscript of the “Caermen”.

Wander ghy myn sust ghy myn besten myn  
ghy dat myn chartering myn ghy dat  
dus dit myn ghy myn besten  
maer dat is myn myn ghy dat  
myn myn myn myn myn  
dat myn ghy myn  
die ghy myn ghy myn  
myn ghy dat myn myn

flor of myn myn dat myn myn  
myn myn myn myn myn  
alloy myn myn myn myn  
myn myn myn myn myn  
myn myn myn myn myn  
myn myn myn myn myn  
myn myn myn myn myn  
myn myn myn myn myn

Wander myn myn

Ghy ghy myn myn myn myn  
myn myn myn myn myn  
ghy myn myn myn myn  
myn myn myn myn myn  
myn myn myn myn myn  
myn myn myn myn myn  
myn myn myn myn myn  
myn myn myn myn myn  
myn myn myn myn myn

Reproductie van het (ernstig beschadigde) handschrift van het „Caermen”.  
Reproduction of the (seriously damaged) manuscript of the “Caermen”.

nor held too long, except for deliberate comic effect, but the real difficulty lies in the fact that controlling the effect of words on the ear is quite a different matter from discussing the meaning of words seen on a printed page. An actor can understand meaning perfectly and still be unable to control emphasis or timing so as to convey that meaning. We should realise with humility the fact that when we have full understanding of a play we are only at the beginning. I think, however, that given natural aptitude this kind of professional knowledge is more easily learnt than an understanding of poetry—without which all the technical skill in the world is merely a menace.

But there is a second reason, quite apart from technical skill, why understanding the meaning of a play, both in general and in detail, will not of itself enable you to produce it. A play is a whole thing—it is not the sum of its parts. That is why cutting a play is so difficult and dangerous. A play is like a poem in that it has rhythm, and although we can attempt to analyse rhythm we can't do it completely. By rhythm in a play I mean the concentration and relaxation of energy, the gathering and dissipation of excitement. It is possible to perceive this when you read a play without being able to translate successfully into speech and movement this delicate and complicated thing. I thought of the recent film of *Hamlet*, that thrilled as I was by most of it, the editing of the play had damaged this rhythm.

Now to make the whole thing more complicated there are people who have what we call a "sense of theatre" that is an instinct for knowing what will make an audience sit up and take notice. With this kind of ability, it is possible to present a play which has continued excitement and suspense at a certain level. Of course, this excitement and suspense will never be as great, nor will it be of the same kind as if the meaning of the play were understood, but just as an actor could speak the lines of one of Hamlet's soliloquies showing complete ignorance of the meaning but force you by virtuosity to listen, even if you listened in complete exasperation, so it is possible for the attention of the audience to be held by spurious dramatic excitement, although it will neither understand articulately what the

play is about nor will it, which is more important, have that profounder experience, which need not be completely understood, or understood at all, the experience of rich living, of touching life itself, the sense of joy, which an audience should have. For this reason amateur productions which only dimly realise the meaning and lack technical skill may be bad enough, but professional productions which ignore meaning and have technical skill are positively dangerous, because they persuade audiences that for us great plays have no immediate significance.

I should like to illustrate the difference in effect on the audience between a production in which meaning has been thoroughly grasped and one in which it has been only partially understood, from four productions of T. S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*, which I happen to have seen. After three of these performances, two in England and one done here by the students of R.U.C., with far more general competence than most student productions, in fact with very great competence, the reactions of the audiences were very similar. Everybody was suitably impressed. The people who did not know the play had very little idea that it might have an immediate meaning for them and some were inclined to think that the four knights talking to the audience didn't fit in with the rest of the play. For the people who knew the play, the universal significance came over, but it was a common comment that in spite of himself St. Thomas had given in to the fourth tempter, or that, at any rate, Eliot had not made it clear whether he had or not. Now these points are crucial because it is upon Thomas's conquest of himself that the purpose and meaning of the play depends, and it is upon its application to our world that much of its value depends. The gist of the play, if I may remind you of it, because I am not speaking on Eliot, is that ordinary people, occupied with their petty and personal lives, fail to be aware of their share of responsibility for the whole world, and are made aware that they are at once the agents as well as the victims of their fate (suffering is action and action is suffering), and brought back to communion with God (or if you prefer it stated in non-religious terms, to an awareness of values other than material, everyday ones) by St. Thomas because he himself conquers the tempters and then submits willingly to the purpose of God

that he should by martyrdom reaffirm spiritual values and so save the people.

The failure of part of the audience to realise how directly the play applied to them is due, I suggest, to treating the chorus, which represents ordinary people, as commentary, like in a Greek play, rather than as a protagonist with a direct share in the action. The women begin by making clear the limitations of their lives "living and partly living". They "do not wish anything to happen", but they are aware of being drawn in to events which they can neither understand nor control. Half-way through the play they reach a degree of consciousness of the cause of their despair when they say to Thomas: "God is leaving us". After Thomas' victory and death they praise God and acknowledge their responsibility.

*'We acknowledge our trespass, our weakness, our fault,  
we acknowledge  
That the sin of the world is upon our heads, that the  
blood of the martyrs and the agony of the saints  
Is upon our heads'.*

This chorus is clearly part of the action and the development of thought and feeling must be reflected in movement. It is not enough to have appropriate gestures for each individual phrase. In the one production I have seen which really illuminated the meaning, the movements of the chorus were rather confined and cramped at the beginning, becoming freer and more uplifted at the end. If movements are of the same kind all through the play what the mind perceives is not helped by what the eye sees. Another reason for the failure of the members of the audience to identify themselves sufficiently with the chorus was due to taking all the lines very solemnly, because they happen to be in verse. There are odd lines here and there which are merely meant to emphasise the everyday humanity of the women of Canterbury. At one point, for example, the chorus say

*'We have had laughter and gossip,  
Several girls have disappeared  
Unaccountably'.*

The next words are *'and some not able to'*. This is clearly



the comment of some down to earth peasant woman. For the whole chorus to chant it out solemnly with uplifted arms is to waste an opportunity of establishing contact on another level. Also to keep this play on a level of perpetual remoteness makes the entrance of the knights seem in too different a key.

The failure to convince the audience that Thomas has conquered the fourth tempter is much more serious because it invalidates the whole play. I think it is due to building the climax in the wrong place. The fourth tempter leaves Thomas in despair. He says, *'Is there no way in my soul's sickness does not lead to damnation in pride'*. It is the despair which we all feel when psychologists tell us that everything we do is a different form of selfishness, that we are only the puppets of our environment. The tempter then repeats Thomas' earlier speech about the individual's part in the pattern of life, leaving out the significant phrase *'for the pattern is the action and the suffering'*. The priests urge Thomas to save himself. At this lowest ebb the chorus speaks, saying *'God is leaving us'*—and *'save yourself that we may be saved'*. Thomas then says *'Now is the way clear, now is the meaning plain. Temptation shall not come in this way again'*. Nothing has happened except that Thomas has responded to the despair of the people (someone said like the Ancient Mariner seeing the watersnakes) and understood that he must die not to win eternal glory but to save the people. Death is now inevitable. He puts it most explicitly in the sermon which follows: *'A martyrdom is always the design of God, for His love of men, to warn them and to lead them, to bring them back to his ways. It is never the design of man'*.

This is the turning point of the play and if the meaning is to be made clear it must be built up by the movement of the chorus, by timing, by the emphasis which Thomas gives to his words. Above all, the actual murder which follows must be played quietly, almost ritualistically. Thomas must give the order to unbar the door with resignation and not with urgency. In the R.U.C. production the actual murder was done symbolically, without clashing of swords or violence, which was good. But this was spoiled by the producer's yielding to the temptation of giving the knights a very effective entry. He brought them in from the back

of the auditorium, a device which was also used in at least one of the London productions. This is effective from the point of view of startling the audience but apart from the emphasis which this scene then acquires at the expense of the real climax, Thomas, in order to be heard above the din, has to command the priests to unbar the door, not resignedly, because he has realised that spiritual things cannot be defended by physical force, but at the top of his voice, so that he sounds in a great hurry to be a martyr. This inevitably leaves everybody with the impression that St. Thomas has, after all, succumbed to the fourth tempter. Thomas, of course, can no more allow himself to be protected by an oaken door than Mahatma Gandhi could have walked about with a bodyguard of American gangsters, but '*unbar the door*' must be said with sorrowful acceptance and submission, perhaps with a trace of holy anger. In fact the local dramatic opportunities of this scene must not be allowed to destroy the pattern of the play.

I have gone into this play in some detail because it shows most clearly how much the realisation in the audience of the meaning of the play depends upon details of production, and because I am convinced that when the meaning is concentrated on in production the play is actually much more exciting to watch. The one performance I saw which put across the meaning was by far the most dramatic.

I believe that the universities have in the first place the positive duty of finding some way of presenting plays in which the meaning has become the action and secondly the more negative task of developing in students, and so in audiences, a critical sense of plays which will enable them to reject spurious dramatic excitement in the same way as they are taught to reject the visceral appeal of the third-rate novel. An audience which has understanding will be bored and not excited by production, however ingenious, which fails to demonstrate the real excitement, the real conflict, of a play. The more a student in class understands the way drama works the better a critic he will be. It is particularly necessary to tackle the question of criticism because there is very little good dramatic criticism in this country. Students generally rush headlong from praising everything to blaming everything, which is natural enough, since only the security of real knowledge and

judgment can enable anyone to give the maximum response to what it worth while, as a critic must, and reject without hesitation what is not. To praise or blame is easy, to continually sift and weigh is not. For this reason I think we should seize every opportunity to discuss and criticise in class, actual performances, including films of plays, such as Hamlet, and films of books.

Since we set out to show students that a play is meaning in action, then when we teach plays we have in some way to create the action in the imagination of the students. This seems to me a most difficult thing to do. I am sure of some things, that a small piece at least of the actual text of a play must be read aloud and examined in detail—this may light up the rest—and that we have to fight for a response to the play as a whole. It is only too easy to take refuge in information about sources or discussion of character, especially discussion of character, and lose sight of the response, the joyful and excited response which the students should make to the play as a whole.

In universities where there is a department of drama there is always material on which to draw for discussion and criticism. It is obviously easier for students to see a play in action in the imagination if they have seen it in action on the stage. For universities where there is no department of drama it is interesting to see that the Oxford Commission on Drama of 1945 advocated the creation of a repertory company, freed from the needs of serving the box office, existing only to tour the universities with classical plays. If this was felt to be a need for the students of Oxford, how much more is it a need of the students of South African universities? I think this an excellent plan and by no means impracticable, but as it does not exist at the moment and as there is almost no professional theatre in this country we have to fall back upon doing the plays ourselves. Some people object to this on the grounds that we do more harm than good by doing plays badly. I think there is something in this, but at the worst our efforts, if we are modest about them, provide us with the material for criticism, which we badly need; and if we set out to make clear the meaning of a play simply and sincerely our production should be of some help, especially to the students who actually take part in them.

This is emphatically the opinion of fifty third-year students I questioned at the University of the Witwatersrand. That even this is a debateable point is made by the Oxford Commission who report Professor Granville Barker as being of the opinion that dramatic activities on the part of students so far from increasing their understanding of a particular play, tended to diminish it. He made the point that the student who is required to act in a play immediately becomes engaged in the "method of presenting his particular part and ceases to let his mind turn on the significance of the play as a whole". This is worth thinking about. I think much depends upon the way a production is handled, how much everyone is made to discuss and follow what everyone else is doing and I think also that the preoccupation with acting which Granville Barker notices may have been a temporary condition, due to the excitement of performing, and that later the residue of the experience may have been that the student knew much more about that play than plays that he had only read. I tried to test this out in my own experience because I plead guilty to a slightly demented condition while a production is actually forward. The first play I took part in at the University was *The Importance of Being Earnest*. I can no longer remember which part I played. This lapse of memory of course demonstrates nothing except that I probably played the part so badly that it has dropped like a stone into my subconscious.

Whether we agree that amateur productions within the university or the production of students by a first-class professional producer from outside are good things or not, we have not time to treat many plays in this way. The acted play-reading takes up much less time and if it follows the plan of an ordinary production, beginning with detailed discussion of the interpretation of the play as a whole and of individual parts, then it should be valuable at least to those who take part. I think that comedy, especially Shakespearean and Restoration comedy, which it is perhaps difficult for students to take in alone with their books, is often brought to life by an acted play-reading in spite of the obvious disadvantages of holding books in the middle of a comic action. I think this is because in comedy the important thing is the mood of a scene and once that is caught the meaning of particular speeches is easy. It is the mood which people unfamiliar with

a period find it hard to get for themselves. If a few words are heard in the right tone a whole scene can suddenly fall into focus. But I am less happy about the acted reading of tragedy, because as I pointed out earlier in connection with my own experience as Regan, I believe that the full meaning of the words comes very slowly. If you read a play like *Dr. Faustus* aloud around a table a good reader can quietly suggest the kind of feeling which Faustus has and it does not matter if there is not enough feeling for a performance because the conditions are different. But put a reader on to a stage who has not yet imagined the fullness of the emotion and he will nearly always make up for lack of feeling by increased volume of sound. In fact he will rant, and this I think destructive. I do not mean to imply that an acted play reading of tragedy is never successful, but I do think it very difficult, not only because meaning has not been fully realised but also because unless the movement is right it is a distraction. If a play is read aloud without movement, even if it is inadequate there is at least no interference and we should not despise the plain reading which pretends to be nothing else. But I think there is a difference here between comedy and tragedy. Other people's experience, however, may be different.

What I chiefly wanted to say, and I hope it has not been tiresomely obvious, was that the nature of drama itself compels us not to bury it on the library shelf, and that because we are particularly concerned with the meaning of plays and with the value of that meaning, we should both in what we do ourselves and in how we influence by criticism what others do, be uncompromisingly clear that achievement on the stage, as in the exam room, is to be measured by the degree to which the meaning of the text has been realised.

PHYLLIS WARNER.

## GEORG SIMMEL AND TOTALITARIAN INTEGRATION

In the course of their development, communities have been confronted with the problem of spatial expansion. They might, at the cost of military efficiency, retain simple popular institutions in small areas or, alternatively, they might organise a large unit in which the individual's voice must necessarily be overwhelmed. Democracy could either, as it did in Athens, limit itself to a small State and face defeat, or it could, as in the Roman Empire, expand to a size which would provide sufficient manpower for its armies, but in which political organisation would become increasingly bureaucratic,<sup>1</sup> and finally tyrannical.

The development of modern communications seemed a great advance for popular government; but the people were ill-prepared for it. By some malevolent paradox the new technical developments of the industrial age seemed to threaten democracy with destruction. Modern communications have brought people nearer to each other, but have hardly increased neighbourliness. The circles of control are widened so quickly that the circles of group co-operation cannot keep pace. Not only communications but many other branches of modern technology increase the opportunities of those who are in positions of power by decreasing the control exercised over them by those who are ruled. Large-scale industrial organisation, for example, needs swift decision on the part of the management, and inventions in the field of military technique have powerfully strengthened State control. Contacts between individuals and groups have become considerably modified by improvements in communications. The frequency and duration of such contacts no longer change gradually as in former times. The development of communications has simultaneously developed the integration of local and national life. There has been a

---

<sup>1</sup>See C. H. Cooley's *Social Organisation*.

marked tendency for the State to control more and more aspects of the individual's life. Hand in hand with the increasing standardisation and regulation of life there has developed a levelling down of intellectual and moral standards.

Although the Russian Revolution should have been a warning, people brought up in the spirit of Utilitarianism and Spencerian optimism were inclined to ignore the danger to modern society of an all-embracing tyranny which might set itself up with the help of modern social mechanisms and techniques. German National Socialism brought home to us the true facts of the situation. It was the first thoroughgoing attempt at a modern totalitarian tyranny and, although it was carried out by elite of dilettanti, it illuminated like a search-light some of the most pressing social and political problems of the contemporary world.

General interest in the structure and method of totalitarian government has been rapidly decreasing since the end of World War II. Yet, the overwhelming superiority in men and materials which was required to defeat National Socialism by a rather narrow margin, invites further deliberation; nor does the recrudescence of totalitarianism in the shape of Stalinist Communism allay our apprehensions. Among the problems which must be of vital interest to modern political sociology are the following: how far is this clear modern tendency towards totalitarianism due to inherent structural elements, and how far is it due to social techniques; how far have existing social mechanisms been affected by modern technological developments; and thirdly, under what circumstances are these mechanisms and techniques likely to be modified.

Those who endeavour to answer this question are likely to appreciate the ingenuity and farsightedness of George Simmel<sup>1</sup> who, since he died in 1918, never lived to see his analysis of domination in relation to group constellations put to the test. The general principles and character of his

---

<sup>1</sup>Georg Simmel (1859-1918) became when he was 28 years of age lecturer in Philosophy in the University of Berlin, and remained in this position for 28 years until 1914, when he was appointed to the chair of Philosophy Strassburg. H. E. Barnes characterises his work as representing a Philosophy of Contemporary culture. His writings were of considerable consequence for the development of sociology in the U.S.A. His approach is usually called the "formal" approach to sociology.

writings are well known on the European Continent and in the United States, where they so greatly stimulated later sociological research; yet the startling insight into contemporary political problems of this analytical genius has so far been less realised. Among his numerous contributions, his allusion to the integration of individuals and groups within a tyrannical society is essential for a real understanding of totalitarian structure and techniques.

Let us recall his statement that under a tyranny the individual gives only a fragment of his individuality to the State-person relationship, whereas the tyrant gives his whole individuality. It would appear, at first sight, that Simmel assumed in the individual a division between his individuality proper and that part of him which is capable of integration into the "group mind".<sup>1</sup>

From the general character of his writings it seems rather unlikely that Simmel would have believed in a "group-mind" which assumes an independent existence, apart from the individual minds composing it, but, more likely, thought that there are aspects—Simmel calls them fragments—of the working of the human mind which more easily relate themselves to social problems. At the time when he wrote it was inevitable that he should have been vague in respect of the frontiers between the "individual" and the "social" man.

It is the normal course of the art of politics, Simmel says, both of Church and State, and even of the family, to select those parts of the individual's mentality which are most readily absorbed into the group mentality: let us first quote: "The groupings differ characteristically by the proportion between the whole individuality and the quantum of the personality which is contributed to the group or mass. A group will be more easily ruled by a tyrant, the smaller the part of the single individuality contributed to the group." "Where the social unit integrates so much of the personality that nearly the whole individuality is absorbed tyranny becomes untenable."

Simmel understood that the Athenian concept of citizenship which integrated all aspects of the individual's

---

<sup>1</sup>It is well known that the problem of the "group mind" led to an extensive controversy and was finally clarified by Professor R. M. Maciver.



life was totalitarian. There was no escape for the individual personality. There is an inherent tendency, (though not a law in Spencer's sense) in any given society, towards an equilibrium of liberty and constraint.<sup>1</sup> In Great Britain, for example, the considerable political freedom has always been correlated to a proportionally greater degree of constraint in society; this constraint is expressed by stringent conventions, moral obligations which are generally accepted and enforced by Public Opinion. Political tyrannies, on the other hand, often find that they have to permit a great deal of liberty in the less political regions of social life. It appears that Simmel's hypothesis has, to some extent, adapted to modern conditions Aristotle's request for balance and moderation in government.

According to Simmel there are two important limitations to tyranny: (a) The size of the dominated group, and (b) the variety of the personalities included in it.

He thought that the wider the circle of domination, the smaller will be, *ceteris paribus*, the sphere of thoughts, emotions, interests, and attributes which the individuals have in common and which form them into a mass. In so far as domination is concerned with what the individuals have in common, the individual's submission to domination is directly related to the size of the dominated circles. According to the author the following principle is hereby demonstrated:

"The larger the number of individuals ruled by the one (the tyrant) the smaller the part of the individual which he dominates."<sup>2</sup>

Simmel's hypothesis can be said to have applied to most tyrannies in history. If we think of ancient Egypt, Babylonia-Assyria, Persia, and the Roman Empire, the most atrocious tyranny at the centre of power did not (apart from spasmodic punitive expeditions) make life uncomfortable on the periphery. In the tyrannies of the Italian states of the Renaissance, and even in the absolute monarchies which ruled Europe from the 16th to the 19th centuries, the subject

---

<sup>1</sup>This view was expressed already in Plato's *Laws* and further developed in Aristotle's *Politics*.

<sup>2</sup>Simmel's *Soziologie*, p. 116.

who did not come in touch with the princely court did not experience the direct impact of tyrannical government, provided he did not meddle into politics. In Tzarist Russia and Hohenzollern Prussia a comparatively small part of the individual's life was subject to domination.

Even modern dictatorship exemplified this rule at the beginning. Italian Fascism did not, at first, interfere greatly with the life of the non-political person; nor did Polish, Yugoslav, or Hungarian authoritarianism between the two world wars. Austria's semi-dictatorship followed the rule, and German National Socialism owed the stabilisation of its hold over the German people partly to its abstention from too much ostentation; in the first years after the conquest of power interferences with the life of the ordinary citizen were subtle and gradual. Nazism was hiding, so to speak, behind the traditional forms of tyranny, while it established a regime quite unprecedented in history.

The mechanism sketched by Simmel would have run counter to all totalitarian purposes; the regime, always anxious to draw on expert advice, laboured ceaselessly to overcome that social mechanism; with all the knowledge of modern social and political organisation at its disposal, controlling all technological inventions and the industrial age, it was temporarily successful, but only to some extent. Channels of various types were prepared to catch all those parts of the individual personality that might wish to escape domination. There was the "Arbeitsfront" for trade unionists; children had to enrol in the Hitler youth Movement, and father had to do military exercises several days a week; "Strength through Joy" looked after leisure, all of which was rather like a travesty of Plato's Republic.

Yet the results of totalitarian integration under Hitler, although they do not disprove the tendency towards a social equilibrium between liberty and authority, derogate Herbert Spencer's assumption that this tendency is a permanent law. National Socialism was able to prove that a government that controls the principal means of power and communications, can dominate not only the citizen's external but also his private life, and can, what is more, control his very thoughts. Moreover, the effect of ideological propaganda based on modern social-psychological research is cumulative. Once

such propaganda can affect the upper strata of the human hierarchy of values,<sup>1</sup> processes of imitation, emulation, domination, and adjustment are likely to help beliefs which are quasi-religious in character. Thus it is possible to exceed the natural limits of domination over large numbers of individuals.

There can be little doubt that Stalinist Communism has since World War II adopted several of the Nazi techniques of totalitarian domination; just as Nazism had originally learned from Soviet Communism. The coup d'etat in Czechoslovakia of 1948 and the subsequent integration of all social and political life into the Communist system bear witness to that.

On the other hand, the social limits to domination still present difficulties to dictatorship. Marshal Tito's apostasy from Communist orthodoxy has amply proved the danger to a dictatorship that sets out to dominate too extensive a geographical area; for no remedy has been found yet against the innate human desire for independence.

Whether this limit to tyranny, within the large-scale community, can be overcome will, in my view, depend on three main conditions:

- (a) The proportion of opportunists to loyal partisans,
- (b) The number of overseers available.
- (c) The efficiency of the social techniques applied.

During the later stages of World War II the second condition presented an ever-increasing problem to the Hitler regime. Under any authoritarian rule, the number of overseers whose loyalties can be relied upon under all circumstances will be small in relation to the number of those whose loyalties will be conditioned by material advantages derived from the regime. Thus, once totalitarianism is opposed from the outside, be it war or peace, the majority of overseers will be inclined to strike a balance between momentary actual advantages and their fear of prospective dangers.

---

<sup>1</sup>See my article in *Philosophy* (Journal of British Institute of Philosophy), July, 1943.

## TECHNIQUES OF PSEUDO-TOLERATION

One of the totalitarian techniques which satisfy the need of a balance between freedom and authority, and thus facilitate totalitarian integration, is, as Simmel knew well, the technique of pseudo-toleration. The relatively considerable degree of criticism permitted to German citizens often astonished visitors from Western countries. Similarly, Communist-dominated countries are not too sensitive about the convenient safety valve which they call "constructive criticism". But once criticism hardens into opposition, no minor punishments are applied, but rather a policy of "liquidation".

## SUBMERSION OF DEMOCRATIC PARTIES UNDER TOTALITARIANISM

After a modern authoritarian group has assumed power, the former democratic parties become completely submerged. Their energy is destroyed, and after the democratic leaders are eliminated, or rendered harmless, their partisans become docile followers of authoritarianism. This was the case as much in pre-war Germany, Italy, Austria, Hungary, and, to a lesser extent in Poland and Jugoslavia, as it is the case in present-day Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania, and the Eastern zone of Germany. What has Simmel got to say on this point?

"There is a degree of antagonism between groups which is replaced by unity if all the antagonistic groups are put under pressure from a third party. But should the original aversion transcend a certain limit, the common suppression will have the opposite effect. The reason for this phenomenon is not only an increase in general irritability, but first of all the fact that the common experience presses the divergent elements together and brings them nearer; this enforced neighbourhood throws into relief irreconcilable differences of all the suppressed elements. Where unification is unable to overcome antagonism the latter is not left untouched, but is increased". . . . "The negative side of this is the jealousy amongst the dominated groups. Common hatred does not increase opposition, but submission, if the one who is hated by all is the master".<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Simmel's *Soziologie*, p. 110.

Outwardly this might appear as a mere analysis of the old "divide et impera". Simmel knew from English history that the laws against the Nonconformists did but little increase their affection for the Roman Catholics; he could not have foreseen that common suppression by National Socialism would divide the German opposition to such an extent, that the Communists sometimes denounced their democratic comrades in arms to the Gestapo; nor could he have foreseen, how easily former Fascists were enrolled by the Communist regimes in some of the countries of Eastern Europe. Here is another social mechanism of domination, the efficiency of which is likely to be intensified by modern methods of technology and propaganda. As the means of communications make distances shrink, so totalitarianism is able to press against the other patterns of conflict in an entire State or even Continent, once these conflicts have been artificially stereotyped by propaganda.

Once the former constituent group-elements of democratic society have been effectively disrupted and paralysed, totalitarian tyranny can proceed towards the constructive process of integration.

"By the submission of many divergent groups to a single master, the latter facilitates domination by taking on the position of a referee. Conflicts and divergencies between the antagonistic suppressed groups can be exploited and new wide common interests can be created for groups varying from children's play-groups to religious and political parties if a common denominator can be found".

After National Socialism had succeeded in absorbing all relevant groups of the community, it skilfully backed at one time the peasants, at another industry; at another time again, the workers; sometimes the small shop-keepers and sometimes the chain-stores. Similar techniques were applied in the realm of international relations after 1939, when the Nazis alternated in favour shown to the various nations integrated within the "New Order". Similarly, today, Soviet foreign policy skilfully backs sometimes the idea of German unity, and sometimes promises the resettlement of the expelled German-speaking colonists in their former homes, (e.g. the Sudeten-area); then again it will, in turn, support Czech or Polish interests, which are threatened by a unified Germany. Communism, by posing as the champion of

extremist nationalist aspirations in countries whose traditions have been historically antagonistic, aims really at a disintegration of all these loyalties and a reintegration under the common denominator of Soviet Imperial Communism.

These few examples may help to assist those who are seriously interested in the discovery of the hidden "forces" which help the very real contemporary tendency towards autocratic rule. That which outwardly represents itself as a complicated social process, is often merely a simple but ingenious social technique. As with every technique much depends on the ethical end to which it is applied. Simmel's treatment of the social process of domination in relation to formal-sociological group constellations deserves, therefore, our closest attention.

K. J. NEWMAN.

# EEN MIDDELEEUWS VOLKS- LIEDJE ALS SPIEGEL VAN ZIJN TIJD

Omstreeks 1850 werd een kleine vondst gedaan ten Westen van Luik op handschriftkundig gebied: de band van een kerkelijk jaarboek, dat zich bevond in de domstiftskerk te Borgloon, bleek (zoals gewoonlijk) te bestaan uit een stuk karton, waaromheen een perkamenten omslag gevouwen was, maar dit stuk karton bestond uit een veertigtal bladen manuscript: „On collait les feuillets ensemble avec un bon papin composé de farine de seigle et de lie de bière, on serrait et affermissait le tout sous une presse, et, après l'avoir fait sécher, on s'en servait en guise de carton”. Deze welhaast sadistische beschrijving is te vinden bij den uitgever van het handschrift, prof. J. H. Bormans (*La chanson de Roncevaux, fragments etc.*, 1864). Hij weekte deze papieren voorzichtig los, bestudeerde en publiceerde het grootste deel er van, en gaf ze tenslotte ten geschenke aan de Universiteitsbibliotheek van Amsterdam.

Daardoor kreeg ik een schone kans het handschrift op mijn beurt te bekijken. Ik vond toen, dat er behalve de uitgegeven fragmenten Roelantslied op enkele overgebleven bladen nog een geheel andere tekst stond: geen ridderepos, maar een aantal slordig neergekrabbelde volksliedjes, sprankelend van leven en levenslust. Sommigen van hen kwamen overeen met reeds bekende uit het Antwerps Liedboek van 1544, maar andere zijn tot nog toe onbekend, en één daarvan onderzocht ik nader. Om een levendige confrontatie zonder vooroordeel of beïnvloeding vooraf mogelijk te maken, geef ik vooreerst de tekst weer zoals die met enige moeite te ontcijferen was, en zoals ik die ten gerieve van de meeste lezers van *Theoria* enigszins normaliseerde (jammer, want er gaat een stukje poëzie der auhenticiteit mee verloren!).

CARMEN: MIJN VADER . . .

Mijn vader gaf mij enen man,  
van ouden<sup>1</sup> was hem sijn baerd so grijs.  
Der minnen spel hij niet en can,  
sijn lijf is couder dan een ijs.  
Wanneer hij rust  
so crijgic lust  
te liggen al in den armen sijn . . .  
Mishuwet so is den name mijn!

Maer als hij slapen compt met mij  
dan duuct hij onder,<sup>2</sup> hij doet mij sere,  
ende hij cruupt achter,<sup>3</sup> dat dunct mij vrij,  
als ic vrintscap aen hem begere.  
Hij is so stedich,<sup>4</sup>  
altoes leyt hij ledich.<sup>5</sup>  
Ende ic soude so gerne vrolich sijn . . .  
Mishuwet so is den name mijn.

Dan leyt hij ende ronct alle den nacht.  
Ende altoes slaapt hij, den ouden catijf!  
Als die mijns niet sere en acht.  
Geen tijd en compt hem vreugt int lijf.  
Ende maect hem siec,<sup>6</sup>  
den ouden griec,  
hij ronct als waart een everswijn . . .  
Mishuwet so is den name mijn.

Waer hij mij siet, hij betrouwt mij niet,  
hij doet mich wachten<sup>7</sup> dag ende nacht.  
Dat doet mijn herte groet verdriet . . .  
Maer dat ic noch min<sup>8</sup> gelijden mach  
en cannic niet verdraghen:  
dat sijn grote slaghe  
die hij mij geeft, den ouden catijf!  
Mishuwet so is den name mijn.

---

<sup>1</sup>ouderdom.

<sup>2</sup>nl. onder de dekens.

<sup>3</sup>achteruit.

<sup>4</sup>halsstarrig.

<sup>5</sup>werkeloos.

<sup>6</sup>en hij houdt zich ziek.

<sup>7</sup>bewaken.

<sup>8</sup>minder.



*Noch en achtich dat niet een slee<sup>1</sup>  
mochtich liggen al in den armen naect  
alle nacht een uurken of twee  
van mijnen lieven, dat naer mij wacht.  
Ic en cans niet helen,  
ic soude so gerne spelen  
met sijnder fluiten, sij is so fijn . . .  
Mishuwet so is den name mijn!*

Reeds de inhoud: de klacht van een jonge vrouw over haar ongelukkig huwelijk met een oude man (waarschijnlijk omwille van zijn geld, zoals dergelijke gedichten van hetzelfde thema doen vermoeden!), deze stof dus is zeer bekend, en veelvuldig bezongen in het „herfsttij der Middeleeuwen”, toen de Middeleeuwse geest in revolutie kwam op elk gebied. Ik behoef slechts aan Hervorming, Renaissance en Humanisme te herinneren, om met deze termen (dooddoeners!) al een en ander op te roepen van de geweldige veranderingen die er in het denken plaats vonden. In de geest, niet alleen van de beschaafden en ontwikkelden, die al een soort elite gingen vormen, maar zeer zeker ook in de geest van het ongeleerde en ongeletterde volk, dat niet de klassieken als voorbeeld kon nemen, maar zich evenzeer losworstelde of losgeslagen werd van de Middeleeuwse (bijv. kerkelijke) normen en hopen moest op een nieuwen profet.

En dit maakt dit tijdperk zo boeiend voor ons: de verandering der normen (of althans van hun formulering) en het ontwaken van het (zelf-)bewustzijn. De taalkunde en de letterkunde registreren deze veranderingen nauwkeurig. Men wordt zich van zijn taal en taalgebruik bewust, men gaat zijn taal als een object zien, dat men kan bestuderen. Een eerste inventarisatie van de woordenschat, niet voor praktisch gebruik maar om zijn zelfs wille, vindt plaats: in 1477 verschijnt het eerste woordenboek, in 1574 het eerste zeer waardevolle (Kiliaen). De eerste grammatica's worden geschreven (1584), men gaat zich op de spelling toeleggen en daarvoor regels geven (1550). Zelfs een soort phonetiek wordt geschreven,<sup>2</sup> waaruit de volgende humoristische proeve: „*Ie* is onder alle die vocalen minst van geluit/ende wert bina als e. geboren/maer meer omtrent die tanden. door stil

<sup>1</sup>scort wilde pruim.

<sup>2</sup>Pontus de Heuter : *Nederduitse Orthographie* (1581).

geblaes/. . ./zulx dat het een vrouweletter schijnt om minlic te spreken. - eR wart een hontsletter genomt/omdat haer uitspraec gelijct tgegnor van enen grammen hont . . ." etc.

Het opkomend nationalisme bevorderde het purisme, de drang om zijn taal van vreemde woorden "te schuymen". De stijl werd op klassieke leest geschoeid. De kunstjes met de taal, zo eindeloos vervelend door de Rederijkers toegepast in guirlande-rijmelarijen, naamdichten en hoofdletterallegorieën bewijzen slechts eens te meer, dat men de taal als een object leert beschouwen, waarmee men experimenteren kan.

En deze geest van bewustwording is tevens een geest van individualisme, van onmaatschappelijkheid, van bevrijding uit de oude (maatschappelijke en kerkelijke) normen, en van zelfwerkzaamheid van de lagere standen óók. Een teken des tijds zijn de vele zwervelingen langs 's Heren wegen, de varende zangers, al lang geen troubadours meer, de studenten die van Universiteit naar Universiteit trokken als halfintellectuelen en kwakzalvers, de soldaten en passagierende zeelui, de landlopers en „ruyters van de banck", de kroeglopers en de opvarenden van het merkwaardige gilde van de Blauwe Schuit. En als decor stelle men zich dan de bloeiende haven- en handelsstad Antwerpen voor, waar de gulle Brabander zijn lach en zijn lied deed instemmen met zoveel vreemde tongen.

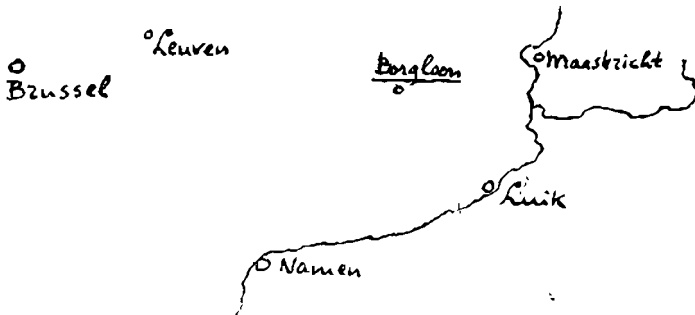
Geen wonder, dat temidden van deze gisting het volk, losgeslagen van de oude remmen, op zoek of in afwachting van nieuwe ankers in het metafysische, bijtijden tot heftige en merkwaardige uitpattingen in het aardse, ook met de pen, kwam. Dergelijke uitingen vindt men in de andere „sotte vleesschelicke liedekens" in ons handschrift overvloedig. Gedichten over het feest dat de mollen in de grond houden met de begraven lijken (voorbeeld van de obsessionele angst voor de dood), en een fragment „Dit es van de Scijtstoel", dus dood en (de wel bijzonder aardse vorm van) leven, staan vlak naast het "Carmen".

Een nadere aanduiding van de tijd waarin deze liedjes geschreven zijn vormt het watermerk, dat ik in het papier ontdekte. Met behulp van de naslawerken (Briquet: Les filigranes III, waarin ondanks de dorre opsomming zo veel poëzie schuilt door de duizenden afbeeldingen) kon ik de

uitgespreide hand met een kruisvormig bloemetje op de middelvinger dateren omstreeks 1490.

Wie hier zat te schrijven zal wel een onopgelost raadsel blijven. Het is in 't geheel niet onmogelijk dat wij ons denzelfde monnik moeten voorstellen, die de wonderlijke Refereynenbundel van Jan van Stijevoort samenstelde, waar de vroomste Mariadichten midden tussen de meest onbeteugelde pornografie te vinden zijn, een sprekend cultuurhistorisch document! Ook ons handschrift diende als band voor een kerkelijk jaarboek, en het zou zeker bij de vestiging van de nieuwe normen of bij het herzien en verstevigen van de moraal door de Contrareformatie ten offer zijn gevallen aan de censuur, die reeds in 1550 een Index, een zwarte lijst opstelde, waar ook het Antwerps Liedboek op voorkwam (daar is dan ook maar één exemplaar van over!). Wie weet welke berouwvolle impuls het handschrift nu reeds voor de kartonfabricage bestemde. Maar onder het sterke, beschermende perkament bleef het ondeugend en ondeugdelijk geschrift tegen beter weten en willen in voor de eeuwen bewaard, om thans opnieuw het hart van Goden en mensen te verheugen . . .

Blijft nog de vraag *waar* het geschreven is. Het hs. werd gevonden in een gehucht tussen Leuven en Maastricht in. De dialectische vormen wijzen ook op deze Brabants-Limburgse streek. Nadere gegevens ontbreken ten enenmale. Alleen het watermerk vertelt ons nog, dat het bij voorkeur in de omgeving van Namen en Leuven werd gebruikt. En deze halven en kwarten aan zekerheid kunnen ons wel tot het positivum met een vraagteken tussen haakjes doen besluiten: de oorsprong zal waarschijnlijk West-Limburg zijn. Een kaartje ter verduidelijking.



De inhoud van het Carmen is dus realistisch. Wat zegt one nu de *vorm* en de stijl van de taal over de veelbewogen tijd van ontstaan van dit gedichtje? En over de tijd vóór zijn ontstaan? Want zoals iedere taaluiting draagt het in ieder woord ook een belangrijk stuk historie en traditie met zich mee, en de kennis hiervan maakt de schoonheid sprekender en het genot rijker en geschakeerder.

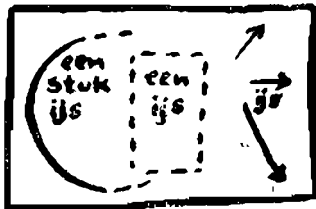
In couplet 1 staat „sijn lijf is couder *dan een ijs*”. Daarvoor zeggen wij tegenwoordig: zijn lijf is kouder *dan ijs*. Eenvoudig genoeg geconstateerd, maar het verschil blijft ons intrigeren. Waaróm kunnen wij „kouder *dan een ijs*” niet meer gebruiken? Wat is er veranderd in de aanschouwing van de ons omringende werkelijkheid, in onze gedachtenstructuur? Bij onderzoek blijkt dat wij stofnamen nooit laten voorafgaan door het onbepaald lidwoord, dat komt van het verbijzonderende telwoord één. Dit verbijzondert, grenst af, concretiseert; veronderstelt een tweede, derde, x-de. Een stofnaam nu duidt een stof aan (ijs, sneeuw, stroop, glas, zink, beton), een algemeenheid die in deze wereld als „element” bestaat, een abstractum in zekere zin, dat zich slechts laat verbijzonderen in een bepaalde hoeveelheid: een kannetje stroop, een vracht sneeuw, een ijsje, etc. Niettemin staat in ons gedicht toch maar „kouder *dan een ijs*”. En dit is niet het enige voorbeeld dat de Middeleeuwse lectuur hiervan te zien geeft. In Maerlants Historie van Troyen 8350: swerter veel *dan een roec*, 20823: cout oft waer een ijs, 21776: wit als een snee. Van Ginneken wijst in zijn „Studie der Nederlandsche streektalen”, blz. 110, op het gebruik, nog heden voorkomend in Brabant van „rood als een bloed” en „wit als een sneeuw”, zonder een eigenlijke verklaring te geven. Ook in de grammatica's blijft het bij de constatering van het feit. Door deze minimale documentatie zou ik natuurlijk niets mogen bewijzen, of zelfs maar een vermoeden mogen uiten. De aard van dit artikel en de beschikbare ruimte staan mij echter niet toe al mijn voorhanden materiaal ten toon te stellen, en dus moet ik dit verwaarlozen (jammer genoeg, want in die statische gegevens schuilt juist zoveel poëzie), en mijn redenering vervolgen.

De mentaliteit van het nog niet of weinig ontwikkelde denken, gewoonlijk „primitief” genoemd, is zeer concreet ingesteld. De Eskimo heeft geen woord voor hond, maar wel

voor een hond liggend bij het vuur, een geheel ander voor een hond jagend op een beer, weer een ander voor een blaffende hond, etc. De algemeenheid, de soort heeft hij nog niet ontdekt. Hij verbindt alles nog aan tijd en plaats. Het intellectuele vermogen tot abstraheren, het zich bewust worden van eenheid in de verscheidenheid heeft zich nog maar weinig ontwikkeld, maar groeit natuurlijk. En soms doet dit bewustwordingsproces een grote stap: bijvoorbeeld in het herfsttij der Middeleeuwen. De reeds vroeger genoemde hoofdlettercultuur der Rederijkers is niets anders dan het eindeloos oefenen van een kind in een pas ontdekte denkwijze. Alles wordt bij hen geabstraheerd: in de toneelspelen zijn de personagiën bijvoorbeeld „Onbescaemt Lawijt” of „Honger” of „Groet Verdriet”. Hetzelfde verschijnsel zit wellicht ook in onze stokregel „Mishuwet so is den name mijn”. Het adjectief „mishuwd” staat hier op een wonderlijke manier tussen de naam (abstract) en het benoemde (concreet) in. Eenzelfde geval is hier bij „couder dan een ijs”. Oorspronkelijk heeft men alleen gekend en aangeduid specimina, specificaties van de stof ijs, zoals wij nu generaliserend kunnen zeggen.

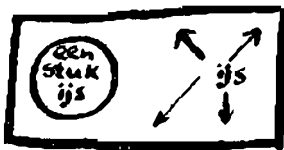


Langzamerhand kreeg men oog en daarmee ook „tong” voor de gelijksoortigheid. De figuur kreeg pijlen in alle richtingen van algemeenheid en onbestemdheid, naast de vroegere specificaties. Dit is de toestand die mogelijk maakte van „een ijs” te spreken.



Maar het abstracte won veld, en de stofnamen kregen hun tegenwoordige waarde van algemene, elementaire eigenschappelijkheid. Ijs werd ijs, waar dan ook ontmoet, en

een specimen daarvan kon men niet anders aanduiden dan met de toevoeging „brok”, „stuk”, „klomp”.



Om precies te bepalen op welke plaats in dit proces onze uitdrukking gesitueerd moet worden is het statistisch materiaal nodig. Daaruit blijkt dat de uitdrukkingen „swerter dan een roec” etc. vaak alleen rythmische functie hebben, ter versterking van het beeld dienen, in poëzie voorkomen, na 1500 zeer zeldzaam worden ( $\pm$  1700 nog in het spreekwoord: men valt licht op een glad ijs), en bij Bilderdijk (als archaïsme) definitief het laatst voorkomen. In ons gedicht is het dus een vrij traditionele uitdrukking (ook al, omdat het in die stereotype vergelijkingsformule staat), die nog goed in het gehoor lag en bijdroeg tot het luchtige, dansende rythme, dat in het hele gedichtje zo uitstekend aansluit bij de klacht met een ironische knipoo) der „mishuwete” ega. De stofnaam zal gewoonlijk echter ook voor deze tijd reeds iets hebben aangeduid, dat overal in alle omstandigheden en verschijningsvormen dezelfde invariabele eigenschappen had, getuige de vele voorbeelden van hetzelfde-als-ons-huidige gebruik. Abstract en concreet waren echter nog niet geheel *twee*. Zij konden nog, zij het in vaste gezegden, door elkaar lopen, verwisseld worden.

Volgen wij het gedicht verder, dan valt de goede compositie van het geheel op in de vermelding van het ware liefje in regel 7 van couplet 1, niet meer dan een toespeling die de aandacht gespannen houdt: „te liggen al in den armen sijn . . .”, terwijl deze voorlopige, vage vermelding wordt uitgewerkt in couplet 5.

En dan stuiten wij op de woorden „vrintscap” en „vrolich”, en „vreugt” en „dat doet mijn herte groet verdriet”, die in dit realistisch gezelschap van snorken als een everzwijn en scheldwoorden als „oude griec” en „oude satijf” merkwaardig kies en verfijnd aandoen. Ook intrigeren ons die Duitse vormen: *vrollich*, hij doet *mich* wachten, noch en *achtlich* dat niet een *slee*, *mochtlich* liggen. Er blijken

vrij wat meer Nederlandse handschriften te bestaan met deze geheel „anorganische” Duitse vormen in de tekst, d.w.z. geplaatst naast apert Nederlandse, bijvoorbeeld: In *weis nicht* hoe, Dt.: ich weis nicht wie, Ndl.: ic ne weet niet hoe. En dan blijkt tevens, dat de inhoud van deze geschriften altijd amoureuus is, en meestal niet realistisch maar „hoofs”, en dan ook van een vroegere datum dan ons Carmen, ± 1200-1400. Deze „höfische Sprache” vindt zijn oorsprong bij de troubadours, dus in de riddersfeer, waar een steeds grotere verfijning en vergeestelijking in litteris door verschillende oorzaken plaats vond. Daarvan wil ik de volgende noemen:

Nadat het kruistochtenideaal voor de ridderstand verbleekt was, moesten zij een nieuwe levenshouding vinden. Temidden van de gruwelijke werkelijkheid der 12de en 13de eeuw, van oorlogen, epidemieën corruptie, immoraliteit, decadentie, onrecht en geweld zocht men althans één ding veilig te stellen: de liefde. Deze vond zijn uitingen in het letterspel, de allegorieën, de kleurensymboliek, de vrouwenverering en de eerste aandacht voor de natuur, en het zijn vooral de letteren, de poëzie der zangers, waarin deze zaken zijn uitgewerkt (meer waarschijnlijk dan in de werkelijkheid!). De letteren ondergingen de invloed van de door de kruistochten bekend geworden Arabisch-Perzisch-Hellenistische mode van de kwijnende, irreële, uiterst-verfijnde liefdespoëzie. De verhouding tot de vrouw als tot een meesteres (dompta) vloeide uit de troubadourszangen voort, die hun liefde tot de slotvrouw (verplichte of werkelijke) op papier althans niet anders konden uitdrukken. Zo ontstaat een hoofse taal, waarvan ik graag voorbeelden zou geven, maar waarvan ik hier slechts de terminologie kan noemen, die bestaat uit woorden als „twifel”, „trouwe”, „jonst”, „pine”, „hope”, „treuren”, „liden”, „herte”, „verdriet”, en niet te vergeten de „valse niders”. Niets wordt met name genoemd, alles wordt vergeestelijkt (en verwekelijkt) en versymboliseert, zodat de eigenlijke inhoud soms ter dege onduidelijk is, hoewel er ook pareltjes als het Egidiuslied toe behoren. Daar dit een nogal kunstmatig procédé is, is het noodzakelijk gevolg: verstarring. De termen hebben slechts de beschikking over een zeer beperkt scala, en worden volkomen traditioneel en eentonig. Zij bewegen zich tussen een aantal vastgestelde gevoelens

(vreugde contra treuren, truwe contra valsheit, etc.), geven een gracieuse elegance, maar worden stereotiep, onvruchtbaar, ziekelijk en decadent. Zij vormen niettemin een eeuwenlange mode, waarvan het ontstaan, als boven vluchtig aangeduid, is te vergelijken met de latere préciosité der Franse salons na de ontzettende godsdienstoorlogen, en (wie weet!) met de New Look dezer tegenwoordige na-oorlogsjaren.

De hitte der tijden deed de alcohol der liefde steeds fijner vervluchtigen tot tenslotte de opkomende derde stand (die de realiteit vanuit zijn positie best aankon!) het parfum ging gebruiken, gesprenkeld over zijn lied, waarin de jenever—goddank—ook niet gespaard bleef, ja zelfs door de meer bewust levenden met brutale voorkeur geschonken werd (Rabelais: *fais ce que voudras!*). Maar zo sterk was dus de na-geschiedenis van het oorspronkelijke troubadourslied (in onze op het individu en de originaliteit gerichte eeuw zouden we van epigonisme spreken!), dat ook de derde stand de mode in zijn lied overnam. Deze termen en vormen lagen gereed voor het spraakgebruik, zodra men de amoureuze toon aansloeg. Men hoorde dan als noodzakelijk de stereotype formules (dat doet mijn herte groet verdriet), en het vocabulair, waaronder ook mich, dich etc. was meegekomen, lag ree in het geheugen. Hoewel de derde stand dus de boventoon ging voeren (bloeitijd van het lied, 15de eeuw), deed zij dit gedeeltelijk met leengoed van de adel, die de toon- is gelijk taal-aangevende stand bleef, het bewonderde voorbeeld. Een blik in het Antwerps Liedboek (1544) is voldoende om deze papieren rozen en violieren aan te treffen op iedere bladzij.

Een vergelijking van het thema met dergelijke in de omringende literatuur moest achterwege blijven. Opmerkelijk is echter, dat de inhoud, hetzelfde gegeven in Frankrijk vooral wordt teruggevonden, terwijl de vormelementen over het algemeen Duitse invloeden verrieden, zoals wij zagen. Als „bewijs” haal ik een stukje zuivere poëzie aan uit Gaston Paris: *Chansons du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle*:

*Si je suis trouvée  
Avecques mon amy  
En doi je estre blasmée  
Pour parler a luy?*



*Mon père et ma mère sy m'ont mariée  
à un vieil bon homme . . .  
Maudit soit le jour qu'oncques je le vy!  
Hellas! mes amours ne sont pas ycy.*

*Quant ce vient le soir que je suis couchée  
Mon villain s'endort toute la nuitée;  
Je pleure et souppire, je ne puis dormir.  
Hellas! mes amours ne sont pas ycy.*

*Sur tout couleur j'ayme la tanée (= bruin).  
Etc.*

In de laatste regel weer kleurensymboliek, die verder uitgewerkt wordt.

Zo zien we dat ook in deze enkele regels willekeurig dicht Nederlands positie door de eeuwen heen, nl. tussen Duitsland en Frankrijk en hun beider culturen, bepaald is, natuurlijk met behoud van zijn eigen accent, hier vooral kenbaar in het kernachtig realisme en de ironische sentimentaliteit.

E. ENDT.

# POETRY AND ACTUALITY

*See: it does this: keeps warm  
Men's wits to the things that are . . .*

Despite the spread of literary education, there are still comparatively few people who read poetry regularly and with what I should call a cumulative interest. For the majority, poetry is a memory of school, an examination subject, or so many undisturbed cubic inches on a bookshelf; yet for the few, poetry still provides one of the main hand-holds on the slippery face of reality.

This relative neglect of an ancient and honoured intellectual activity is not entirely due to the limitation, in human nature, of the higher sensibility and imagination; the incidence of these qualities at any given time depends to a large extent upon the nature of men's beliefs and the scope and sensitivity of the education they receive. In the modern world, the multiplication of superficial amenities and distractions has not only served to compensate the masses for their lost or weakened belief in an ultimate supernatural reality, but has also induced a superficial and materialistic world-view. The preoccupation of science with the physical aspect of things (or with mathematical abstractions which give practical meaning to the physical) has led to a distrust of the deeper 'ontological', 'mystical', or what used commonly to be called the 'spiritual significance' of phenomena: indeed, for many people who profess and call themselves intellectuals such a term as 'spiritual significance' has no real meaning; it is regarded as an abandoned cliché of the pre-scientific age. I have noticed that whenever some eminent scientist or philosopher shows an interest in specifically religious values—to say nothing of theological concepts—he is accused either of courting popularity by appealing to a vestigial superstition or even of a positive softening of the brain. True, the term 'spiritual' is still used by some rationalists to describe the indefinable essence of

artistic and emotional experience; but the prevailing and intellectually snobbish denigration of a good deal of what the word stood for in the days when the poet was *vates* or prophet, and therefore expressed the deepest religious emotions and aspirations of the people, is firstly a symptom of the disintegration of our culture, and secondly the main reason why the priest and the poet are no longer universally regarded as necessary in the general scheme of things.

The steady growth of a utilitarian and secular view of life has induced the professional classes, industrialists, and eventually the people as a whole to adopt something like Plato's less liberal view of the poet, as expressed in the *Republic*: he is 'inspired', but of dubious value to the state. Today he is, at best, an esoteric entertainer—writer of scripts for the B.B.C. Third Programme. Shakespeare's Theseus did not improve matters when he said that the poet is related to the lunatic, and that poetry

'gives to airy nothing  
A local habitation and a name.'

There is a sense, of course, in which a mathematical proof, a scientific hypothesis, a philosophical system, and a tragedy by Shakespeare are *all* 'airy nothings'; but the assumption that poetry is, in all its forms, less close to reality or actuality than science, philosophy and history has been examined and virtually refuted by many literary critics from Aristotle to I. A. Richards — although the findings of the latter are sometimes of dubious value to the prestige of the poet. Admittedly there are kinds of 'romantic' and so-called 'escapist' poetry (e.g. *Kubla Khan* and *Le bateau ivre*) the immediate and vital actuality of which—their connection with our life, as we live it today—would be difficult but not impossible to establish. These apparently frenzied, irrational effusions are engendered by psychological phenomena the reality and importance of which no educated person would deny—our private and subconscious impulses, appetencies, and fantasies. The remarkable therapeutic release of inhibited desires and the satisfaction of obscure psychic impulses are apparent in the intense pleasure and feeling of exaltation with which sensitive youths of both sexes read for the first time the

most successful works of the Romantic poets—Keats's *Ode to a Nightingale*, Shelley's *West Wind*, and the two mentioned above. In the present essay, however, I intend to deal at some length with certain poems which are less professedly 'romantic'—which are more positive, realistic and even utilitarian, though at first sight they might not appear so.

The true scientist, the genuine student of matter and energy, is one for whom the obscure or partially hidden ontological meaning of the universe, and in particular of human existence, is not only a fascinating inquiry but also the acknowledged *telos* or goal of his specific labours. It has therefore long been recognised by those whose minds are not mechanically partitioned and stultified by specialist pursuits that 'metaphysical poetry', arising as it does out of a scientific or religio-scientific attitude to all phenomena, can and does speak, in a limited way, to the intellectual integrity of the pure scientific rationalist—if such a person exists. T. S. Eliot is a 'metaphysical' poet, and I shall mention *The Waste Land*: but I shall also try to show that even comparatively simple and direct poetry—poetry which is innocent of learned or recondite pretensions—may have an unsuspected 'actuality', by which I imply a scarching and prophetic quality: it illuminates the surface aspects of life, and at the same time penetrates to hidden motives, intuitions, and aspirations. Such poetry, if it fulfils my claim, should perhaps receive more attention from the people whose lives are too rigidly controlled by the journalist, the politician, the scientist, or the theologian.

One of the main criteria of the value of poetry is 'contemporaneity'. If the poet in question is, in fact, our contemporary, his work should reflect the contemporary consciousness; it should elucidate, if it does not solve, contemporary problems. But many aspects of mind and sensation are demonstrably universal and persistent; hence the greatest poets are always, in this sense, contemporaneous and 'actual'. To take an extreme example, the following dialogue between Albany and Goneril in *King Lear* could easily be interpreted as a symbolic representation of the modern world, with its ruthless cruelty and persecutions (lines 1-5); its threat of self-annihilation by scientific 'total' warfare (lines 6-8); its contempt for the Sermon on the Mount, its inexorable



found in Arnold's *The Forsaken Merman* (pure Symbolism!),  
*Empedocles*, *A Summer Night*, and *The Scholar Gipsy*:

'And each succeeding age in which we are born  
Will have more peril for us than the last;  
Will goad our senses with a sharper spur,  
Will fret our minds to an intenser play,  
Will make ourselves harder to be discern'd.  
And we shall struggle awhile, gasp and rebel;  
And we shall fly for refuge to past times,  
Their soul of unworn youth, their breath of greatness;  
And the reality will pluck us back,  
Knead us in its hot hand, and change our nature.'  
(*Empedocles*).

So as we read these poems by Arnold the reality is constantly plucking us back to the present:

'For most men in a brazen prison live,  
Where in the sun's hot eye,  
With heads bent o'er their work, they languidly  
Their lives to some unmeaning taskwork give . . .  
Death in their prison reaches them  
Unfreed, having seen nothing, still unblest.'  
(*A Summer Night*).

The poets of actuality seem to be writing in an eternal Now. Above (p.62), Yeats's *Byzantium* provided a commentary on Shakespeare; here, from Yeats's *The Second Coming*, is a passage which is elucidated on the one side by Arnold's *Dover Beach* and on the other by T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*:

'Turning and turning in the widening gyre  
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;  
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;  
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,  
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere  
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;  
The best lack all conviction, while the worst  
Are full of passionate intensity.'

That passage, fine as it is, lacks truth of perspective; for at no time, not even in the midst of the First World War, would it be true to say that 'the *best* lack *all* conviction'. The tragedy of the modern world, as revealed by the greatest poets from Arnold and Hopkins to Yeats and Eliot, is that the best do not hold the same fundamentally *right* convictions, while the worst are almost unanimous in holding all the fundamentally wrong ones. But Yeats's prophetic condemnation of the 'passionate intensity' of our recent and contemporary ruthless messiahs gives an extraordinary 'actuality' to *The Second Coming*, which ends:

'And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,  
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?'

Such poets as Shakespeare, Donne, Herbert, Blake, Arnold, and Hopkins owe much of their present-day fame and influence to their poetic 'actuality' (though admittedly Shakespeare bulks too large for any single label to be adequate): the searching beam of their at-once visionary and realistic imagination impinges directly upon disturbing aspects of modern life, many of which have to a large extent been induced and aggravated by the material, intellectual and broadly humanistic or secular 'progress' of the last four hundred years. In *Hamlet* the man we see the clash between Christian and Pagan ideals—which makes him the 'type' of modern bewildered European intellectuals. The repercussions of Donne's

'The new philosophy calls in doubt'

are still being felt, though his statement that this world

'Is crumbled out again to his atomies'

must now be carried a step further. The religious and almost 'existential' actuality of Donne and Herbert is closely related to the actuality of Hopkins, which I have examined at length in a different context. The echoes of Blake's

'And the hapless soldier's sigh  
Runs in blood down palace walls'

reverberate yet from the high places of Berlin, London, Rome, and Moscow, while the sociological implications of his *Songs of Experience*, are among the bones of contention in our present 'cold' and 'hot' wars. All the above poets have powerfully influenced the three most 'actual' of modern poets—Yeats, Eliot and Auden; and if I assert that the most important of the three is Eliot it is because his view of 'reality' is not limited to the natural world, but is deepened and broadened by 'the issues of eternity', by the practical certainty of a 'supernature' which is the vital concern of the whole of humanity.

In 1922 T. S. Eliot's poem, *The Waste Land*, presented with a gnomic, kaleidoscopic, and unforgettable actuality the decadence, the disintegration of twentieth century society, with its aimless and materialistic social round, its lack of transcendental purpose, its intolerable *ennui* and frustration:

'. . . we stopped in the colonnade,  
And drank coffee, and talked for an hour.  
Bin gar keine Russin, stamm' aus Litauen, echt deutsch.  
And when we were children, staying at the Archduke's,  
My cousin's, he took me out on a sled,  
And I was frightened. He said, Marie,  
Marie, hold on tight. And down we went.  
In the mountains, there you feel free.  
I read, much of the night, and go south in the winter'.

That is a specimen of the texture and main drift of modern upper-class life: we can imagine all the rest of the speaker's physical, mental, and spiritual make-up (and for those who are not sure, the novels of Virginia Woolf will elaborate the details). Eliot implies that if human existence has no deeper meaning than this then Life is not willing to renew itself in the Spring of the year. The ultimate purpose of education and culture is to co-ordinate and reconcile the values of this world with the values of eternity: any other programme is either incomplete or trivial. No wonder, therefore, that the poet comments on the above passage in a series of pregnant yet familiar images or symbols, which reveal a universal desolation and despair:



'What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow  
Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man,  
You cannot say, or guess, for you know only  
A heap of broken images, where the sun beats,  
And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief,  
And the dry stone no sound of water'.

Although *The Waste Land*, like Yeats's *The Second Coming*, was to a large extent provoked or evoked by the First World War, it is astonishing that it could ever have been regarded as anything but a profoundly *religious* poem—a work whose tacit aim is to clear away the stony rubbish and sweep up the broken images prior to a new beginning. The immediate sequel to the above passage should have made this clear, even to those disillusioned intellectuals of the 1920's who seemed to want nothing more than a confirmation of their own nihilism:

'Only

There is a shadow under this red rock,  
(Come in under the shadow of this red rock) . . .'

How plain is this symbolism to anyone brought up in the English and Anglican tradition! Here is just a part of the field of reference:

' . . . and thou shalt smite the *rock*, and there shall come  
*water* out of it, that the people may drink . . .'  
(*Exodus*, xvii.6.)

'The Lord is my *rock*, my fortress, and my deliverer . . .'  
(*Psalms*, xviii.2.)

'Enter into the *rock*, and hide thee in the dust, for fear  
of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty.'  
(*Isaiah*, ii.10.)

'Thou art Peter, and upon this *rock* I will build My  
Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against  
it.'

(*Matthew*, xvi.18-19.)

Why does Eliot speak of a 'red' rock? An explanation had

been unconsciously proffered by the hymn-writer Toplady, long before the poem was written:

'Rock of ages, cleft for me!  
Let me hide myself in thee!  
Let the water and the blood  
From thy riven side which flowed,  
Be of sin the double cure . . .'

Eliot became an Anglo-Catholic, but all the traditional Christian references which he used in this poem had been summarily anticipated by an Anglican devotional versifier named Egone:

'As the shade of a rock in a weary land  
Whence gush the fresh waters at thy command;  
As a rocky foundation whereon to build,  
As a fortress of rock when the foe is afield,  
Such Maker and Saviour of man art thou,  
Our fortress, our rock, and our shield below.'

Moreover, what is Eliot's

'(Come in under the shadow of this red rock)'

but an inversion of Toplady's 'Let me hide myself in thee' combined with Christ's own: 'Come unto me all ye who are weary . . .'? It is because Eliot has hitherto been expressing, in his own terse and striking manner, the great commonplaces of Hebraic and Christian dogmatic theology that the whole is so immediate and 'actual' for us today. As he himself has insisted, no great poet is altogether 'original'; but every great poet must and does embrace, in his work, the things which are close and dear to the people.

In this first section of *The Waste Land*, Eliot seems to say: 'Once you have recovered the religious view of life you will perceive the shadow of death over all physical existence and all merely mundane hopes; you will realise the aridity, the pettiness, even the stark horror, of life which is without a transcendental purpose:

'I will show you fear in a handful of dust.'

This remarkable symptomatic and prophetic poem draws its motifs and symbols from many traditions—Nordic, Celtic, and Eastern; but the key to its total meaning is contained in the first forty lines. Moreover, the intense ‘actuality’ of this poem, for the present writer if for nobody else, is concisely explained in a passage of Eliot’s more recent prose:

‘First our culture, so far as it is positive, is still Christian. Secondly, it cannot remain in its present state; it must soon become wholly secular, unless it becomes more Christian than it now is. Thirdly, if the majority of our people understood the issue in all its bearings they would choose Christianity’.

We are still in a position to accept or reject that proposition as we please (and any but a *voluntary* acceptance would amount to a refutation); but we are not free to deny the obvious fact that the actuality of all Eliot’s greatest poetry springs from his vivid though not always perspicuous presentation of the modern dilemma, from his quietly passionate and deeply imaginative restatement of religious values which are in danger of eclipse.

I shall now pass on from the 1920’s and look for a similar ‘actuality’ in a poet of the 1930’s. Many critics would expatiate on the actuality of Auden, but for me the impact of this quality in his brilliant early poems is impaired by their materialism—their lack of higher vision or comprehensive realism; and his later works I have not yet had time to study. I shall deal, therefore, with two poems by the South African poet, Roy Campbell.

After Eliot’s work, *The Zulu Girl* and *The Serf* are relatively traditional, lucid, and mundane; but their simplicity may be deceptive. Both poems appear in *Sons of the Mistral* and in such a school anthology as *Thudding Drums* (set for Junior Certificate in 1948); hence I shall use the method of ‘running commentary’:

### THE ZULU GIRL

‘When in the sun the hot red acres smoulder,  
Down where the sweating gang its labour plies,  
A girl flings down her hoe, and from her shoulder  
Unslings her child tormented by the flies.’

Here we see at once what is virtually a variation on the theme quoted above (page 63) from Arnold's *A Summer Night*. In this first stanza the realistic African scene is stamped on the memory by half a dozen vivid words which suggest violence and discontent: *red, smoulder, sweating gang, flings, and tormented*. In this context "sweating gang" implies a low social stratum and suggests (to me) unwilling or 'sweated labour'. At first reading we feel this vaguely, but a knowledge of the whole poem confirms the impression. Ready to suckle her child (and no doubt glad of the rest), the girl 'flings' down her hoe: the verb looks and feels innocent enough until we read, in stanza 4, of

'The curbed ferocity of beaten tribes,  
The sullen dignity of their defeat.'

Campbell does not use a cliché like 'smouldering passion', but that, in effect, is what he means: these natives are so close to the soil that he creates a double and cumulative image when he first reminds us how the red acres 'smoulder' under the noon-day sun and later speaks of the subconscious racial feeling as 'An old unquenched unsmotherable heat—'. We note in passing that the girl's two initial actions have been linked by internal rhyme (*flings—unslings*), and we shall find throughout (as we *should* find) a strict interrelation of parts with regard to the whole.

Mention of flies prepares us for the slaughter of ticks.<sup>1</sup> But the Zulu agrarian life is not all sweat and vermin. There is an interglimpse of pure beauty as, having unslung the baby,

'She takes him to a ring of shadow pooled  
By thorn trees . . .'

Suckling is accompanied by the healthy sublimation of Bantu 'ferocity':

---

<sup>1</sup>It has been suggested to me, by a university student who was born on a South African farm, that "ticks," in this context, is not realistic: "ticks are not partial to natives!" Ticks may be the wrong word here (and in any case I have to accept the poet's assurance that the blood of a tick, when spread on a Bantu nail, is "purple"); but the error, if it is one, does not impair the core of meaning, the essential significance of the poem.

‘purpled with the blood of ticks,  
While her sharp nails, in slow caresses ruled,  
Prowl through his hair with sharp electric clicks,

His sleepy mouth, plugged by the heavy nipple,  
Tugs like a puppy, grunting as he feeds: . . . ’

This is a serious poem, but Campbell doesn't balk at suggesting the interfused comic and pathetic—the slow, half-angry, half-loving precision of the hunt and kill. The transposition to line 2 (stanza 2) of the adjectival phrase describing ‘nails’ harks back to the inverted style of Gray's elegy, and we may remark incidentally that whereas the smooth eighteenth century quatrains and lucid diction reveal a sedate *vates* who believes in seeing life *steadily*, the more unsavoury details indicate the plain modern man who is not afraid of seeing it *whole*. In the last two lines the strong diction of a Dryden is reinforced by the flat leaden assonance of *plugged, Tugs, puppy, grunting*.

At this point, exactly half-way through the poem, the poet seems to say (in the words of Blake): ‘Behold, I show you a mystery’. We suddenly encounter the sensual imagination, superbly controlled, of a Baudelaire. As the child sucks,

‘Through his frail nerves her own deep languors ripple  
Like a broad river sighing through its reeds.’

Already the imagery has assimilated Man in Nature—the aboriginal amid his native acres and trees; the child's nerves and the reeds. We are now prepared for the main theme of the poem, the more explicit suggestion of racial passion, the ‘dark gods’ or primitive mysticism (so-called) of ‘blood, nerve, and soil’. To any South African (black or white) stanza 4 should be more than ‘actual; it should strike home with ominous force:

‘Yet in that drowsy stream his flesh imbibes  
An old unquenched unsmotherable heat—  
The curbed ferocity of beaten tribes  
The sullen dignity of their defeat.’

In the last stanza of all, the symbolic images, simplified and lucid as primitive sculpture, complete the fusion of Man

and Nature. The black baby, contentedly sucking, is like a peaceful village nestling under a hill; but the swart hill (the mother) quickly becomes something less static—the first black cloud of a storm, charged, paradoxically, with a quiet menace and the promise of fruitfulness; a phenomenon pregnant, like the Bantu, with latent terror and future abundance:

‘Her body looms above him like a hill  
 Within whose shade a village lies at rest,  
 Or the first cloud so terrible and still  
 That bears the coming harvest in its breast.’

The imagery is dynamic and progressive: when we have reached the end we have also reached the beginning. The ‘flings down’ in stanza 1 may reverberate finally, in some minds, with an unpleasant change of adverb. The ‘electric clicks’ of stanza 2 gather up into the imminent lightnings of stanza 5. We have felt (possibly without consciously noticing them) the tension of *opposites*—contrasts which give dramatic suspense to the poem. In converging lines of development, they meet and culminate in the concept of ‘harvest’ — a fact which invests that word with a significant ambiguity:

<i>flings</i>	<i>unslings</i>
sharp nails	slow caresses
sharp clicks	sleepy mouth
ferocity	languors
sullen	drowsy
terrible	rest
<i>HARVEST</i>	

No less ‘actual’ and significant for us today is Campbell’s sonnet called *The Serf*. Not only is it like a pendant to *The Zulu Girl*; it is also like a commentary on it — almost an exegesis. I quote it entire, with interspersed observations:

#### THE SERF

‘His naked skin clothed in the torrid mist  
 That puffs in smoke around the patient hooves,  
 The plougman drives, a slow somnambulist,  
 And through the green his crimson furrow grooves.’

(A somnambulist should not be awakened too brusquely;  
some say he should not be awakened at all.)

‘His heart, more deeply than he wounds the plain,  
Long by the rasping share of insult torn,  
Red clod, to which the war-cry once was rain  
And tribal spears the fatal sheaves of corn,  
Lies fallow now.’

(Note the progressive ‘plough-harvest’ images: ‘*crimson furrow*’, ‘rasping *share* of insult’, ‘*Red clod*’, ‘spears . . . fatal *sheaves* of corn’. The ‘fallow’ heart corresponds to the ‘cloud so terrible and still’ in the previous poem.)

‘But as the turf divides  
I see in the slow progress of his strides  
Over the toppled clods and falling flowers,  
The timeless, surly patience of the serf  
That moves the nearest to the naked earth  
And ploughs down palaces, and thrones, and towers.’

Once again a latent power (this time of the ‘naked serf’) is attributed to a close relationship with the ‘naked earth’. The deliberately hyperbolic last line (evoked so naturally and pointedly by the toppling clods and falling flowers of line 11) may mean either (1) that the humble necessary toil of the ploughman will persist even when empires totter and cities crumble; or (2), catching up the intimations in ‘share of insult’, ‘tribal spears’ and ‘surly patience’, it may and surely does mean that the serf and his kind represent a solid phalanx of human rights and thews which in the end must inevitably prevail against all overprivileged and repressive forces. It is important to remember, moreover, that Roy Campbell was never in any real sense a Communist; indeed, as a determined anti-Communist he fought with Franco’s army in Spain.<sup>1</sup> Hence the actuality of these poems is born of ‘negative capability’ and virtually unbiased observation.

It has been well said that all poetry is ontology; these two poems are also ethnology and sociology. Though they do not deal with *being* on the highest plane, their imagery

---

<sup>1</sup>For his uncomplimentary opinion of ‘Reds’ see his *Flowering Rifle* (1938).

is symbolic and prophetic. We feel that the poet has understood the physio-psychological nature of the aboriginal better than most politicians. Campbell's disturbing awareness of the South African situation ought to shake the dangerous complacency of those nice people who, with their possibly delusive visions of the coming 'harvest', sit on their comfortable verandahs or behind sun-trap windows and think, between sips of iced fruit-juice, of the almost entirely 'non-actual' though factually true verses of Francis Carey Slater:

'Blue skies burning above  
Leagues of brown earth and sand;  
This is the land that we cherish and love,  
This is the Sunshine Land.'

W. H. GARDNER.



## SHAKESPEARE'S INFLUENCE ON GERMAN DRAMA

In the seventeenth century Shakespeare's name was completely unknown in Germany. His plays, however, found their way on to the German stages, though in a very distorted and vulgarised form. The English comedians who travelled on the Continent to earn their living by entertaining the people with music, dancing and play-acting produced the following Shakespeare plays: *The Comedy of Errors*, *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *King Henry IV*, *Titus Andronicus*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Julius Caesar*, *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, and *Othello*.<sup>1</sup> As there were no adequate German translations of Shakespeare's tragedies and comedies, and moreover as the English comedians were often ignorant of the German language, they spoke the original English verse. The audience on the other hand did not understand English sufficiently well to be able to listen for hours to the foreign language. It is for this reason that the English players began to over-emphasise the acting, gestures, decor and costume to offer to the eye what the ear missed. The result was that Shakespeare's plays were staged as burlesque, grotesque entertainment suitable for the vulgar masses and for production at fairs. When the English players took on German-speaking actors matters did not improve as these comedians had neither the ability nor the desire to give a worthy presentation of Shakespeare's plays in German. Most of them were uneducated people of the kind that travelled from fair to fair and showed their art on the market place. They were only interested in the plot and the story of the plays. They completely disregarded the original verse and began to improvise the dialogue in prose, and replaced by acting and over-acting what Shakespeare himself had been able to convey in words. One might venture to say that the Germans of the seventeenth century only understood the Shakespeare of the

comical interludes, and interpreted all his plays in this light.

The reason why Shakespeare was thus misunderstood is easy to find: The German people of that time could not imagine any other kind of stage entertainment than noisy, boisterous plays with cold-blooded murders, thrashings and obscenities as their main features. There was no real cultural life because Germany was suffering from the Thirty Years War and its aftermath. The German language itself was undeveloped in the seventeenth century. Apart from the translation of the Bible by Luther no major work had been written in Germany since the thirteenth century. As late as the middle of the eighteenth century the Germans were completely incapable of expressing in their mother tongue what Shakespeare had been able to say in English at the turn of the fifteenth to the sixteenth century. The only islands of civilisation and culture were the German courts. These courts—of which there were a great number—were altogether under the influence of the French. Even the medium of ordinary daily intercourse was French. Many of the German nobility spoke German only with difficulty and as a foreign language. The reason for this orientation towards French civilisation in preference to any other European culture is to be found in the very strong position of Louis XIV, who in the opinion of his contemporaries set the example not only of fashion but also of refined culture. Even Frederick the Great—the founder of Prussian power—wrote his own philosophy and poetry in French, and maintained in Berlin a company of French actors.

The influence of France did not remain restricted to the aristocracy. Towards the end of the seventeenth and at the beginning of the eighteenth century the professional and learned men in Germany were also wholly under the spell of the French way of thinking, although they thought and wrote in the German language. The Germans who had been uprooted by the Thirty Years War and who were longing to find security of some kind envied the French for their sure, successful way of living. Above all they admired the clarity and rationality of French thinking. It is therefore not surprising that the first attempts to reform the German stage were not inspired by Shakespeare's plays but by the French classical tragedies and comedies. The prestige of the French

classical writers was further enhanced by their claim to be the disciples of the Greek tragedians. For their strict rules of unity of place, time and action they quoted the authority of Aristotle. Their demand that in tragedies only the fate of the nobility and of important people should be depicted while the comedy should restrict its funmaking to ordinary people, the French asserted to be in true Greek tradition. Nobody in Germany bothered to read Aristotle in the original, and nobody had the desire to verify the French interpretation of the Attic rules for drama. One simply believed in the French and through their mediation in the Greeks. Apart from this very clear rules in dramatic art met one of the needs of the German rationalists: instead of being left to their own imagination and sense of value they were given objective measures, which were supposed to be valid for every writer or critic of drama.

One result of the great admiration for the clear, precise and regular French plays was the adoption of the alexandrine for German tragedies and comedies also. The advantage of the alexandrine seemed to lie in its regularity, clarity and lucidity of construction. One overlooked, however, that the alexandrine lost all its elegance and easy flow when it was used in the German language where the syllables are not differentiated by length but by emphasis. As German intonation is such that the first syllable always carries the stress, there developed a great monotony in German verse, which was very objectionable to the ear.

From about the second quarter of the eighteenth century Gottsched (1700-1766)—a very ordinary man of few gifts but a great talent for organisation—assumed the role of a dictator in the field of language and literature and the theatre. Gottsched was professor of literature and rhetoric at the University of Leipzig. Leipzig was at that time the centre of refined rationalistic culture in Germany and Gottsched planned to make Leipzig the German Paris and to develop his Society for the Study of German into a kind of academy as the French people have in their Academie Francaise. He propagated the rules of French classical drama and made the alexandrine the exclusively used verse in the writing of plays. He really dealt a deadly blow to the German versions of Shakespeare's plays and to the crude harlequinades of the

people's theatre. He was fortunate enough to acquire the support of the leading travelling company of players and between the years 1727 and 1740 twenty-seven 'regular' plays were produced. All these plays were either direct translations from the French or uninspired imitations. Nevertheless the audiences all over Germany appreciated the new regular plays because of their rationality, clarity and above all for their dignity. For the first time German theatregoers experienced in these plays which used the alexandrine that there was a direct connection between literature and theatre.

When Gottsched's influence was at its height, in the year 1741, a Prussian diplomat in London published the first German translation of a Shakespeare play, viz *Julius Caesar*. As a concession to public opinion he chose the alexandrine for his translation. But Gottsched was not to be blinded by this concession. He felt immediately and strongly that this Shakespeare play, even in its rather stiff and lifeless translation, did not conform at all to the ideal of rationalistic French drama. He feared that all his efforts in educating German audiences to appreciate a clear logical play with a simple straightforward plot and with characters who behaved in a calculable manner were in vain. He lost no time to state in public what he thought about such an uncontrolled, unorganised, chaotic concoction and did not spare words of deep-felt disgust. His criticism applied not only to the form of the play but to the plot as well. As a true rationalist he ridiculed and condemned the appearance of the ghost, arguing that no enlightened person could possibly believe in such supernatural apparitions. Yet he had to experience that just his most gifted pupils were fascinated by Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, in which they sensed a much fuller and truer depiction of life than Gottsched's 'regular' plays had been able to give. To be sure, these admirers of Shakespeare did not advance further than to an apology for his inability to depict life in a more rational way.

The first German critic and playwright who not merely condoned Shakespeare's neglect of the classical rules but dared to defend him was Lessing (1729-1781). Lessing, like all his contemporaries, believed in the authority of Aristotle, but instead of relying on the French translations he read him in the original. He proceeded to show that Gottsched and

the French had interpreted Aristotle wrongly. According to Lessing's interpretation of Aristotle the aim of tragedy is to inspire sympathy and fear, sympathy with the suffering hero and fear that a similar fate may befall us. For Lessing there was no doubt that Shakespeare achieves this aim in all his tragedies in spite of the fact that he disregards the three unities. The French classical playwrights, however, seemed to him often to fail to bring about the desired effect, although they observed the laws slavishly. Because Shakespeare achieves the object of drama—as defined by Aristotle—Lessing called him the 'brother of Sophocles'. Further Lessing claimed that there was a much greater affinity between the English and the Germans than between the French and the Germans. He went so far as to say that it was a great mistake of Gottsched and his followers to attempt such a close approximation to French classical drama.

Nevertheless Lessing himself was a rationalist at heart. His whole approach to Shakespeare bears this out. He first analysed the object or aim of drama, then inquired into the means to achieve this aim, and finally proved that Shakespeare could justify himself even before a rationalistic tribunal. All along Lessing was convinced of the inherent rationality, if not of the structure of Shakespeare's plays, then at any rate of the universe which his plays represent. In his own dramatical works Lessing desired to follow Shakespeare in this respect and to give a coherent picture of life. He did not, however, allow himself the same liberty with the classical rules about the three unities. He used prose in all his plays except the last, *Nathan der Weise*, which is written in blank verse. Lessing's only really revolutionary move was the introduction of the so-called *Bürgerliche Trauerspiel*, a tragedy in which the heroes are ordinary middle-class people. In defending this innovation Lessing quoted both Shakespeare and Aristotle as authorities. That Lessing himself remained within the framework of rationalism reveals itself clearly in his attitude towards the young generation of writers who came into their own round about 1770 and who are known in the history of German literature as *Sturm und Drang*.

'Storm and stress' broke completely with the rationalistic French tradition of the theatre. For them the highest abilities of man were not ratio, thinking and intellect, but passion,

feeling and emotions. They acclaimed Shakespeare's plays as the only worthy and true representations of life as it really is. Indeed they went so far as to say that Shakespeare's plays are life itself. Under the influence of Rousseau they developed a new concept of life. While Lessing conceived life and the universe in terms of ratio and reason, *Sturm und Drang* understood it as free spontaneous nature which out of the abundance is always creating new, characteristic, original forms which can never be repeated. Just as it makes no sense to ask nature about her aims and the means to achieve them, it is impossible to inquire into the object of poetry and the means to realise it. Shakespeare was now idolised as the great genius who, like life or nature itself, creates spontaneously and is therefore independent of rules. Neither Shakespeare as a poet nor his work—so the argument ran—can be really understood within the narrow limits of rationalism. The *Sturm und Drang* writers claimed to be exceptional, original poets like Shakespeare and therefore felt privileged to break all conventions of form and construction and use of language. Lessing had no sympathy whatsoever with this revolutionary movement and yet unintentionally and unknowingly he had paved the way for it by defending Shakespeare as a man of genius against the narrow schoolmasters who are oblivious to Shakespeare's uniqueness and measure the giant by inches.

In the meantime more of Shakespeare's works had been rendered into German. Again the translation did not meet with unqualified praise, though now for a different reason. *Sturm und Drang* writers accused the translator Wieland (1733-1813) of a petty, schoolmasterly attitude towards the great English playwright and criticised the translation for its lack of vigour and vitality. Yet it was through Wieland's rendering that the Germans became more intimately acquainted with Shakespeare as a poet. And as it happens again and again in the German interpretation of Shakespeare a misunderstanding proved to have far-reaching consequences. Wieland presented Shakespeare's plays in German prose, because the Germans had had no experience as yet in using their mother tongue in blank verse.<sup>2</sup> But instead of finding fault with Wieland's use of prose for the original English verse *Sturm und Drang* established the principle that

all plays which are to reflect life as it really is must be written in prose. Instead of criticising the lack of concentration and structure they hailed it as an indication of the extreme freedom of the poet who refuses to be restricted and frustrated by the laws of verse.

The German discussion of Shakespeare's qualities as a poet and playwright was carried further by Herder (1744-1803), the leader of *Sturm und Drang*. He concerned himself not only with the form of Shakespeare's plays, but also with the contents, particularly the characterisation. Herder was strongly influenced by Rousseau and his philosophy of nature. For Herder Shakespeare is a creative force like nature itself, and the universe, which his great plays depict, is also an image of nature—or even nature itself—in all its richness and diversity. The experience of Rousseau's philosophy of nature and the intimate knowledge of Shakespeare's plays, in English as well as in translation, underlies also Herder's analysis of the possibility of absolute and general laws of art. According to him a work of art is not made to order and not constructed to fit a given pattern; a work of art grows like a plant or as an animal grows. Individual artists and single works of art can therefore only be judged by their own standards. All artistic creations are bound in spirit and in form to epochs, nations, and existing cultures, and can thus only be understood against this background. Herder's advice to the German poets consequently was that they should not imitate any other author nor any other nation, but that they should find their own original expression of their own characteristic experiences. Herder then proceeded to show why Shakespeare's achievements cannot any longer be measured by standards of the Greek tragedians and why Aristotle's rules of the three unities may not be applied to him either. Greek drama developed out of the chorus and the ritual dance which were produced on the market place to honour the gods and to commemorate heroic deeds of the past. A comparison of the work of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides proved to Herder that the tendency of Attic drama was not towards simplification but towards variation and differentiation. The famous laws of Aristotle reflected only the state of affairs in his own time; they grew naturally out of the conditions under which Greek plays were produced. Shakespeare's plays on

the other hand did not develop out of a chorus and dance and they do not reflect a simple mode of living. Shakespeare lived in an age with a social structure which was already highly complicated, and the history of his nation as well as that of other peoples was far from being simple and straightforward. Shakespeare depicted life as he experienced it in all its diversity. Therefore the rapid change of scene, the stretching of the span of time far beyond the Aristotelian 24 hours, therefore the development of subordinate actions and minor plots, and for that reason also the interspersing of tragedy with comic elements.

There is however one Aristotelian criterion which Herder wished to apply to Greek, French, English and German drama alike: the evocation of fear and sympathy as the aim of tragedy. According to Herder Shakespeare is in his own way and with his own particular means just as successful in arousing these emotions as Sophocles is. In an enthusiastic essay on Shakespeare Herder formulated the paradox that Shakespeare is the brother of Sophocles just because he does not imitate the Greek pattern of tragedy but evolves his own. In the concluding paragraphs Herder referred to a young German poet who, he thought, might be able to create in the German language for the German nation plays such as those of Shakespeare.

This young German was Goethe (1749-1832). His attitude towards Shakespeare changed greatly in the course of his life. As a young man he shared Herder's unqualified admiration for Shakespeare. The English playwright seemed to him the incorporation of an exceptional, original poet, whose creative power was without limitation like that of nature itself. In his first dramatic plans and completed plays Goethe obviously imitated those characteristics of Shakespeare which for him and his contemporaries stood out most clearly. He used prose; he disregarded all the rules about the unities; he neglected the disposition of the plot, arranged all the dramatic events round one main character and let the play end with the death of the hero, quite unconcerned about whether he had achieved or failed to achieve what he had been striving for. Goethe's first novel, *Die Leiden des jungen Werther*, also bears witness to the strong influence of Shakespeare's plays, particularly of Hamlet, which he had read in



English and in Wieland's translation. Although Goethe's early works were well received and made him famous all over Europe, he developed away from *Sturm und Drang*. A number of factors, too numerous to mention here, were responsible for the change. It is necessary, however, to mention that Goethe took over the duties of a minister of the state of Weimar and that in this position he felt the need for self-control and self-restriction. His friendship to a married woman, Charlotte von Stein, which soon developed into passionate love, forced upon him the decision either to disregard the moral laws and to fulfil his desires or to respect convention and ethical laws and thus sacrifice his happiness. He chose the latter and discovered to his amazement that such restriction of his freedom did not mean frustration of his personality but on the contrary the possibility of expansion. He felt himself growing in strength and in self-respect. During the period of his office Goethe had little time to devote to his poetical works. But when he left Weimar after ten years of hard and strenuous work in the service of others, he tried to transfer his newly gained convictions about the necessity of law and order and restriction to his poetry. In Italy he saw the relics of ancient culture and he was most fascinated by their clear proportions and well planned structure.

From now on Goethe not only used blank verse in his plays but also sought after a more rational and clearer disposition. It is in this connection that the Attic tragedians gained influence on Goethe to the same extent as Shakespeare lost it. There can be no doubt that Goethe was attempting to emulate Euripides when writing his play *Iphigenie*. The German people and even his closest friends did not understand his new aspirations, and Goethe felt very lonely and deserted until he got to know Schiller.

Schiller (1759-1805) was about ten years younger than Goethe. They met each other for the first time when Goethe had returned from Italy. Schiller was at that time a candidate for the professorship in history at the University of Jena and Goethe had to make a written recommendation as to his suitability. Although Goethe supported Schiller he had no desire for a more intimate acquaintance with him, for he knew Schiller's early plays and he disapproved of them. These

plays were strongly influenced by Shakespeare as seen through the eyes of a disciple of Rousseau and of *Sturm und Drang* and they appeared at a moment when Goethe himself had done away with Shakespeare and storm and stress. But Schiller was also to be cured of the irrationalism of *Sturm und Drang*. The need for clear proportions and rational forms which Goethe had experienced in the relics of ancient sculptures and buildings, Schiller learned to appreciate through his study of history and of Kant's philosophy. Only after Schiller had outgrown the influence of *Sturm und Drang* did the intimate friendship between the two greatest German writers develop. In their correspondence Goethe and Schiller tried to clarify their views about the nature of dramatic art and formulated the principles of the German classical writing.

They found a new definition for the difference between Attic and Shakespearian tragedy, contrasting the former as tragedy of fate with the latter as tragedy of character. The ancient Greek tragedies show the fate of the hero as being predetermined by the gods. The human being may be aware of the intentions of the gods but he cannot counteract the execution of their will. Indeed if he attempts to plan his life in such a way as to escape his fate, he only hastens the course of destiny. This is called tragic irony and displays itself most forcibly in *King Oedipus*. Another characteristic of Attic drama is that it concerns itself mainly with the analysis of the catastrophe which is impending from the very beginning of the play. What Goethe and Schiller admired in ancient Greek tragedy was the coherent structure and the consistent manner in which the role of destiny is displayed. All the singular, characteristic, individual qualities of the hero were of no real significance in comparison with the representation of human life in general.

In the evaluation of Shakespeare Goethe now distinguished between Shakespeare's qualities as a poet and those as a playwright; he thought highly of the poet Shakespeare but poorly of the playwright. He dwelt on this distinction in a long essay: *Shakespeare und kein Ende*; and it is true to say that Shakespeare's influence on Goethe was not less on his two novels: *Die Leiden des jungen Werther* and *Wilhelm Meister*, than on his two early plays, *Götz von Berlichingen* and *Egmont*.

As director of the court theatre in Weimar Goethe would not produce any Shakespearian play without re-writing and adaptation. He himself cut and arranged *Romeo and Juliet*, while Schiller adapted *Macbeth*. Goethe's stage book of *Romeo and Juliet* simplified the action, reduced the number of characters, cut down the comical interludes to a minimum, replaced names of individuals like Friar Laurence and Paris by generalising descriptions — the padre and the bridegroom, and did his best to remove everything that was unique, characteristic or arbitrary.

Another objection of Goethe and Schiller becomes evident from Schiller's remark about *Macbeth* that 'destiny itself contributes too little, and the faults of the hero contribute too much to his misfortune'. Shakespeare, they felt, emphasised too strongly the freedom of action of the autonomous individual. They realised that Shakespeare's tragedies show how the great individual, conscious of his own free will, comes up against the laws of the universe. The heroes of Shakespeare's plays shape their own destiny and tragedy arises from forces in the tragic hero himself.

When Schiller adapted *Macbeth* for a performance in Goethe's theatre in Weimar he did his best to bring out the inevitability of fate. He described the witches as 'sisters of destiny' and overemphasised their influence on Macbeth. In addition he made him a victim of Lady Macbeth who is represented as his evil demon. This and the fact that his crimes are shown to be the result of ambitious desires arising from the unconscious over which he has little control, make Schiller's *Macbeth* a passive hero. To arouse associations from Attic tragedy the parts of the witches were played by male actors in masks and on cothurni.

The adaptation of *Macbeth* shows however still another aspect of Schiller's interpretation of Shakespeare which had far-reaching consequences, although it is based on a misconception. While Shakespeare shows the free individual in conflict with universal laws without laying undue stress on moral issues Schiller projects his own moral evaluations into Shakespeare's characters, e.g. into Macbeth. Destiny is for Schiller the executive agent of a moral order in which crime finds its just and ineluctable retribution. It is because of Schiller's prestige that this interpretation of Shakespeare prevailed in Germany well into the nineteenth century. And

this in its turn gave rise to the German theory—which was also accepted throughout the first half of the nineteenth century—that tragedy is always concerned with man in his relation to a universal moral order and that drama represents the course of history as a final and just judgment on virtue and vice. In his own tragedies Schiller followed Shakespeare as he understood him. His last plays are an attempt to reconcile the Greek conception of destiny with Shakespeare's analysis of characters. It is no exaggeration to say that Shakespeare's influence on German drama was furthered more through Schiller's mediation than through any translation of Shakespeare.

This however should not lead us to overlook the famous translation by Schlegel, Tieck and Baudissin (since 1797). This translation is significant in many respects, and for various reasons it represents the culmination of Shakespeare's influence on German writing.

Only now at the very end of the eighteenth century was it possible for the Germans to attempt a translation which in form and contents is a close approximation to the original works. The German playwrights had first to go through the hard discipline of rationalistic rules about form and construction, then to try and cope with the forcefulness, vigour and passion of *Sturm und Drang*, before Goethe and Schiller could set them an example of a form which, in spite of restraint and control, retained the underlying human experience to the full. Now only the German language was broad enough in vocabulary and sufficiently flexible to be used for a verse translation of Shakespeare.

But the mastery of the German language was not all that was wanted before such translation of Shakespeare's works could be attempted. There had also to be experienced a new need for the rendering in German of works that were accessible in English to every educated person. A. W. Schlegel as well as Dorothea Tieck and Graf Baudissin who helped him belonged to that generation of German writers which is customarily described as the Romantic School. The Romantics admired Goethe—with some reservations—and despised Schiller, and were in opposition to the whole outlook of the German classical movement. They ridiculed Schiller because of his overemphasis of the moral issue in drama. They refused to accept Goethe's doctrine

that the aim of drama is to raise all individual and historical experience into a sphere of generalisation and abstraction, where the fate of the individual is merely representative or symbolic of the fate of mankind as a whole. Yet the Romantics did not believe either what *Sturm und Drang* and Herder had propagated, that the representation of the individual, characteristic, unrepeatable features of life and of unique characters is the aim of play-writing. They were, if anything, even more against the rationalistic conception that nature and man can only be understood in terms of ratio and reason and that drama should represent only what is comprehensible to the five senses. In their opposition against all these doctrines the Romantic school developed a new concept—that of universality. And just as the rationalist, the *Sturm und Drang*, and the classical writers had based their convictions on Shakespeare's works, so the Romantics acclaimed Shakespeare as the great master of universality, indeed as the greatest example of universality in their sense.

Friedrich Schlegel, the brother of August Wilhelm, characterised modern poetry as progressive and universal; and this formulation was generally accepted by the Romantic school. By progressive they meant that modern poetry should not aim at the presentation of the result of experiencing, thinking and feeling in a static picture with definite and clear-cut outlines as Goethe and Schiller had done in their classical plays. Modern poetry should contain and reflect the process of experiencing, thinking and feeling. By universal the Romantics understood that poetry should aim at grasping the whole meaning of all experiences of life and human nature. This involved in their opinion that life cannot be understood without the experience of death, that day and night belong together and mutually explain each other, as light and shade are only two aspects of the same entity. Sanity is revealed by madness; waking depends on the possibility of sleeping, dreams illuminate the experiences of clear day; the magic sphere of fairy tales and demons is not hermetically sealed off from the reality which is governed by the strict laws of cause and effect. Good and bad belong to each other as two poles; the sublime and the vulgar cannot be understood without reference of the one to the other. Tragedy gains a new

dimension if set out against the background of comedy, just as comedy rises above mere wit and funmaking as soon as the tragic quality of life is sensed as well. This theory of modern poetry as being progressive and universal was developed mainly in the study of Shakespeare's poetical works—and was now used to demonstrate his greatness both as a poet and dramatist. It was this experience that led A. W. Schlegel to translate Shakespeare's tragedies and comedies into German. In his interpretation Shakespeare is today known to all Germans even if they read the original English plays.

The nineteenth century did not give up the discussion of Shakespeare; yet it added nothing new to the Romantic conceptions. Poets and playwrights did not feel tempted to gain clarity about their own aims by analysing Shakespeare's works. They simply accepted the interpretation of the Schlegels or of Goethe or Schiller or Herder. Only in the school of Stefan George which tried to break completely with contemporary and generally accepted views on the nature of the poet and of poetry did one begin to feel again that a fresh interpretation of Shakespeare might lead to a better understanding of one's own ideals and possibilities. It was this search for a new orientation that finally produced Friedrich Gundolf's famous book: *Shakespeare und der deutsche Geist* which traces in great detail the developments which are only briefly indicated here. But Gundolf himself did not advance beyond his remarkably subtle account of previous interpretations of Shakespeare, probably because the fundamental premises and experiences of the George School were not broad and profound enough to carry the full weight of a new interpretation. He paved the way for it, and it is indeed possible that German poets and playwrights may once more be stimulated by the experience and study of Shakespeare's drama to create the plays which will be in conformity with the needs and aspirations of their own age.

M. SCHMIDT-JHMS.

---

<sup>1</sup>cf. Gundolf: *Shakespeare und der deutsche Geist*.

<sup>2</sup>Lessing's *Nathan der Weise* appeared only twelve years after Wieland's translation of Shakespeare's works.

## FOREIGNERS IN SOUTH AFRICAN ARCHAEOLOGY

A recent paper by Mr. J. F. Schofield<sup>1</sup> has argued that the rock-paintings of South Africa are of recent date, not more than a few centuries old at most, and that the pictures of so-called foreigners cannot be identified with Chinese, Minoan Cretans, Sumerians or other distant peoples who flourished thousands of years ago. Mr. Schofield has done valuable work in clearing away a number of vague and misty generalisations, put forward partly by the Abbé Breuil, who has been greatly impressed by the resemblances of South African to European palaeolithic rock-paintings, and has consequently tried to equate their ages.

A resemblance of style between the two areas is undoubted, and this is reinforced by the resemblance of many South African stone implements to North African and European cultures and forms. Assuming however that various palaeolithic cultures spread across the African continent, their contemporaneity rests at present on slender evidence; nor has satisfactory proof yet been given for assumed climatic correlations across the equator, that an extension of ice in northern Europe, involving a cooler and damper climate round the Mediterranean and habitable conditions in the Sahara, caused a maximum either of rainfall or of aridity in South Africa. Until the meteorologists can demonstrate the interdependence of the climatic pulsations in the two hemispheres, archaeology cannot accept vague cultural resemblances as bases for chronological reconstruction.

Thus there is no evidence that the rock-paintings of South Africa are as old as or are derived from those of Europe, and it is unjustifiable to string them out in a stylistic series from an assumed starting-point about 20,000 B.C. Mr. Schofield has however used his broom a little too

---

<sup>1</sup>*South African Archaeological Bulletin* iii (1948), p. 79.

energetically, and tried to sweep away some of the floor as well as the cobwebs. He asserts that the paintings must be subsequent to the inhabitation of the rock-shelters in which they are found, because smoke and soot from fires would rapidly have destroyed the colours. This would lead us to the conclusion that the "Bushmen" moved from shelter to sites in the open, in order to decorate the walls of their former abodes. In fact, paintings are sometimes found at the side of the cave, not at the back where fires have hollowed out the rock. It would be safer then to say that the extant paintings are contemporary with the later phases of occupation of the caves, i.e. they mostly belong to the end of the late stone-age (down to a century ago). Many of them cannot be much older, as the rock panels used would have been out of reach until the cave-earth rose to nearly its present level.

Older paintings there may have been, and lumps of ochre have been found in cave-deposits. Mr. Schofield stresses the extreme rarity of paintings below the present surface of the cave-earth. It is however possible that the paint, which was probably compounded of mineral colouring-matter and animal-fat, remains hard when exposed to the air but moulders rapidly or attracts soil-insects, such as white ants, when covered with earth.

If our extant paintings are of no great antiquity, those reputed to represent foreigners are not so either. Indeed, the claim that they depict ancient peoples has been based sometimes on white skins, details of costume etc., which are not "Bushman", sometimes, as in the case of the White Lady of Brandberg, on motifs which appear in Mediterranean countries. The latter argument is unconvincing, as the style of these figures differs but little from that of other rock-paintings.

The costumes of some "foreigners" have been explained by Mr. Schofield, so the only pictures which need discussion are the White Lady at Brandberg in South-west Africa and Impey's Cave in Rhodesia.<sup>1</sup> The figures at both sites wear many beads, which suggests Bantu influence, and apparently tight-fitting garments covering more or less of the trunk. Such garments are neither specifically nor normally

---

<sup>1</sup>S.A.A.B. iii (1948), p. 2; Battiss, *Artists of the Rocks*, pl. 12.



Mediterranean. The claim for European features is doubtful, though it may be admitted that some of the faces on the White Lady panel are not Bantu. The white skins may show that bodies were rubbed with chalk for certain ceremonies or were albino. We find on other sites figures wearing a skin which hangs down the back; this is often painted in a contrasting but unrealistic colour such as white.

The paintings therefore give us no help in our search for foreigners in South African archaeology, and it behoves us to enquire what other evidence might be forthcoming. It is the purpose of this paper to direct attention to certain considerations, and to appeal to the public to inform the university staff if they find anything which might throw light on our problem. Evidence is likely to be found by chance and sporadically, and if not at once reported may easily be destroyed.

The arrival of stray foreigners, probably merchants, on our shores is not intrinsically impossible. I see no reason to doubt the story of the Phoenician circumnavigation of Africa. Winds and currents would make a journey down the east coast fairly easy whereas along the west coast the ancients were unable to go farther than the Cameroons, if as far.

Supposing foreign traders came to South Africa, we should not expect traces or pictures of them in the Drakensberg or far in the interior. The Drakensberg artists can have had no knowledge of seafaring ships, whose masts and sails could hardly fail to appeal to them. They occasionally portray fish<sup>1</sup>; and the scene at Himeville of fish-spearing from small boats<sup>2</sup> is probably laid in a lagoon.

A few centuries ago the lagoons of the Natal rivers would have been accessible from the sea; the present bars have been formed as a result of modern soil-erosion. The Tugela lagoon, which is one of the largest and most inviting, is remembered to have been used by small sea-going boats. Foreign traders would undoubtedly have taken refuge in these lagoons from an otherwise surf-bound coast, especially in the larger ones like the Tugela and Durban Bay. North of the Tugela they are unlikely to have tried to land, as

---

<sup>1</sup>Cp. *S. A. A. B.* ii (1947), p. 41.

<sup>2</sup>Battiss, *J. c.* p. 163.

they would have been lost in a wilderness of marsh and forest. Beside the lagoons they would have established markets, probably temporary and without buildings, at which objects would be bartered and lost, to be found in modern times. These markets would probably have been on defensible mounds close to the shore of the lagoon.

Thus, if we are to find traces of foreign infiltration, we must look for stray objects of foreign provenance near the lagoons. The sort of site which is likely to have been used is the steep isolated hill of Fort Pearson on the Tugela, though nothing has been found there.

From the Tugela southward, fairly easy routes lead up ridges to the interior. Neither foreigners nor natives bartering with them are likely to have used the valleys, which are steep and torturous. Thus, though late stone-age remains and sites are common in the middle Tugela-Mooi valley, there seems to be little on the lower reaches. We must therefore look for stray finds along the ridge-routes, which are often those used by modern roads.

Next, what would such foreigners have imported? They may have brought beads. Such were found at Zimbabwe, and early types of bead, perhaps Roman, have turned up in South Africa. But in this matter one must be cautious. Beads from India are likely to have arrived by sea, but those from Egypt and the Mediterranean could have travelled overland and been carried south by Bantu invaders. Moreover, beads are heirlooms used for many generations, and there is no guarantee that a bead was deposited or lost even within several centuries of its date of manufacture. Coins and other trinkets may have been brought by sea, though Mr. Schofield pours scorn on the few coins that have been found along the coasts of Natal and Cape Province, maintaining that they had been introduced by modern collectors. In such cases it is most necessary to make immediately a clear record of the circumstances of the find.

Supposing again that foreigners did come so far south, it is necessary to envisage their aims. Were they explorers, like Necho's Phoenicians? Was anything to be found in South Africa which they could not get further north? For ivory and slaves they need not come so far, and the coastal districts contain few valuable minerals. The ancient world

did a large trade with Somaliland; but otherwise their ships turned east at Bab-el-Mandeb, on the route to the civilised lands of India and China.

Finally, who might such foreigners be? It is unlikely that in the normal way Mediterranean peoples would have sailed the Red Sea. The Persian Gulf faces east and not south-west; and when Alexander the Great undertook to circumnavigate Arabia, it is clear that little was known about its south coast. Indians might have come to Africa, but hardly in any numbers before the Portuguese discovered the route to India. Arabs made their way and founded settlements a long way down the East African coast, and their predecessors the Yemenites held most of the local carrying trade of the Indian Ocean. It is to Yemen rather than to the Levant or Mesopotamia that we must look for early imports, if any are ever found in South Africa.

This paper is negative in its conclusions; but it is clear that possible foreign contacts are going to be of great value for reconstructing the record of South African prehistory. The evidence is likely to consist mainly of stray finds, and unless these are promptly reported and examined by an expert, their value will be small. I would therefore appeal to readers in Natal and elsewhere, if they find ancient objects which seem to be of foreign origin, to communicate at once with the University, several members of whose staff are competent archaeologists. On such news being received, someone will visit the site as promptly as possible.

O. DAVIES.

## THE POETS' POET

Spenser is the poets' poet because only poets can read him. One expects scholars, of course. They can read anything: having an ulterior motive, they will sift through hills of dust, like Silas Wegg and Mr. Venus, with their eyes shut, feeling only for the hard and brassy facts. But among bona fide readers those who mix in their complexions too much of earth and water may sink if they try to follow Spenser; only readers whose natural element is his own, or who have learned to move there, can keep afloat in the vast aerial oceans through which his chariot 'softly swims'.

*Sweet Spenser, moving through his clouded heaven  
With the moon's beauty, and the moon's soft pace . . .*

Everything in *The Faerie Queene* is transfused with Spenser's light, the 'colouring of the imagination', which is like moonlight, Wordsworth says. Frequent points are 'tipped with silver', frequent shadows dramatically black, and the air is both vague and luminous, a 'tranced crystalline haze'. You can't walk there with thoughtless strides, as if it were daylight; you need a much sharper eye and a much more watchful step.

In other words, the texture of Spenser's verse is so fine and yet so even that your whole mind—senses, intellect, emotions, imagination—must be acutely on the alert to respond as it ought. The verse can only be taken in fully by dint of minute attention, the attention of many faculties together, and as the poem goes on for about five thousand Alexandrine stanzas that attention is likely to flag from time to time without some powerful unifying stimulants. And this is lacking, for Spenser disregards two of Aristotle's profoundest principles, the one about singleness in the action, and the one about magnitude.

It is not at all true, as Professor H. C. Notcutt has proved<sup>1</sup> that Spenser rambles: he weaves an immense,

---

<sup>1</sup>See *Essays and Studies of the English Association*, Vol. xii, et al.

ornate, connected design (unfinished, of course), based not on the narrative, but on the allegory, which he works out in close detail as he goes along, keeping the main pattern fairly symmetrical and clear. But singleness? No! The kind of plot where every detail helps to drive the main action and our interest in it more and more urgently to the more and more inevitable close—that is almost comically absent, even in the individual books; and Aristotle is right: the poem which lacks action in that sense falls short of the very greatest. *The Faerie Queene* is also the wrong size; it is too long: it can't all be taken in at the same time, as Aristotle says a work of art must be; it can't be hung up on one wall, like *Paradise Lost* or *The Head*, but lies in the mind folded up, fold on hidden fold, like 'cloth of Arras', and has to be shaken out, hung in a whole castleful of rooms, and looked at gradually in perambulation. Then the pattern is perceptible through all the lovely detail, and the cumulative effect is delightful. Nevertheless, too much of the energy that should go into the aesthetic response is wasted in walking and standing about, and presently we grow tired and go off somewhere else, or fall asleep on a bench.

And yet he is the poets' poet. Poets have never taken *The Faerie Queene* seriously, perhaps, as a solid single work of art. But as an element to bathe in, he refreshes like the sea at one's cottage fence. We bathe in the little bay, but the tang and the freshness come from all the lively ocean beyond. Any reader, jumping in for a dip, and letting wavelet after wavelet dash against him, comes out with mind and senses new-washed and more vigorous, his whole spirit toned up, less earthbound, and with an allegiance to the purer element.

What is this purer element made of? No analysis will explain, but we might consider what some of the components are:

The greatest pleasure in life being, as Aristotle says, the recognition of truth, poetry that 'unveils the hidden beauty of the world', is doubly delightful to us. Spenser unveils the beauty through a myriad beauties—his great sea gives them up freely and abundantly—but perhaps we are most enchanted when he discovers to us as living,

moving creatures the Platonic Ideas that we feel to be hidden in the forms of everyday life. *The Faerie Queene* is full of Perfections and Absolutes walking about quite naturally among the other inhabitants. Words have made 'fleshy weeds' for them, so that we apprehend them with our five senses, our memory and emotions, and yet the weeds don't 'grossly close them in', for they remain Ideas. This is because the images that clothe them have a very transient concreteness; they flow away into something else the moment they have touched our minds and opened them to suggestion. It is almost as if the Ideas were defined by circumambient abstractions, like the angels of mediaeval Schoolmen, who were clad in air to make them palpable to human sense.

Consider, for example, the description of the two swans who symbolise the birds in *Prothalamion*:

*With that I saw two Swannes of goodly hewe,  
Come softly swimming down along the Lee;  
Two fairer Birds I yet did never see:  
The snow which doth the top of Pindus strew  
Did never whiter shew,  
Nor Jove himself when he a swan would be  
Fore love of Leda, whiter did appeare;  
Yet Leda was, they say, as white as he,  
Yet not so white as these, nor nothing neare;  
So purely white they were,  
That even the gentle streame, the which them bare,  
Seem'd foule to them, and bad his billowes spare  
To wet their silken feathers, least they might  
Soyle their faire plumes with water not so fayre,  
And marre their beauties bright,  
That shone as heavens light,  
Against their Brydale day, which was not long.  
Sweet Themmes runne softly, till I end my Song.*

*Prothalamion* is a marriage song, and it pictures perfection. This is most magnificently done in the poem as a whole, in which we are made to realise, as perhaps nowhere else, the beauty, wholesomeness, security, fruitfulness of the Elizabethan view of life and attitude to marriage. This stanza is a detail of the whole. The two birds are highborn,

beautiful and chaste, and the image of the swans is used to express the pure essence, the Idea of these qualities. The lovely gliding movement of the verse, flowing and bending, pausing and gliding on, like the river and the birds, reflects elegance and grace; then, when the whiteness of the swans is dwelt on, as one image flows and vanishes into another, each image fluid and aetherial, casting off concreteness or any earthy clog, the Idea of that whiteness — purity, nobility, loveliness — is built up with a most astonishing intensity, holding the light from all the images around it as a diamond holds light. The images that built it up are very nearly Ideas themselves, but touch the concrete just long enough to gather these qualities from snow, those from Jove, others from crystal and water; to turn the mind from plummy swans to airy snow to godlike majesty, magnificent, feathered, sculptured whiteness, and male power, back (through Leda) to women, to the brides (and here the mind is moved toward tenderness and love); back through all the words and rhythm, and especially such words as 'billowes', 'silken feathers', 'faire plumes', 'soyle', to a vision 'excellently bright' of the airy lightness, the curving shapes, the 'softly swimming' movements of the swans, and of the crystal-pure river, and, in it, to corresponding thoughts about the dazzling virgin beauty of the brides; until at length from whiteness now become purer and more radiant than water, we are lifted up to the blissful summit of seeming to imagine what of course we can't imagine: 'that shone as heaven's light'; and at this heavenly height, the words and rhythm float right back again to the concrete, the time and the place, the 'Brydale day', the 'silver-streaming Thames'.

*The Faerie Queene* is full of this kind of writing. Maintaining, as it does, that the only activity worthy of man is to pursue the ideal, especially the ideal of chivalry,—

*O goodly usage of the antique time  
In which the sword was servant unto right.*<sup>1</sup>

—it is full of Perfections made palpable. Being allegory,

---

<sup>1</sup>An echo of Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso* Canto I line 22 : 'O gran bontà de' cavallieri antiqui!'; where Ariosto's comment is ironical. Spenser, who cannot have overlooked the irony, calmly sets it aside.

it is full of all kinds of Absolutes. But among these ideas move robuster creatures, like Britomart and Glause, almost as human as Shakespeare's Beatrice and his Touchstone. Fantastic as their stories are, their behaviour, speech and bearing is like that of real people whom we know, living in the twentieth century. For Spenser holds his creations

. . . like a dream

*With pargeter's hands, now light now dense.*

Angels clad in air, creatures clad in clay weave about through his poem in flawless harmony. This is one of the perpetual pleasures of *The Fairie Queene*. For example, Britomart, the lady knight, has just unhorsed the anti-feminist, Marinell, and is riding unconcernedly on, when in come Cymoent and her nymphs. They tend the wounded knight, lamenting with thin watery shrieks; for though they have a touch of human quality in them, for the rest they are pure poetic expressions of the nature of water, ocean and river water, with their qualities of movement, light, sound and colour. So too, in the Fourth Book, it seems perfectly natural that all the rivers and streams of England should be found taking part in the plot and assuming a human form, just as easily as the brides in *Prothalamion* swim down the Lee in the likeness of two 'swannes of goodly hewe'.

Spenser has, in fact, a gift of combining incongruities, as the metaphysicals of the seventeenth century had, or the surrealists of this; only, he reconciles them, as they, desiring the stimulus of shock and contrast, purposely do not. Though a great deal of his verse smoothly uses the conventional Elizabethan imagery of roses, likes, belgards and cupids (giving each image, indeed, an unexpected freshness and winding them all into a wonderful 'labyrinth of sweet sounds') yet we find him quite as often using imagery as a modern painter does—first breaking up appearances into their component elements, and then making a surprising but happy new combination of the parts. It is this gift that produces, for example, such beautiful grotesque pageants and processions as the Pageant of Love in Busyrane's Castle (III, xii) or the procession of the Seven Deadly Sins in the House of Pride (I, iv) and such strangely expressive details as this from the stanza on Gluttony:



*'His belly was upblowne with luxury,  
And eke with fatnesse swollen were his eyne,  
And like a Crane his neck was long and fine,  
Wherewith he swallow'd up excessive feast';*

or this stanza from those on Envie :

*'All in a kirtle of discoloured say  
He clothéd was, ypainted full of eyes;  
And in his bosom secretly there lay  
An hateful snake, the which his tayle uptyes  
In many folds, and mortall sting implyes.'*

The discoloured say, the many eyes, the snake lying *secretly* in his bosom, its many folds, its mortal sting—what an extraordinarily brief epitome this is of the long spiritual struggle and suffering in which this vice involves us: all the stages, all the aspects of it, all its befouling complexity, the cunning of the heart, the torture of the nerves, all are there.

This is a very purified kind of poetry. Deep down in the creator's mind the components have gone through many distilling processes before they are fused, as Eliot says they must be, with such an intensity that there is no separating them again.

There is this mixture of distillations in all Spenser's best allegory. We see this in a thousand phrases, like *'rancour's rusty knife'*, three words which are a case-history: the deep wound, the poisoned brooding, the anguish-driven spite. We see it at fuller length in such pictures as that of the House of Care (IV, v) where Sir Scudamour, kept awake by the hammering of black demons in the forge all through the night, every time he dozes off has his heart nipped by a devil with red-hot pincers. (Spenser often makes us feel the change in our very metabolism produced by a mental state).

More difficult to analyse is the canto about the Cave of Mammon (II, vii), where Sir Guyon is tempted with wealth and its power. There the effect is built up by such things as the vast gloomy chambers of this abode in the bowels of the earth, a neighbour to Hell; by the crusted gold gleaming through dust and cobwebs, 'the strange chiaroscuro', the throng of demons smelting and scumming their cauldrons with ferocious industry; the glimpse of Hell's garden with the

tormented in it; and especially the 'ugly fiend' who leaps upon Sir Guyon from behind the door, follows him 'with monstrous stalke', and watches for the first sign of weakness, for then he will fall upon him and rend him to pieces with his 'cruell claws'. All these details, and many more, help to bring about, indirectly and with mysterious beauty, a feeling of enormous suspense, a sense of the magnitude of the moral issues, and the growing tension in Guyon's mind, until, when it is over, he falls into a swoon as deep as death, and is saved only by one of those heavenly spirits, who often, Spenser tells us,

. . . *their silver bowers leave,*  
*And come to succour us, that succour need.*

For to Spenser the earth is no pinfold, as it is to the heavenly messenger in *Comus*. He easily leaps the boundary wall, as he does in his whole conception of love, expressed in the *Four Hymns*, the *Easter Sonnet*, and the Third Book of *The Faerie Queen*, where marital love is the completest earthly form of the divine love which created the universe, and which Christ showed on the Cross. Perhaps it is partly this easy commerce between earth and heaven, now pagan and now Christian places, that endears *The Faerie Queene* to poets, by lessening for them their sense of exile, so frequently lamented.

In *The Faerie Queene* there is every reason why they should feel at home. They are in their element, and the tools of their trade lie scattered round them as thick as treasure on Marinell's 'rich strond'. Devices they love lie there in profusion—alliteration, assonance, onomatopoeia—all are prodigally used. For no 'rakehellye route of ragged rymers' ever 'hunted the letter' more ardently than Spenser: he mingles dialect and 'inkhorn terms', archaisms, rustic words and courtly phrases with a lavish hand; he takes poetic licence without a thought of apology, inflecting language and inventing new words and word-endings wherever he wants them to give variety or to soften or harden, shorten or lengthen, slow down or speed up a rhythm. If he wants to express sweetness, he is not ashamed to let his music flute, his words drip honey; if horror, his phrases grow lugubrious, grind and gnash their teeth, sob, shriek and groan. Take, for example, this stanza about the Cave of Despair (I, ix):

*Ere long they come where that same wicked wight  
His dwelling has, low in an hollow cave,  
Farre underneath a craggie cliftpight,  
Dark, doleful drearie, like a greedie grave  
That still for carrion carcase doth crave:  
On top whereof aye dwelt the ghastly Owle,  
Shrieking his baleful note, which ever drave  
Far from that haunt all other chearfull fowle;  
And all about it wandring ghosts did waile and howle.*

This verse is almost blatantly 'poetical'; and yet, in spite of this, it is poetry too. The devices, though obtrusive, are a vital part of the meaning, and the obtrusiveness sinks away in the total effect: over it washes his sea, lingers his moonlight, unifying everything, subduing the ornament to the nature of the whole. He is, in fact, most thoroughly the poets' poet. His poetry is more 'poetical', in the doubtful sense, than that of any other great English poet who ever lived, and the miracle is that however 'poetical' he chooses to be, his genius keeps him still the purest of poets.

CHRISTINA VAN HEYNINGEN.

## SOME THOUGHTS ON THE VERSE AND POETRY OF LUCRETIUS, BOOK III

If we accept Plato's assertion that there is an ancient quarrel between philosophy and poetry we may expect to find, in a philosopher who is also a poet, some interesting and even strange contrasts (as in Plato himself), and that these contrasts will be all the more noticeable if the philosopher-poet elects, like Lucretius, to use verse as a vehicle for his teaching. And this is certainly true of Book III of the *De Rerum Natura*. There are lines like

*Haud ita vitam agerent, ut nunc plerumque videmus.*

(‘They would not spend their lives, as we see them now for the most part do’)

which, but for the metre, and perhaps to some extent the ‘*haud*’, might be prose, and there are lines like

*Floriferis ut apes in saltibus omnia libant.*

(‘Even as bees sip of all things in flowery glades’—but this is inadequate: ‘*floriferis*’ as a word is well-nigh untranslatable) which give delight (one of the functions of poetry) and could not have been better expressed by Virgil himself. But the aim of this article is not so much to stress such contrasts, which are plain for all to see, as to try to draw attention to some other characteristics of the poetry of Lucretius and at the same time to try to discover wherein the attractiveness of this poetry lies.

And the first further characteristic of the poetry of Lucretius to which I should like to draw attention is what I would call its ‘forthrightness’, a quality which seems to depend on strength of expression combined with simplicity and an eschewing of much detail and elaboration. Consider what is one of the finest and most satisfying phrases in the book

*exortus ut aetherius sol*  
(‘even as the sun arisen in heaven’)

I feel that Virgil or Catullus might have elaborated the picture, and given more detail, and no doubt a beautiful description. Lucretius does not, and the result is a strong, ‘forthright’ expression entirely suited to its context, which compares the genius of Epicurus surpassing mankind to the sun quenching the light of the stars. The completeness of this process is something familiar to all who have seen it, and the strength and brevity of the language is in keeping with that completeness. There is similar strength, finality, and simplicity in the hymn line from Prudentius

*‘Fairer than the sun at morning’*

Further detail seems superfluous.

A more obvious characteristic of the poetry of Lucretius is his use of alliteration; but I believe that the inquiring reader will be surprised to find how much more common the use of it is than he suspected. There is, for example, an instance in each of the first five lines of the book, a proportion which is not, of course, maintained, though the first twenty-two lines give the still relatively high number of ten instances (if ‘*large diffuso lumine*’ be admitted). Alliteration is, I suppose, to us at any rate, a somewhat artificial device; but there can be no doubt of the forcefulness which Lucretius can impart to a phrase by means of it. Consider the expression

*honorum caeca cupido*  
(‘blind lust for honours’)

where alliteration gives a strength to the Latin, which, it may be suggested, it would not give to the English.

From alliteration we may turn to the allied practice of immediate repetition of a word. Lucretius makes use of this sparingly, and it is obviously a practice which would lose in effect if it appeared too often. It is therefore not so much a characteristic of his verse as an ancient device which he uses well, as in ll. 12-13 ‘*aurea dicta, aurea*’, where it is singularly effective, and in l. 69, where we have the slightly different type ‘*longe longeque remosse*’. A kind of repetition which may be considered a characteristic of Lucretius is that of such phrases as ‘*Quare etiam atque etiam* and

'*fateare necesses*' in argument. This is, however, a repetition of the philosopher rather than of the poet. But it is the poet who repeats the '*fortis equi vis*'—'the powerful might of the horse'—of lines 8 and 764, for reasons easy enough to understand, even if one ignores the fact that epic traditions probably have something to do with it.

Another characteristic of the verse of Lucretius is the presence of a number of self-contained lines, embedded as it were in the rest of the poem; but still showing a kind of isolation. Such a line is 78

*Intereunt partim statuarum et nominis ergo.*

(Some wear themselves out for the sake of statues and a name')

and even some of the lines which conclude a portion of the argument have this quality, although linked up with what precedes. Such a line is the famous

*Hic Acherusia fit stultorum denique vita (1023)*

(Here on earth, in short, the life of fools becomes a hell—Duff).

It seems to me possible that single lines like this were the germ of the whole poem.

One of the regular types of descriptive epithet which appears in some other Latin poets is that formed from proper names, whether personal or geographical. One thinks of such phrases as the '*Agamemnoniae phalanges*' of Virgil, the '*lacrimis Simonideis*' of Catullus, and the '*Persicos apparatus*' of Horace. Of this type of epithet Book III of the *De Rerum Natura* would seem to offer but a single possible example, the '*Hyrcano de semine*' of 750, and its lack of company ('*Acherusia vita*' quoted above seems to me in a different class) suggests that its use, unlike that of the same word in Virgil's '*Hyranae tigres*' (Aeneid IV 367) may not be so much descriptive as factual (which of course it also is) just as we might say 'a dog of Alsatian breed'.

Earlier in this article I referred to epic traditions. I should like to close it with the suggestion that, where comparison is revelant, Lucretius, both in diction and atmosphere, is closer to Homer than Virgil is. Where he virtually translates Homer, as in ll. 18-21 of this book, he seems to me to do so with marked success, and one may perhaps

be excused for expressing a regret that some at least of his strong, clear, forceful phrases were not put into the mouths, or devoted to the description, of actual characters, whether human or divine.

Note: Except where otherwise stated, the translation into English in this article owes something to Munro.

B. H. FARRER.

## SPEECH TRAINING AND PRACTICAL CRITICISM

In English studies today, great stress is laid—and rightly so—on practical criticism as a means of developing the student's powers of thinking. The materials on which the student works are prose and poetry, and one of the most able exponents of the methods employed in training students in practical criticism has written:— "Reading aloud, if you can make the sense clear without dimming the powerful incantatory and magical emotional power of rhythm may do more than analysis can to carry the poem 'alive into the heart' of the hearer, but few of us have this rare gift, and bad rendering may iron out the delicate variations of sound and movement in the poem".<sup>1</sup>

Obviously then, the fundamental aim of practical criticism is to carry the poem alive into the heart of the hearer, and we are told that reading aloud is the best way to begin, but we are warned off trying this method because 'few of us have this rare gift'.

May I say at the outset that reading aloud is NOT a gift. It is an ability which can be acquired and should be acquired by all who have any claims to education whatsoever, let alone any aspirations as students of literature.

Reading aloud presupposes the ability to speak, for the printed word is merely recorded speech. Therefore, the ability to read well is largely dependent on a training which enables one to speak well.

'Speech though normally learned in infancy without any compulsion or formal training is none the less the product of sheer learning—and where there is no teacher there is no accomplishment'.

At present, there is no subject on which there is a more widespread ignorance on the part of scientists,

---

<sup>1</sup>C. van Heyningen, in *Practical Criticism—A Symposium*, in an essay entitled "The Technique of Practical Criticism."



educationists and the public in general, than the subject of speech, and when I say this I am not belittling the work of phoneticians or of speech therapists—the former seeking respectability in the company of the scientists, and the latter seeking prestige by an alliance with the medical profession, but both utterly stultified by their failure to realise the limitations of their approach to the subject, the one being interested in the purely mechanical aspect of speech, and the other in the deviations from normality on a physical and psychological plane. These studies can never be of much value to the normal human being until they have been integrated, and they cannot be integrated except by those who understand the whole field of speech studies based on a fundamental understanding of the possibilities of normal speech.

Phonetics is one aspect of the study of normal speech. Logopaedics is the study of some types of deviation from normal speech. Both these subjects must obviously be included in the field of speech studies, since they represent scientific aspects of the art of speech, but, also in that field, must be included the aesthetic aspects of speech, which culminate in man's greatest speech achievement, the drama.

The neglect of the study of speech in the modern University has had widespread and disastrous consequences, chiefly reflected in the steadily declining standards of education in primary and secondary education, and in consequence, in the failure of our democratic system of education which should aim at training people 'to see, to think and to feel, and so to become more securely virtuous'.

What the Universities neglect, the public tends inevitably to despise. Witness Sarah Gertrude Millin's ignorance on the subject of speech in her biography of Rhodes: 'Cecil went to the Bishop Stortford Grammar School and his career there may be judged by the blighting fact that he won a medal for elocution', obviously, for Mrs. Millin, elocution is a despised study and proficiency in it 'a blighting fact'. Why? Because for her elocution stands for an insincere and affected manner of speaking verse or prose. It is true that so-called 'Elocutionists' in the last fifty years have been responsible for the cultivation of the voice for its own sake—that is, for the sake of its 'beauty', and

there has been no body of informed men and women to say that good speech does not attract attention to the voice production etc., but is so free from blemish and warping of any kind that the speaker becomes the instrument for the adequate expression of the idea. The idea cannot be adequately expressed silently. The spoken word is its body, just as the printed word is its photograph. It only exists fully when it is clothed in a body.

Good elocution argues many things, good voice production, resonance, enunciation, articulation, pause, pace, emphasis etc., as well as the ability to understand the meaning of what you are saying, to feel the emotion implicit in the idea, and to visualise the whole situation as it existed originally in the mind and the heart of the author. Obviously then, the fact that Cecil won a medal for elocution, need not necessarily be a 'blighting fact'. It might be a sign of physical control, intellectual vitality, and imaginative insight. I mention this instance simply to show how a learned and careful critic in one field, may betray an abysmal ignorance in another, and yet feel justified in assuming that all there is to be known about it, she knows. For the best that is known and thought about speech is not widely known among scholars, let alone the public, and yet elocution—the art of speaking—is of vital importance to the common man, for 'speech is to thought, what protoplasm is to life'. This being so, he cannot afford to be ignorant about it, but where must he look for guidance if not to his teachers? and where can his teachers find this knowledge, if not in the Universities?

'Speech is to thought, what protoplasm is to life'. In that one sentence, Julian Huxley, for those who can realise it, has supplied the key to the understanding of the development of man's power to think—that is, the key to the development of the human mind. Matthew Arnold's scholar sought among the gipsies the art to rule men's minds, but in a later day, the educationist worthy of the name, knows that the only effective way to rule men's minds, is to free them. That freedom comes from the power to think, and so the key to understanding how to teach men to think, must be profoundly important, no matter what the particular subject of the educationist may happen to be. Be it history,

geography or mathematics, the educationist's aim is to develop in the pupil or student the power to think.

It is not enough, however, merely to agree with Julian Huxley. It is necessary thoroughly to understand the implications, and to live by the realisation. And when you have done that you will cease to rely on silent reading, or in your mind to confuse speaking, reading and writing, or pretend that they are the same things, or equally important. Reading and writing are not prime instruments in education, whereas speech is.

When this is realised, you will cease to believe that there are ways and ways of reading, or that good speech and good reading are rare gifts, for you will know how to develop these arts in every normal human being, and more than that, you will know that it is necessary to cultivate these arts, if, as an educationist, you are to succeed in your function, which I assume, is to assist the growing human being to achieve physical, intellectual, and emotional self-mastery, by developing every aspect of his being.

It is true that you can teach him by other means. Swedish Drill and Rugby will develop his physical being. Mathematics and Latin his intellectual being, and his emotional being may be catered for by training him to clap the winner. Speech however is the one instrument which requires no apparatus beyond the ordinary human endowments, and at the same time affords an integrated training of the physical, intellectual and emotional aspects of the human being. This cannot be said for any other instrument available to the ordinary human being.

Long before Julian Huxley made his profound observation, it has been made by the man who wrote: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was Life'. It certainly was the life of the mind, and therefore the basis of civilisation. Sophocles observes of Man: 'Speech he has taught him and wind-swift thought, and the temper that buildeth a City's walls', observing rightly that civilisation pre-supposes the development of the power of speech.

The power to speak and the power to write are not the same thing. Important a role as writing has played in the development of civilisation, it is an incomparably less

important role than that played by speech, for it is merely a mechanical way of recording speech. It would take, at most, a few weeks or months to teach any one the mere mechanics of recording speech in writing. But the training of the power to speak, keeps pace with the life of the mind, and until they have that power in some measure it is superfluous to teach people to write, for they have nothing worth recording, so why record it? Similarly, the power to read well implies a control of speech that few in a modern system of education attain, and therefore much reading is a waste of time because what is read is not 'carried alive' into the heart of the hearer'.

Human beings are not mechanical, and no attempt to educate them by a mechanical means can ever hope to succeed, but in the modern world the temptation to try is overwhelming, and the great majority of educationists have succumbed. In the Universities, however, expediency should not be the criterion, rather it should be remembered that: 'Trouthe shal delivere—hit is no drede', We shall not arrive at the truth by ignoring the humble beginnings.

Speech has three very important aspects—the physical—the intellectual—and the emotional.

On the physical plane, it is a matter of co-ordinating vibrating breath, and certain movements of the articulative organs to produce sounds, which on a mental level, are recognised as symbols of ideas, which on the emotional level evoke a response. No educationist would deny that he has as his ideal the development of the whole man, physically, mentally and emotionally.

Let us remember then that the ordinary man has only one gift on which to rely in this process of development. It is the gift of speech, but it is a supremely adequate gift if it is not maimed or warped, as it can be, and in the modern world usually is.

On a physical level good speech is free from strain, strain for instance, which is registered in reedy, harsh, or thick speech, or again, as is very common in this country, in warped vowel sounds, due to the rigidity of one or other of the organs of speech, especially the inflexibility of the lips or the constriction of the pharynx. Practice in relaxing

the body, attention to posture and exercises in breath control, which includes exercises in the use of the abdominal press as an accompaniment to the process of intercostal diaphragmatic breathing, exercises for the development of resonance, and practice in enunciation and articulation, are all aspects, and necessary aspects, of training speech on a physical level, for delicate variations of sound and movement in a poem cannot be expressed by a clumsy or inflexible instrument or inadequate instrument. To realise we must be able to express.

Before you can read a musical score, you must not only be trained to recognise semi-quavers, crochets and minims, bar signs and rests, or to name the notes on the bass or treble clef—you must be trained to hear the sound of the notes. It is a long training in perceiving musical sounds, their values, their variations, their combinations in patterns, and the rhythm determined by the length of notes, the stressing and the phrasing. It is no use merely talking to people about these things—they must be trained to listen and to perceive, and their power to listen and to perceive will be greatly enhanced if they learn to control a musical instrument, nor can it be trained at all apart from a musical instrument.

When I was a child I was for seven years trained in musical theory, harmony and counterpoint. I could translate any musical score placed before me, but I could not hear it. Now I submit that this was a bad and useless form of training, and you will readily agree with me, that no child should be trained in music apart from a musical instrument. Yet this is what happens to the great majority of children who learn to read their own language. They acquire mechanical facility in translating the little black symbols back into words, but they do not hear the word—they have never been taught to perceive its sound value, its texture or to visualise the idea it symbolises, or to think of the feeling it evokes. There is a minimum of connection between the lips, or eyes (if it is silent reading) and the brain. Hundreds of people can read without registering a single idea, and hundreds read with so little attention to the words that they invent a meaning of their own, often the opposite of what is expressed by the author.

## THE MENTAL ASPECTS

To read a score it is not enough to know the sound of the notes, we must know their length, their grouping in the phrase, the emphasis that will bring out the meaning etc., and so it is with a poem. It is not enough to have a well produced voice, good vowel sounds, distinct and resonant consonants, flexibility of the articulative organs. These are preliminaries. The aim of true speaking should be to have speech so free from defect that the voice and speech do not attract attention to themselves, but leave us free to concentrate on the meaning, and the meaning is dependent on many things—e.g. the grouping of the word phrases. This presupposes breath control so that the rhythms are not broken because of an inadequate technique — Emphasis, inflexion, pause, pace, etc., all are important. The ability to use these correctly can be trained, and in the training, the child, or the student, is being forced to use his mind, to concentrate, to listen, to observe the difference in effect produced by a difference in stress, or pace, or in the placing of the pause. That is, he is being trained to think of the meaning, and does not really know the meaning, nor can he ever know it, till he can express it.

And lastly, I should like to say a word about the emotional aspect of speech.

It is not enough to have a voice perfectly produced on the physical level, free from defect in the shaping of vowel and consonant sounds. It is not enough to know the meaning—because you have been trained to perceive it, and express it. Your expression may still be 'a living lie', if you have not been trained to feel and in order to feel, to express the emotion, that lies behind the thought.

*What would the world be, once bereft  
Of wet and wildness—let them be left,  
O let them be left, wildness and wet,  
Long live the weeds and the wilderness yet.*

(Gerard Manley Hopkins).

Try the following ways of saying this:

- (a) Perfectly mechanically, translating the symbols into sound, but registering nothing.
- (b) In a bored and indifferent way.
- (c) In an impatient and irritated fashion.

You will agree with me that said as indicated in (a) and (b) and (c), the speaker does not communicate what the author intended. Try to think out what he intended, and how it would have to be said if the rendering were not to be completely misleading, or at least inadequate. Only then do you begin to perceive the link up that exists between the physical, the mental and the emotional aspects of speech, only then are you beginning to use the instrument of speech as it can be used for the development of the whole being.

I am frequently asked when speech training should begin, and when it should end. The answer is that it should begin in the nursery school and end at the grave. For the control of that instrument keeps pace with the world of thought and feeling, as it opens on the view of the developing human being, and just as on the physical plane a pianist must practice to keep his fingers flexible, and obedient to his intellect and imagination, so the speaker must practice to keep his control of breathing, enunciation, articulation etc., perfect and flexible.

The smallest child can begin to be trained in every aspect of speech, but the work must be selected on a level on which he can respond.

The following is a suitable poem for small children:

#### *TADPOLES.*

*Ten little tadpoles playing in a pool,  
'Come', said the water rat, 'come along to school,  
Come and say your tables, sitting in a row',  
And all the little tadpoles said: 'No, no, no'.*

*Ten little tadpoles swimming in and out,  
Racing and diving and turning round about,  
'Come', said their mother: 'Dinner time I guess'—  
And all the little tadpoles said: 'Yes, yes, yes'*

(Rose Fyleman).

Here is an excellent exercise for the cultivation of a child's perception of sound values in the vowel sounds: (u) as in *pOOl* and *schOOl*, (ou) as in *rOW*, and (o) as in *OUt* and *abOUt*, or (e) as in *guess* and *yes*.

Most children will delight in learning to perceive these sounds, where before they went unnoticed, hissed out between clenched teeth.

The pictures of the water rat, the tadpoles, the frog will delight them, and they can be encouraged to visualise them more vividly by being invited to draw them.

The meaning is well within the range of their experience, for food is the great reality. Moreover, they will enjoy the contrast between the reception of the water rat's invitation and mother's invitation.

The difference in response, in feeling, expressed in the answers should be pointed out.

'NO' can be said trucently, with distaste, in contrast with the eager delight that lies behind 'YES, YES, YES'. Try to say it reversing the emotional response, say 'NO, NO, NO' eagerly, and 'YES, YES, YES' reluctantly, and ask them if that is right. They will soon tell you.

The work selected must keep pace with the growing ability of the human being to control this instrument for communicating ideas, until at length he is able to unravel complex ideas and complex feelings as they are expressed in great poetry—and especially in great dramatic poetry, where the infinite variety of human complexity in thought and response is to be found mirrored. But we shall never be able to do it unless we take to heart the lesson Hamlet illustrated with the recorders, for the benefit of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

*HAMLET: . . . Will you play upon this pipe?*

*GUIL: My Lord, I cannot.*

*HAMLET: I pray you.*

*GUIL: Believe me, I cannot.*

*HAMLET: I do beseech you.*

*GUIL: I know no touch of it, my Lord.*

*HAMLET: 'Tis as easy as lying; govern these vantages with your finger and thumb, give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent music. Look you, these are the stops.*

*GUIL: But these cannot I command to my utterance of harmony; I have not the skill.*



*HAMLET: Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing you make of my stops; you would pluck out the heart of my mystery; you would sound me from my lowest note to the top of my compass; and there is much music, excellent voice, in this little organ, yet cannot you make it speak. 'Sblood, do you think I am easier to be played on than a pipe? Call me what instrument you will, though you can fret me, you cannot play upon me.*

If you would make speech the instrument of communication — and great literature is after all 'memorable speech'—you must learn its possibilities, you must know its 'stops', and be able to sound it from the lowest note to the top of its compass, if you would 'pluck out the heart of its mystery', and until you humbly submit yourself to this discipline, 'though you may fret, you cannot play'. But take heart, it is no mystery, no rare gift. It is the privilege of all who are honest enough to seek knowledge and understanding, and have the patience to put into practice what they know and understand.

From the foregoing it will be obvious that I think speech and the art of reading are not merely valuable assets in practical criticism. They are fundamental necessities. Therefore. . .

*'Teach language in such a way that he will learn the spirit of it; not only because words are the principal condition of social life, but for this reason: whenever a man makes one of those lonely journeys into his own mind, or the secret places of his will, he takes with him, like a lamp to explore them, his native language. And so if he is to see anything it must be bright and strong. Language, among other things is an instrument of the senses. Your finger tips are blunt, and your eyes are a blur, and your tongue's a flap of dead rubber that won't taste anything unless you have words to translate what they feel and see and relish, to your understanding'.*

(Eric Linklater).

ELIZABETH SNEDDON.

## THE IDEA OF A UNIVERSITY

In this first year of the University of Natal, it seemed to us appropriate that there should be included in *Theoria* some discussion of the Idea of a University. We therefore asked members of the University of Natal to supply answers to a number of questions about the University, its aims and methods, and its relation to society at large.

The questions were put, without any special attempt at refinement, in the form in which they are usually raised in general discussion of the University and its problems. It was of course impossible for the contributors to this symposium to deal exhaustively with the questions that were raised; the aim, however, is not to dispose of any question, but to stimulate further discussion.

*What, in your view, is the relative importance of teaching and research in the University?*

*Professor Notcutt*

This dispute takes one back to mediaeval origins. The universities of Oxford and Paris were, we are told, associations of scholars who agreed to accept certain pupils. The universities of Bologna and St. Andrews were associations of students who hired teachers to instruct them. Since the founders of the South African universities were Scotsmen, our link is rather with Bologna than with Paris, the teaching university rather than the scholar's retreat. But scholarship has changed its meaning since those days. It is no longer a retreat, but rather an advance. The prestige of scientific research is so great that many departments where research is not really an important part of their duties feel it necessary to make a parade of such activity as a claim on funds or status. One remembers the examination in which students were asked to "Discuss Plautus as a field for textual criticism" or the doctoral thesis at Bonn on

“The accusative absolute construction in Elizabethan dramatists other than Shakespeare”. One has the impression that the departments in which these problems arose have mistaken their functions. Their principal function in a university is to make available ‘the best that is known and thought in the world’, and to make its contemporary reference intelligible. The work of a critic has to be done over again in each generation. Departments of literature, history and philosophy may on occasion be concerned with research, but their more important task is that of synthesis and interpretation. Much of what passes for research in these fields is mere hodman’s work, leading to a degree perhaps, but to no spiritual growth.

On the other hand, in the sciences, whether physical, biological or social, research can be closely interwoven with teaching, and can provide the vital spark which gives the teaching a vivid significance. Just think of the joy and glory experienced by Rutherford’s young men at the Cavendish, by Bleuler’s pupils at Burghölzli, Florey’s assistants on the penicillin research, Elton Mayo’s workers in the Hawthorne experiment. To have shared, however humbly, in such an enterprise, will for many be the most memorable experience of their lives.

“And gentlemen in England now abed  
Shall think themselves accurst they were not here”.

*Professor O'Connor*

The university teacher is not a schoolmaster. His job is not to teach in the schoolroom sense of the word, but to direct, encourage and help the student in his own studies. The student who still needs *teaching* when he enters the university has either had poor schoolmasters or lacks the mental initiative necessary for a university course.

The proper direction and encouragement in which university teaching consists can be given only by teachers actively interested and engaged in the promotion of their subject. Thus research is a necessary condition of good teaching. Teaching in the University has two chief functions: (i) to provide the next generation of scholars and scientists; (ii) to provide scholars and scientists with a job which will offer a maximum of time to be spent on research. That few

universities, even in Europe, recognise these functions of university teaching means merely that few universities are, in practice, more than a mixture of finishing school and technical college.

*Dr. Palmer*

Emphatically these will differ under different circumstances. A university should nearly always aim at including both research and teaching, but the proportion of these must inevitably vary under different circumstances.

If a university institution is being started in a backward community, where very little interest is taken in university work and university ideals, and if, as will probably be the case under these circumstances, funds are limited, I hold that the main function of a university so situated should be teaching. It will not be until the community as a whole, has come to understand what the university stands for, that it can safely proceed to any elaborate scheme of research. At the same time if any member of the staff has a research project in which he is particularly interested, steps should be taken to assist him to carry out the project.

Although the university institution in its infancy must legitimately concentrate on teaching rather than research, yet it should never lose sight of the fact that the research is one of the major functions of the university.

On the other hand if the university institution is situated in a community which already understands what university education signifies, sends forward a considerable number of students every year, has so established itself that liberal donations from the public are assured, then obviously research should play a much larger part in its activities. It might, as in the case of All Souls' College and Duke University in the United States of America, be right for it to concentrate exclusively on research and leave teaching to other institutions.

While a large number of university staff should be capable of research, and should be able to carry out some form of research, I suggest that it is a mistake to insist on this in every case. There are people who are admirable teachers, but are not fitted for research, and I do not think they should be entirely debarred from university teaching.

Both research and teaching should be a part of a university's aims, but the precise proportion of time and money devoted to each must be determined by circumstances.

Teaching, I suggest, should include not only the training of students, but also the provision of adult education and extension lectures on a generous basis to the community as a whole.

I suggest very strongly that the University of Natal should pay more attention to this point. It would be one of the best ways of making the community as a whole university conscious, which it certainly is not at the present time.

*Mr. Rees*

The disagreement which divides staffs on the respective merits of teaching and research explains in part the "sickness" of the university in our time. The differences of opinion are rooted in conflicting conceptions of the university and of its purpose. What might be called an "Oxford-Cambridge" school of thought, tends still to consider that the primary function of the university is to familiarise students with "the best that can be thought and said" in the past, and to make of them cultivated and "rounded" persons fitted for leadership. Another school, inspired by the great German universities, also of the nineteenth century, contend that the mere communication of learning (its embalment) is an incidental function of the university, whereas the advancement of knowledge is essential.

What I think is urgently needed is not the continuance of this controversy, but a search for a synthesis of the two views. This would be facilitated if the one group would recognise more frankly the extent to which their conception of university education was shaped by a special combination of social and economic circumstance which has not survived in the twentieth century even in England; and if the other admitted that the triumphs of the German universities were in considerable measure due to the fact that they were able to concentrate rather upon the training of graduates.

As long as the university has as its principal commitment, the training of undergraduates—and such is the case in South Africa—it is mere folly to minimise the importance of teaching. At the same time, the universities of this country have special responsibilities for the advancement of knowledge in particular fields which they cannot ignore. The University of Natal, for example, has a particular responsibility for the writing of Natal and of Imperial history. For a university in these circumstances to discriminate in its staffing and financial policy in favour of one of these two functions at the expense of the other, is to invite disaster. I submit that teaching and research should sustain university life in much the same way as life in our bodies is sustained by breathing out and breathing in: to attach greater relative importance to the one, and to disregard the the other, is to precipitate a maladjustment, which might have the most unfortunate consequences for the breather.

*Mr. Prestwich*

I doubt whether it is possible to answer this question in general terms. It is possible that in one subject teaching should properly be regarded as more important than research, whilst in another the order of precedence should be reversed. The answer will also depend to some extent on the kind of community within which the university exists. One in which, for example, there are few or no schools attaining a very high standard of scholarship, and in which that class which Julien Benda calls “les clercs” is neither numerous nor influential, would probably be well advised to assign priority to teaching.

In the last analysis, the form of the question implies too clear a dichotomy. In one sense in which, I suggest, the word may be used, research is necessary to good teaching. The university teacher, if he is to be effective purely as such, must be perpetually widening and deepening his knowledge of his own subject, and perpetually reviewing his ideas upon it. A process of continuous learning must run parallel with the task of teaching. Whether this process results in the addition of new facts to the world's stock of knowledge, whether it results in any more of that making of books of which Solomon tells us there is no end, are in many subjects

considerations of very little importance. There may, however, be some subjects in which research in a narrower sense than that in which I have used the word above, research in the sense of discovery and publication of new knowledge, is necessary to the satisfactory teaching of the subject. Perhaps the so-called social sciences are examples.

I believe that in the study of what are (not very satisfactorily) called arts subjects, there has been too much importance attached in recent years to research in the narrower sense. The results have been deplorable. There has been an endless outpouring of works of trivial investigation, and university teachers have often come to be valued by essentially irrelevant criteria. What the arts subjects need for the most part, and what in these subjects the universities should aim at producing, is not research workers but ripe scholars. By all means let those who have anything new to say publish it. But research for the sake of research, publication for the sake of publication, have become an occupational disease of the academic profession.

*Is the present standard of teaching generally satisfactory? What measures do you suggest to improve the effectiveness of university teaching?*

*Professor O'Connor*

The answer to this question may be inferred from what I have said above. But there is one reform which might be made without satisfying the rather remote ideals outlined there. The main failing of university teaching at present is a grotesque faith in the value of lectures. Lecturing to replace reading of texts and text-books is a waste of time and an active discouragement of the students' initiative. The proper use of lectures is to pass on the results of recent research which has not yet reached the text-books. Their present indiscriminate use is a relic of medieval days when lectures were necessary because text-books were lacking. The remedy is to substitute a comprehensive tutorial system.

*Dr. Palmer*

This is an invitation to criticise my colleagues, an invitation which I am naturally chary of accepting.

particularly as one teacher seldom has much opportunity of coming in close contact with the teaching methods of others. I have heard some lectures are dull. In some few cases I have heard of lecturers who displayed a lack of conscientiousness in taking their classes at the time assigned. In my capacity as Organiser for the Non-European Section, at least two rather flagrant instances of neglect of this type have come under my notice.

Some lecturers again are inclined to spoon feed students by carrying school methods into university work. It is not the business of a university lecturer to see that the students do their work, as it the business of a schoolmaster. It is not always his or her business to instruct a student by the giving of very careful and detailed lectures. This may in some cases even militate against the students' training in independent work and thought.

The lecturer should see that the students have all the necessary facilities for obtaining knowledge; that they have access to books and adequate time for reading; should urge the writing of essays and criticise these essays in some detail; but save by the refusal of College Records or D.P.s should not put pressure on idle students. They ought to learn that idleness is their own responsibility. I understand, however, that these mistakes in teaching are the exception. It seems to me that on the whole the standard of teaching in the University of Natal is quite reasonably high, naturally not so high as Oxford or Cambridge or Harvard; that could not be expected, but not far below the level of a good provincial university in Britain.

There should perhaps be, especially in the case of part-time students, some means of preventing students from taking too many classes, and so giving them the opportunity of working harder at the classes which they do take, but again, it is not desirable to interfere with the students' life; let them make their own mistakes and learn from these mistakes.

*Mr. Rees*

To answer the first part of this question affirmatively is to invite a change of unwarranted complacency: to reply in any other way is to provoke the just wrath of one's colleagues. I content myself therefore with some comments



on the "Lecture" as a recognised method of university instruction.

The formal "Lecture" can admittedly have considerable educational value at the graduate level, but it confronts the undergraduate with many pitfalls. This is particularly true of undergraduates who have had no post-matriculation training in the schools. Not unnaturally they mistake the College "Lecture" for the School "Lesson", as a means of acquiring information, on which they can reasonably expect to be examined, and which relieves them of the necessity of reading books on matters "covered" (not "opened up") by the Lecture.

An obvious corrective is to supplement the Lecture by the Tutorial Hour, but this is not always satisfactory, particularly if a university discourages early specialisation. As long as undergraduates are required to offer as many as five subjects in any one year, I consider that, in fairness to each other and to the students, Departments must rely upon the Lecture method. An aggressive Departmentalism may lead to the introduction of the Tutorial system in one subject without prior consultation with other interested Departments, but this can only aggravate the situation and seriously prejudice the interests of the students in their other subjects.

The solution to my mind, may be found in a reduction of the number of courses offered, which would of itself effect a limitation of the number of formal lectures, and the introduction, after consultation, of Tutorial classes in all subjects, even if this involves an upward revision of staff requirements. The alternative is to continue with the present method of teaching, which is unsatisfactory for young undergraduates, and which, in view of the Degree Structure of most South African Universities, will tend to produce far more dilettantes than is desirable.

*Mr. Prestwich*

Manifestly, this is a question which neither I nor any of my colleagues can answer directly. We do not attend each others' lectures, and we presumably do not seek the opinions of students on the work of our colleagues; nor, perhaps, would such opinions be a very reliable guide if we did. If the question refers not specifically to the University

of Natal, but generally to South African universities, I for one am still less able to supply a direct answer based on evidence. I should suppose, from my contacts with my colleagues and from my experience of my own Alma Mater, that the standard of teaching here probably falls short of that sometimes (though not invariably) attained in the older and more famous English, Scottish, Continental and American universities, but that it probably attains the standard prevailing amongst what have been (perhaps rather unkindly) called the "red brick" universities of Great Britain.

Looking at the question from a somewhat different angle, I should be inclined to answer with a reluctant negative. If we have regard to the results of our teaching, it is difficult not to entertain a sense of their inadequacy. Our intellectual ministrations do not seem to produce a sufficiently high proportion of men and women who could be described as learned, or who carry from the university into the outer world a real love of scholarship and a real understanding of its spirit. But it may be that this somewhat depressing fact (if I am right in regarding it as a fact) can be explained otherwise than by any unsatisfactoriness in the present standard of teaching.

I would emphasise, in any case, that there are great impediments to the attainment of a high standard of teaching in most (perhaps in all) South African universities. Members of the teaching staff have generally too much work to do any of it really well, and much of it is dangerously near to drudgery. They are, in many subjects, required to cover a wider field than any one man can cover satisfactorily. It is difficult, in many subjects, to maintain that continual process of learning, parallel with one's work as a teacher, without which teaching is unlikely to maintain a really high standard. Having regard to our difficulties, I am inclined to believe that the standard of teaching may be rather higher than it might be.

The only remedy that I can see is to provide university teachers with more leisure and, where necessary, to provide greater library facilities, and to hope that these opportunities for improvement will be used. But financial difficulties will no doubt prevent its adoption.

*Should the university—especially in South Africa—try to train as many students as possible, or should it concentrate upon the training of the “best brains”?*

*Professor O'Connor*

This question seems to ask whether matriculation standards are to be raised or lowered. Obviously, to raise the standard would wreck university finances and to lower them would make the South African degree valueless, as degree standards would have to be adjusted to meet the increased intellectual incapacity of the students. If the question is meant to suggest alternative teaching programme for good and average students, I agree that this would be a desirable reform.

*Dr. Palmer*

Here again I think the alternative is stated too absolutely. South African universities should certainly not try to train as many students as possible, but on the other hand, neither should they, in my opinion, concentrate on the best brains only. There are too few of the latter to provide a university with sufficient students today if this policy was followed, and in any case, what is the definition of the best brain? It would be disastrous I think if the university was to insist on taking only first class matriculants. The obtaining of a first class in matriculation is very largely dependent on the school training, and pupils of a second or third rate school may fail to obtain a first class in the matriculation examination, and may yet have a genuine capacity for independence and original thought, superior to a man who has a first class matriculation certificate, gained through an elaborate and extensive training at a good school. I do not know whether intelligence testing is yet sufficiently developed to be a real test of intelligence apart from environment.

If it were, I should acquiesce in the view that the University should not take a student whose intelligence quotient is below a certain level, but I do not think the level should be put too high.

It is the business of the university to afford teaching and training to all who can profit by it, and the only

persons who should be excluded are those whose previous education or general intelligence, makes it impossible for them to profit by it. In this matter I think a mid-way policy should be followed.

But the university might do more to secure the best brains by much more generous bursaries and a remission of fees in certain cases. At present the fees are so high that there is a real danger that the university may become a class preserver. Would it be possible for students who have done outstandingly well at school or in the matriculation examination, to be interviewed and the way paved for them to become students?

*Mr. Rees*

I do not sympathise with the suggestion that the university should exclude all but "the best brains" from its training. I offer four reasons.

Firstly, the university today has lost all sense of purpose and direction, as anyone with first hand experience of Senate and Faculty meetings must admit. Until the university cleans up the intellectual confusion in which it is now wallowing, by some hard thinking on first principles, it can ill afford to be so fastidious in its admissions policy.

Secondly, how would the university determine to its own satisfaction which are the "best brains"? It would hardly be sufficiently naive as to accept a first class matriculation as a criterion? Are our psychiatric experts ever likely to devise a series of tests which will win the general approval of faculties?

Thirdly, I believe there are qualities in addition to the narrowly intellectual which a university can usefully stimulate and develop in its students.

Fourthly, I may be pardoned for making a passing reference to the bogey of finance. To dream of an organisation wealthy enough and at the same time disinterested enough to provide the university with all necessary monies, without protesting against a narrowly exclusive policy of admission, provides some light relief in the midst of this profound cerebration, but I hardly think it helps in any other way.

*What is the place of technology in the university? Do you think there is at present a danger of an excess of technical instruction?*

*Dr. Palmer*

I do not quite know what is meant here by technology. Both medicine and law have always had a place in the university, and it has been generally accepted, save by a few pursuits, that it is the business of the university to give professional training at the highest level. The point is that in training for professions and vocations the university should see that the training is given on the highest possible level. That it should include a special study of the sciences which lie at the back of the special technique which is to be aimed at, and that even in the purely technical subjects, the professors and lecturers should be careful to preserve a high level of scientific speculation in relation to all cognate subjects.

If it is proper for universities to train doctors (and nobody, I think, denies this) why is it undesirable that they should train engineers or commercial or industrial administrators?

I was for some time closely associated with the development of the degree of Household Social Science given by the University of London, and I was struck by the fact that the training needed for the full understanding of household administration, in such subjects as nutrition and ventilation etc. required a very high standard of scientific knowledge. The contempt exhibited for such subjects, for example by Flexner in his book on universities is merely a sign of the writer's ignorance of what is involved in a scientific training in domestic management. But it is of course essential that the scientific foundation of such studies should not be excluded or scamped. The idea that there is anything improper in a university's teaching agriculture, or veterinary science, or household management, or Engineering, seems to me to be merely a remnant of the snobbish idea, snobbish even if it is put forward by Aristotle, that the main function of a university is to train a gentleman (i.e. a man of independent means) for the noble uses of leisure.

At the same time the university should provide these

students with general culture as well as with technicological training. To some extent the general culture will be provided (as it is in the case of doctors) by the scientific studies which precede and underlie their later special medical training. Further the general culture will be obtained through the intercourse of student and student, with the general influence of distinguished professors even if not in the student's own faculty. Possibly a little more might be attempted through occasional lectures by distinguished persons on subjects of general interest and steps should also be taken to see that *all* students should be adequately trained in English and should be able to express themselves satisfactorily in writing and speaking.

*Mr. Rees*

Sir Richard Livingstone, Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University, is credited with the remark: "The Greeks could not broadcast the Aeschylean trilogy, but they could write it". The wording of this question strikes a similar note of condescension, which so frequently characterises the attitude of the arts towards our colleagues in the applied sciences. Living as I do in a residence inhabited largely by engineering students, I have been driven to re-examine the place which the humanities can continue to occupy in the university. The child of today is born into a world of gadgets. He is reared in a home which is mechanised to a degree unparalleled in history. At nursery school and in the kindergarten, he is handled by technicians, who deal with him as a bundle of potential aptitudes and eskills, and if we are to accept the assurances of child psychologists, this treatment must leave some enduring impression on his mind. The school through which he passes, makes increasing use of radio, film, speech recorder and "inter-communication" systems. How can the youth of our day fail to be excited by all the mechanisms and apparatus of science with which he is constantly and intimately surrounded? Learning how these things work by dismantling them and putting them together again, provides him with a far greater sense of reality and of life, than reading history, poetry or philosophy. The opportunities which applied science offer of increased mastery over nature, and particularly of combating social

evils, cannot fail to capture the generous impulses of youth and to arouse its imagination.

A Faculty of Engineering must in these circumstances occupy a valuable place within the modern university, provided it does not so narrow its conception of a university education as to identify it with the acquisition of mere technical expertise. But as much can be said of the Faculties of Law, Commerce, Science, Agriculture, Social Science, and even of Arts, if an inclination to minimise the value of *literae humaniores* and to favour subjects which can be used to teach particular skills becomes apparent.

*Professor O'Connor*

There are technical processes like building bridges and operating for appendicitis which presuppose a knowledge of pure science of university standard. Others, like plumbing and servicing motor cars, do not. I think that this distinction offers the only practical criterion for admitting technical courses to universities. As the results of scientific research are applied more widely technical courses are bound to be multiplied. It is difficult to suggest any remedy for the consequent lack of balance between humanities and sciences which is almost certain to follow. However, the sciences do not lose their value by being applied.

*Do you share the fear that the university is in danger of losing its traditional independence and its corporate autonomy?*

*Professor O'Connor*

It is difficult to give short answers here. As long as universities are not self-supporting institutions they will always have to please their patrons. Nowadays, their main patron is the 'State' i.e. the community politically organised. It will no doubt be found that the extent to which a university can keep its traditional autonomy will depend on the extent to which the form of political organisation in its community will tolerate autonomy. This is obvious—and unhelpful, for nothing can be done about it.

*Dr. Palmer*

I hesitate to answer this question as I am not sufficiently in touch with the facts and is the word university here to be taken as the University of Natal, universities generally in South Africa or universities generally throughout the world?

There is certainly evidence that some universities in the United States are too dependent on wealthy donors. At the same time the practical situation has to be faced that a university must have funds and generous funds. Students fees are, of course, quite inadequate, and must be supplemented either by Government subventions or private donations, unless the university has large endowments of its own. One can justly say that the university should be on its guard against these dangers; should see to it that no donations are accepted to which obnoxious conditions are attached, and that the donor no matter how generous is not allowed to interfere in the internal administration of the university, and that the university should protest individually and collectively against any attempt by the Government of undue interference.

*Mr. Rees*

I query whether this 'tradition' of university independence is not one of the many unexamined assumptions on which so much thinking, even within the university is based today? I doubt whether this 'tradition' would bear critical historical analysis. It is highly desirable that the university should enjoy full corporate autonomy, and I believe most strongly that the university in any case, should never allow itself to become subservient to the State, the Churches, big business or even to any individual benefactor. It requires little common sense on the other hand to recognise how difficult it must be to persuade any organisation or person to vote funds for university purposes, without demanding some control over their use. This is after all a very fundamental principle of democratic practice.

I think in many ways the danger of outside interference is greater today, particularly with the virtual disappearance of the disinterested private benefactor. It might be well to consider, however, whether the increase in outside interference is not due to a lack of confidence in the university.



*Do you think that 'service to the community' is a valuable conception of a university's function? If so, how would you interpret "service"? If not, what do you think to be the chief single reason for a university's existence.*

*Professor Notcutt*

There are obviously many ways in which a university can serve the community in which it is situated, and it is only right and proper that the university should do so to the best of its ability. But if we are looking for some general expression of the deepest purpose and goal of the institution, I should prefer some more abstract and universal symbol, perhaps, in old-fashioned language, the service of the Goddess Truth. It is well to remind ourselves that by virtue of our calling as scholars we are bound to put universal before particular values, to rise above propaganda and faction, to reject narrowly utilitarian and pragmatic arguments. There is no need to be self-consciously high-minded about it, but merely to make the pursuit of truth a daily occupation.

*Professor O'Connor*

Universities cannot hope to avoid reflecting in their teaching and research the intellectual values socially approved at the time. On the other hand, they can, if they try, determine those values to some extent. I feel that it is clearly desirable that universities should determine values, rather than reflect them. This would be a 'service to the community' but not, perhaps, as that phrase is usually interpreted.

*Mr. Rees*

If by "service" is meant the focussing at a high level of the intellectual energies of the community, I would endorse this conception as a part explanation of the university's function. I would add to it, the responsibility which the university has for transmitting to successive generations, the accumulated learning and the culture of the past. I believe further that the university should be something more than a mere store-house of knowledge, and a power-house of thought. It should be a community

expressing in its corporate life a firm and unshakable belief in certain civilised values, which, quite apart from class instruction, should provide students with a profoundly enriching experience of life. It is in this respect that so many of our modern universities are lamentably deficient. They present on the contrary a picture of chaos, of conflicting Departmentalism, of Faculty rivalry, of financial lobbying, and of an advanced fragmentation which frequently prevents members of one section from recognising those of another section as colleagues. In this of course they reflect the chaos in which the whole of humanity is floundering at the present time, but as the community will rightly persist in turning to the university for leadership, it is time we attempted to make up our minds where we ourselves want to go and how we propose to get there.

*Dr. Palmer*

I do not believe that the university has one function only. Certainly one of its functions is the promotion, as soon as it is in a position to do so, of pure research in the field of knowledge, even though it may appear to be useless.

On one occasion at the Non-European Vacation School I aroused some indignation among the audience by congratulating Dr. Lawrence on the attainment of perfectly useless knowledge in the investigation of some quite obscure forms of life which he found in the forests of Natal. The audience was angry with me, but Dr. Lawrence quite understood that I intended it as a compliment and took it as such.

No university is worthy of its name unless it is prepared to promote the extension of knowledge in any field for its own sake, and without any eye to material benefit to be derived from that research, but this is not the only function of the university and service to the community is certainly one of the most important. This service should take the form of raising the general standard of education through action on the minds of under-graduates and by extension lectures open to the whole community extensive lectures must be contributed as a whole. It should also be prepared to undertake research for the benefit of industries which have to face certain problems.

Curiously enough, such research, even though undertaken for motives other than than of pure research, have often added very considerably to the sum of knowledge. The classic example of this is of course, Pasteur's Research into the process of fermentation. I do not agree that the university has one specific function. Very generally, its function might be said to be the promotion and extension of truth. But I feel it is better in practice to distinguish two functions—research and teaching—which have to be balanced against each other in varying proportions in different circumstances.

*Mr. Prestwich*

I think that "service to the community" is about the worst possible conception of its function that the university can propose to itself. To say this, of course, is emphatically not to say that the university ought not to render service to the community. But it will best do so if it faithfully strives to fulfil its traditional tasks of preserving, enlarging and transmitting the heritage of learning and of raising up a "due successions of persons" who will be, if not (in the words of the old Cambridge Bidding Prayer "well qualified to serve God in Church and State") at any rate well qualified to maintain intellectual values. Aristotle (I cite from memory, and perhaps inaccurately) advises us that happiness is not to be achieved by consciously pursuing it. It is rather a by-product of the active pursuit of other ends. In the same way, I believe, the university will best render service to the community if it consciously pursues ends that are at once more particular and more proper to its specific nature.

The conception of "service to the community", taken in a wide and general sense, is too vague to tell us anything about the university's function. Taken in a more concrete sense, it is all too likely to be interpreted as meaning that the justification of the university lies in its ability to help industry or the social services. By all means let those departments of the university which can render practical assistance to government and industry do so, provided that the university does not conceive this to be its primary function. If it does propose this conception of its function to itself, it is in danger of abdicating its task of determining, so far as it can, some at least of the values of the community,

and of converting itself into the harassed maid-of-all-work for governments and pressure-groups.

#### NOTE

The following remarks were prefixed to their answers by Dr. Palmer and Professor O'Connor:

**Dr. Palmer:** These questions seem to me to be at once too absolute and too abstract. They set alternatives which are not really alternatives, and many of the questions would need different answers in different circumstances. The function of the University is not the same under all conditions and should be to some extent modified to meet the special needs and special circumstances of the Community in which it is situated.

**Professor O'Connor:** The answers to these questions do not assert matters of fact but express only the attitudes of the writer. Some facts are referred to which explain the attitudes and support them to some degree. Nevertheless, the answers to these questions must tell the reader more about the writer than about university education. This is an inevitable defect of discussions on such topics and should be borne in mind by the reader.

**Layout by Department of Fine Arts,  
University of Natal,**

**and**

**Printed by The Natal Witness, Ltd.,  
Pietermaritzburg.**

Set in Times Roman.

**BOOKS** for STUDY

**BOOKS** for REFERENCE

**BOOKS** for RECREATION

and all your Stationery needs

+ + +

**FOUNTAIN PENS** . . . all the popular  
makes—Parker, Sheaffer, Waterman, Swan,  
Conway Stewart, Platignum

**NIBS TO SUIT EVERY HAND**  
Propelling Pencils to match all Pens

+ + +

**T. W. GRIGGS & Co.**

Caxton House — — DURBAN

Telephones 21364, 21365



**A. T. BRYANT : THE ZULU PEOPLE.** The most important study of the Zulu race ever to be published. Dr. Bryant gathered the material for this monumental work from sources long since dried up, between the years 1883 and 1935. 310,000 words, 835 pages. Price 35s.

**THE DIARY OF HENRY FRANCIS FYNN, 1824-1838.** This hundred-year-old manuscript, after a chequered career, has at last been edited and prepared for publication and its release will be a publishing event of the first order. An observer's graphic record of Natal in embryo. Approximate price 42s.

**H. C. LUGG : HISTORIC NATAL AND ZULU-LAND.** The authoritative record of people and places intimately associated with the emergence of Natal. Price 15s.

**G. MACKEURTAN : CRADLE DAYS OF NATAL.** A small limited re-issue. Price 30s.

**A. M. RALLS : THE GLORY WHICH IS YOURS.** A graphic account of the experiences of some 1820 Settlers recorded by a member of the Ulyate family. Price 10s. 6d.

**H. WATKINS-PITCHFORD : IN GOD'S GOOD TIME.** An historical novel on an epic scale which traces a Huguenot family from its persecution days in Europe to its diverse destinies in South Africa during the Anglo-Boer war. Price 10s. 6d.

**SHUTER & SHOOTER  
PIETERMARITZBURG**