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As our readers will notice, most of the contributions in the present issue come from outside the University of Natal. This is pleasing evidence of the connections *Theoria* enjoys in the wider academic community. Nevertheless we wish to reassure colleagues in our own University that they are always welcome in the forum.

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COLERIDGE AND ABSTRUSE RESEARCH*

by ROGER SHARROCK

'I stopped short as he turned his face to me, and it happened that for some reason or other I took in as I had perhaps never done before the beauty of his rich blank gaze. It was charged with experience as the sky is charged with light, and I felt on the instant as if we had been overspanned and conjoined by the great arch of a bridge or the great dome of a temple. Doubtless I was rendered peculiarly sensitive to it by something in the way I had been giving him up and sinking him. While I met it I stood there smitten, and I felt myself responding to it with a sort of guilty grimace'. So James in his story *The Coxon Fund* responds to the fatality of the literary genius who by his aim at universality and his failure in the real world projects upon others the predicament of their own non-being and so becomes a scapegoat. James wrote his story after reading the life of Coleridge by Joseph Dykes Campbell. Coleridge is one of those figures in literature in whom the legend of the man has grown so as to overshadow his real work and his real achievement. Scholarship has lately paid ample acknowledgment to that achievement but the legend lives on: the myth dominates and limits any attempts we make to estimate the true character of his works and their value for us; just as it is with other mythical figures, the honest intellectual bulldog Dr Johnson or Dylan Thomas the Dionysiac satyr-poet get in the way of their creations: so does the figure of Coleridge, the archangel a little damaged, the intellectual prodigal with his voice in monologue rising like a stream of rich distilled perfumes to intoxicate and bewilder a circle of listeners until they are reduced, even flattened, by his metaphysical rhetoric (like the row of such listeners in a Max Beerbohm cartoon who seem to be keeling over towards the right of the drawing, sinking into a heap, away from the sublimely indifferent, still declaiming S.T.C.)

The myth of failure is sustained not just by the narrative of personal weakness and breakdown but by more serious charges: was the sublime 'Poet, Metaphysician, Bard' guilty of the meanest intellectual dishonesty? Did he conceal inanity by a fog of wilful obscurity? Was he guilty on a huge scale of unacknowledged plagiarism? The critical debate on Coleridge since his death tends to recur to the same moot points of controversy. The charges of pla-

*This is the text of a lecture given by Professor Sharrock, (then of King's College, London) while he was visiting the Department of English, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg during August 1981.

giarism were first made by De Quincey in an article in *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* in September 1834. They were pursued with more thoroughness and ferocity by J.F. Ferrier in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (1840). In 1971 Norman Fruman revived the attack (*Coleridge, the Damaged Archangel*). Once again the stealthy borrowings from Schelling and Jacobi are described, the debts to Tenneman's *History of Philosophy;* all the old charges and some new ones are laid. This self-appointed executioner is not satisfied with drawing and quartering the victim, but probing the remains with a psychoanalytic scalpel he holds up the quivering pudenda for our inspection: S.T.C. was probably impotent.

It is not necessary to defend genius against the exercise that used to be called debunking. But it is important to estimate to what extent the myth of weakness and failure affects our reading of the works. First of all, it must be recognized that there was an arch debunker before De Quincey and Ferrier and John Sterling and those other giants of former days on whose shoulders Norman Fruman now perches. This was S.T.C. himself who prepared for posterity a magnificent hatchet job on his own reputation in the form of constant abject confessions of the deficiency of his character, his moral lassitude and mental sterility. Even as early as the autumn of 1794 when engaged with Southey in the Pantisocratic scheme he writes:

> To me hath Heaven with liberal hand assigned
> Energic reason and a shaping mind,
> The daring soul of truth, the patriot's part,
> And Pity's sigh, that breathes the gentle heart —
> Sloth-jaundiced all! and from my graspless hand
> Drop Friendship's precious pearls, like hour-glass sand.
>
> *(Lines to a Friend)*

There was undoubtedly something in the set of Coleridge's mind which made him do this. Still earlier, when he was at school at Christ's Hospital, a scholar and the most brilliant Grecian of his time, he wrote lines of verse into a book lamenting that Sloth had 'around me thrown her soul-enslaving chain'. The pleas of inadequacy continued into mature years; the prophecy of 1794 was tragically realized: he did indeed squander friendship's precious pearls. The great creative friendship with Wordsworth broke up in bitterness in 1810. Wordsworth cannot be exempted from a grave lack of generosity, but Coleridge had been, in the period after his return from Malta and when his marriage was on its last legs, an exasperating companion. Even in the sunnier years of collaboration in the Quantocks and in Germany there seems to have been an overpowering sense of ultimate loneliness in Coleridge which friendship could not alleviate. This comes out in the

moving hexameter lines sent to William and Dorothy Wordsworth from Ratzeburg in 1799:

> William, my head and my heart! dear William and dear Dorothea!
> You have all in each other; but I am lonely and want you!

Coleridge's relationship to Wordsworth — the astonishing symbiosis, as I.A Richards has called it, of these two minds — is certainly of prime importance for the understanding of his psychology, his thought, and his theory of poetry, and to it I shall return. But we might note that in all the complex story of borrowing and paying back (the situation when phrases from Dorothy's *Journals* turn up in poems by both poets, and when a not very remarkable line or two of *The Ancient Mariner* is contributed by Wordsworth with due acknowledgment by S.T.C., an acknowledgment he regrettably did not apply to the twenty or so pages of Schelling's *System des transcendentalen Idealismus* copied into the middle of *Biographia Literaria)* — in all that complex story it was Coleridge who consistently encouraged and deferred to the superior greatness of Wordsworth as man and poet, Wordsworth who obligingly accepted his superiority and put on record the statement that *The Ancient Mariner* was not a very satisfactory poem in any case. Coleridge may have been an unreliable friend but he was always a generous one. And he was always apologizing for himself. Even his poems are strewn with prefatory apologies for placing them before the public at all. That before *The Wanderings of Cain* attempts to persuade the reader that the poem's appearance is not due to the author's 'will, choice or judgment'; that before *Kubla Khan* offers it to the public 'rather as a psychological curiosity, than on the ground of any supposed *poetic* merits.'

The truth is that Coleridge provides an outstanding example of the type of artist and thinker whose work is rooted in a neurotic personality; his very successes are gained through failure and strain and going against the grain of the ordinary, happy, adjusted life; he wages a constant battle with anxiety. To characterize such a type it is not necessary to universalize it and treat all art as essentially the product of neurosis, as did Freud, the wound of Philoctetes inextricably linked to the artist's privilege of stretching the bow of the imagination. I would rather suggest that these strains belong to a special kind of artist. No doubt there were many such before Coleridge but it is in the nineteenth century that we encounter the type in significant number and possessing major status. Carlyle, Kierkegaard, Baudelaire, Nietzsche. These are the founding fathers of existentialist thought and art. They are all enemies of rational systematizing; they all attempt a philo-

sophical reconciliation of the claims of the heart and the head; they wage unremitting warfare with the intellectual, political and religious establishments of their day; they live entirely for their work, and that work is a total *oeuvre,* not a series of self-sufficient books or a series of answers to a number of independent problems. Possibly it is the existential character of their thinking, its rootedness in the conditions of the self, that creates this phenomenon of the agonized consciousness. They lived only for the idea; their lives were parables of their thought, so that it is without surprise that we read that Kierkegaard spent the last of his savings on the day before he died. All of them were for much of their lives sick and in pain; much of their suffering was caused by what we should now call psychosomatic illness. They were guided by a desire to apprehend totality and haunted by a fear of the abyss yawning beneath man's contingency, Carlyle's Everlasting Nay, Kierkegaard's dread (*Angst*) Baudelaire's spleen, the *nicht* of Heidegger and the *néant* of Sartre. Coleridge shares all these common features and gives often a poignant expression to the last. In a strange poem of 1805 *The Blossoming of the Solitary Date-Tree,* part verse part prose, he writes:

> The finer the sense for the beautiful and the lovely, and the fairer and lovelier the object presented to the senses; the more exquisite the individual's capacity of joy, and the more ample his means and opportunities of enjoyment, the more heavily will he feel the ache of solitariness, the more unsubstantial becomes the feast spread around him. What matters it, whether in fact the viands and the ministering graces are shadowy or real, to him who has not hand to grasp or arms to embrace them? . . .
>
> > . . . O dare I accuse
> > My earthly lot as guilty of my spleen,
> > Or call my destiny niggard! O no! no!
> > It is her largeness, and her overflow,
> > Which being incomplete, disquieteth me so!

'Her largeness and her overflow' — grammatically the possessive pronouns lead back to 'my destiny'; but in the immediately preceding lines he has spoken as if his endowments included the whole world and the arts that interpret it: 'Imagination', capsulates the whole energy of poetry and the whole of Coleridge's contribution to the theory of poetry, and the mention then of 'Fields, forests, ancient mountains, ocean, sky' suggests that, apart from the fatality of his own genius, it is the sheer 'largeness' and 'overflow' of the cosmos that he struggles to grasp, and the effort to grasp causes disquiet. Are not, when all the jokes are over about it, the retreats and advances of the argument in *Biographia Literaria,* the postponements and evasions, another in-

stance of this metaphysical disquiet, a shying away from the problem in the very act of recognizing it because of the terror of the otherness of the world?

Yet this urge to embrace and comprehend was not wholly frustrated. Far from it. It was an essentially metaphysical quest and it resulted in a series of works which, if they do not offer a finished system like the admired German transcendentalists on whom he built, do develop a unified philosophical strategy which can be applied in many different fields, ethics, politics, aesthetics, theology, and which can serve to illuminate universal laws linking nature and the mind of man. The mere catalogue of Coleridge's publications serves to make nonsense of the cruder charges of a wasted life. He edited *The Friend* (1809–10) and was completely responsible for its production and distribution; it is a bold attempt to locate and communicate with a new intellectual class, to appeal to men of good will during the crisis of the Napoleonic age, and to do this by grounding political and social conduct on first principles. The *Lay Sermons* of 1817 continue this work; in the same year *Biographia Literaria* presents both the definition of the imagination as an active power in Chapter xiii which is the keystone of the romantic theory of poetry and the account of Wordsworth's poetry in Chapters xvii–xxii which lays the foundations of modern literary criticism. Although the *Opus Maximum* was never finished a great bulk of manuscript remains which will finally see the light in the splendid Toronto Complete Coleridge. *Aids to Reflection* (1825), a philosophic apology for Christianity, contains many of his most original insights. Within his lifetime there were still to appear the *Essays on Church and State* (1830). *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit*, posthumously published (1840) presents an attitude to Biblical interpretation that is far in advance of his time.

But the honourable score of published work to be set against the grandiose projects which remained unwritten or unfinished does not complete the story. From 1808 until 1819 Coleridge gave widely attended and influential public lectures at the Royal Institution in London and other places; they included the important courses of 1811–12 and 1819 on Shakespeare (the materials of the former have been re-edited by R.A. Foakes *Coleridge on Shakespeare: The Text of the Lectures of 1811–12* (1971)) and the lectures on the history of philosophy of December 1818–March 1819 (ed. Kathleen Coburn 1950). Few of these courses were written up in an entirely finished form but we shall have to wait for the Toronto edition to reveal their full range and quality. Furthermore, in the whole period of his maturity he filled notebooks with entries on every conceivable subject, observations on things seen, personal journal-like confessions, passages of theory and conjec-

ture, sketches, quotations, fragments of foreign languages; in the Bollingen Foundation edition (Kathleen Coburn, 1957, 1961, 1973) there are 3 231 entries filling two large volumes for the years 1794–1808; thus we have yet another Coleridgean iceberg of which only the top portion has so far appeared. The Notebooks bring us very close to the Coleridge who is supposed to have wasted his talents in one-sided conversation. They show that he was, to use his own (borrowed) word applied to Shakespeare, myriad-minded; they provide a parallel to the letters of Carlyle or the *Papirer* of Kierkegaard and his *Journals* where we can sense the roots and continuity of a unified life-work fanning out from a personal centre. The Notebooks make us aware of that 'sense of the beautiful and the lovely . . . in the objects of the senses' which he experienced with such intensity (and intensity is one of those important words of our modern sensibility which were coined by him). If we simply inspect the entries during his stay in Malta in 1805–6 we encounter passages of delicate visual observation where his mind is grasping a new scene:

> Sea & its Bays — fields green with corn, interspersed with the dark crimson Sulla/ white with fields newly sowed — roughened here & there with fields in *building* — the many Casals/ the tents of Stone fields, i.e. Stoocks as in Hopground/ harbor running up as two lakes/ barrenness every where staring out, and every where conquered, or a-conquering — the Sea like a blue wall around — so looked the scene from the ramparts Civita Vecchia looking down in the Bason towards St. Paul's & St. Julian/ Casals looking like burned out Villages.
> The beautiful Milk Thistle — with the milk-blue white veins or fibres up & athwart its dark green leaves.

The following entry on an encounter with a lizard recalls D.H. Lawrence's evocations of birds, beasts and flowers:

> Lizard half-erect stands still as I stop — I stop a long while/ he turns his head and looks sidelong at me/ — Crawls two or three paces by stealth stops again/ I walk off briskly, turning my head tho' & looking at him/ he is too cunning & has not moved — at length I really move away — and off — he is gone!
> Glide across the sunny walk like shooting Stars, green, grey, speckled/ exquisite grace of motion/ all the delicacy of the Serpent from even just the increasing erectness of it to its hind paws.

The first of these passages is not particularly clear apart from a number of colour words and one striking phrase ('looking like burnt out Villages'); what it seems to do is to lay before us the raw materials of thinking; we are taken back to a stage immediately after perceptions have been received by the mind. One is

aware of a double effort: to record, in the colour words and the descriptions of physical movement, but also to grapple actively with the impressions provided by the senses and to move immediately towards their translation into images or to more precisely fixing them by association and comparison. To notice this is not quite the same as to say that such observations are like rough drafts for a poem; the passage on Malta is not that and it is not like an ordinary journal entry either. These notes are not yet shaped by any particular literary intention. They are often incoherent but there is a groundswell of unity as we see themes and associations recur and recur — Coleridge spoke of 'the streamy nature of association.' What we witness is the play of a single mind at the moments when experience is being converted into thought; granted his intense self-consciousness it is little wonder that the process rarely moved on to fulfilment in expression within a specific field of inquiry. Coleridge's universalized intellectual alertness dissolves the barriers between disciplines and the fixed forms of inherited concepts: like his description of the working of the imagination, 'it dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to recreate.'

It is the struggle to idealize and to unify which brings it about that however varied the topics and comments in the manuscripts it is possible to detect a single aim so long as one abandons thinking in terms of types of literary work, notes towards a work in a genre. Coleridge is predominantly concerned with the question of the nature of being. With his intense appreciation of variety and his desperate urge to comprehend that variety he is facing the age-old philosophical problem of the relation of the One and the Many. Another extract from the *Notebooks* illustrates this at the same time as it reveals its author's subtlety of psychological analysis:

> Monday last I was standing gazing at the starry Heaven, and said, I will go to bed the next star that shoots/ Observe this in counting fixed numbers previous to doing any thing, &c &c &c and deduce from man's own unconscious acknowledgment man's *dependence* on some thing *out* of him, on something more *apparently* and believedly subject to regular & certain Laws than his own Will & Reason
>
> Saturday morning 27 Sept 1805.

The main difficulty in the problem of the reconciliation of the One and the Many is that involving the nature of deity. Throughout all the changes of his intellectual development Coleridge remained from the start a devout and committed Christian believing that Christianity was something to be lived before it could be argued about. But the problem of reconciling the love and power

of a supreme being with the variety of nature and the independence and freedom of human existence is a hard one; it is one that is more easily submitted to extreme solutions than to those which might offer fair and full play to all the elements in the pattern, divine and human, natural and supernatural. Thus we can at one extreme take up the position of Berkeley and say that since *esse est percipi,* there is no material reality, all events are mental, and we are all thoughts in the mind of God. Or going to another extreme one can drift into pantheism; according to this doctrine God is the sum-total of the unverse, his spirit flows through all created things, and we ourselves participate in the divine life of the universe:

> And what if all of animated nature
> Be but organic Harps diversely fram'd,
> That tremble into thought, as o'er them sweeps
> Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze,
> At once the Soul of each, and God of all?

That is another quotation from Coleridge, from his poem *The Eolian Harp* written in 1795, and it shows how attractive to him was this kind of dynamic and emotional pantheism; everything seems to be in swirling movement and man merging ecstatically into the forms of nature. He derived the inspiration for this view of the universe from Spinoza. A recent writer has declared that Spinoza combined 'a coldly uncompromising clarity about the blindness of nature and the brevity and meaninglessness of human life. . .icy scientism. . .with a swelling conception of the human lot that is itself normative of the beautiful, the noble, and the harmonious.' The late eighteenth century and the Romantics read him hugely and they thrived on the elevation and excitement of his thought. But in the next few lines S.T.C. rebukes himself for this unlawful excitement through the person of his wife (he had just married Sarah Fricker and was hardly out of the honeymoon period). Her 'serious eye' offers 'a mild reproof'; he should leave these bubbles of speculation and walk humbly with his God.

The fact was that Spinozism could never be reconciled with any form of Christianity, however basic and liberal in its dogmatic attitudes, since Spinozism denies the freedom of the will and the personal existence of God. The whole matter has been very fully opened in the absorbing book by Thomas McFarland *(Coleridge and the Pantheist Tradition,* Oxford, 1969). The Spinozistic solution met many problems of the unity of being with which Coleridge was tussling and which swim below the surface in the fragmentary utterances of the *Notebooks.* But in his heart, and for that matter in his head, he knew that he could not embrace this

solution and continue with ordinary Christian belief and practice. In my house there are many mansions, but Spinozism pulls down walls and all. I have spoken of Coleridge's continuing need to reconcile the claims of the heart and the head; which is the heart and which the head on this issue? it is a nice point to decide. It appears from the poem and elsewhere that Spinoza's thought was both intellectually and emotionally attractive; these terms are too feeble by which to describe the pull he felt from historical Christianity; but certainly he was committed to move on from simple adherence to the latter, to a reasoned defence of its tenets.

We should consider Coleridge as the sort of unified intellectual being his system demands and not give separate consideration to the poet and the critic (dismembered parts of *Biographia Literaria* are put before students, as in the old selected edition by John Sampson, which hardly make sense without some knowledge of the philosophical portions). We can if we like describe him as a romantic-existentialist thinker. The charge that abstruse research killed the poet then disappears since we can discover that Coleridge was a philosopher before he was a poet and that many of the poems are linked by real though complicated fronds to his central principles. The importance of Coleridge the thinker and his influence on the later nineteenth century has been increasingly explored in the last forty years of scholarship. Yet this major aspect of his work was stated very early by John Stuart Mill and even earlier in a rather different and less critical manner by Charles Lamb and William Hazlitt within Coleridge's own lifetime (1820 and 1825). The passages are well-worn and I shall refer to them as briefly as possible; they do however offer clues which if pursued before recent times might have saved scholars and plagiarism-hunters a lot of trouble.

> Next he was engaged with Hartley's tribes of mind — 'etherial braid, thoughtwoven' — and he busied himself for a year or two with vibrations and vibratiuncles, and the great law of association that binds all things in its mystic chain, and the doctrine of Necessity (the mild teacher of Charity) and the Millenium, anticipative of a life to come; and he plunged deep into the controversy on Matter and Spirit, and as an escape from Dr. Priestley's Materialism, where he felt himself imprisoned by the logician's spell, like Ariel in the cloven pinetree, he became suddenly enamoured of Bishop Berkeley's fairy-world, and used in all companies to build the universe, like a brave poetical fiction, of fine words. And he was deep-read in Malebranche, and in Cudworth's Intellectual System . . . and in Lord Brook's hieroglyphic theories, and in Bishop Butler's Sermons, and in the Duchess of Newcastle's fantastic folios, and in Clarke and South and Tillotson, and all the fine thinkers and masculine reasoners of that age; and Leibnitz's *Pre-established Harmony*

reared its arch above his head, like the rainbow in the cloud, covenanting with the hopes of man.

And then he fell plumb, ten thousand fathoms down (but his wings saved him harmless) into the *hortus siccus* of Dissent, where he pared religion down to the standard of reason, and stripped faith of mystery, and preached Christ crucified and the Unity of the Godhead, and so dwelt for a while in the spirit with John Huss and Jerome of Prague and old John Zisca, and ran through Neal's History of the Puritans and Calamy's Non-Conformists' Memorial, having like thoughts and passions with them. But then Spinoza became his God, and he took up the vast chain of being in his hand, and the round world became the centre and soul of all things in some shadowy sense, forlorn of meaning, and around him he beheld the living traces and the sky-pointing proportions of the mighty Pan; but poetry redeemed him from this spectral philosophy, and he bathed his heart in beauty, and gazed at the golden light of heaven, and drank of the spirit of the universe, and wandered at eve by fairy stream or fountain . . . and wended with truth in Plato's shade, and in the writings of Proclus and Plotinus saw the ideas of things in the eternal mind, and unfolded all mysteries with the Schoolmen, and fathomed the depths of Duns Scotus and Thomas Aquinas, and entered the third heaven with Jacob Behmen, and walked hand in hand with Swedenborg through the pavilions of the New Jerusalem, and sang his faith in the promise and in the word in his *Religious Musings.*

. . . or wandered into Germany and lost himself in the labyrinths of the Hartz Forest and of the Kantean philosophy, and amongst the cabalistic names of Fichte and Schelling and Lessing and God knows who. This was long after; but all the former while he had nerved his heart and filled his eyes with tears, as he hailed the rising orb of liberty, since quenched in darkness and in blood, and had kindled his affections at the blaze of the French Revolution, and sang for joy, when the towers of the Bastille and the proud places of the insolent and the oppressor fell, and would have floated his bark, freighted with fondest fancies, across the Atlantic wave with Southey and others to seek for peace and freedom . . . Alas! Frailty, thy name is *genius!* What is become of all this mighty heap of hope, of thought, of learning and humanity? It has ended in swallowing doses of oblivion and in writing paragraphs in the *Courier.* Such and so little is the mind of man!

Hazlitt, 'Mr. Coleridge' (in *The Spirit of the Age, 1825)*

Come back into memory, like as thou wert in the day-spring of thy fancies, with hope like a fiery column before thee — the dark pillar not yet turned — . . . Logician, Metaphysician, Bard! How have I seen the casual passer through the Cloisters stand still, entranced with admiration, . . . to hear thee unfold, in thy deep and sweet intonations, the mysteries of Iamblichus or Plotinus (for even in those years thou waxedst not pale at such philosophic draughts).

Lamb, 'Christ's Hospital Five and Thirty Years Ago'
(Essays of Elia)

The apostrophe of Lamb is really a footnote to the splendid recreation by Hazlitt. The latter is of course writing one of those prose poems on human transience into which his criticism often breaks down. But the result is a masterly impressionistic statement of the progress of Coleridge's mind on its restless search for a total intellectual satisfaction. We need not be misled by the cruel climax: *Aids to Reflection* was published in the same year as this libel according to which Coleridge's latterday pursuits had shrunk to opium-taking and writing for the Tory press. Hazlitt could never forgive anyone who had betrayed the Revolution and supported the war against Napoleon. Nor need we make much of the implied judgment of Hazlitt that S.T.C.'s whole career was one of waste and failure: though it is interesting to be as it were present in those contemporary smithies where the great Coleridge myth is being forged. The real value of the estimate lies in its intuitive perception of the continuity of Coleridge's intellectual quest. He went on looking for answers to the same fundamental problems. In his search he tried out one philosophical system after another. Hazlitt is sometimes wrong about the chronology of his interests: the details do not matter because his great contribution to our understanding is to make us see that Coleridge's thought always functioned through his reading of other writers. Just as he needed a hero to worship in life, steering by Thomas Poole, or, supremely, William Wordsworth, so his thought had to be conducted through a succession of acts of hero-worship. This activity need not be thought of as slavish or subservient. The subject-matter of philosophy is permanent and common problems; philosophers may have personal styles but their themes are the same, matter and spirit, moral obligation, perception, and so on; in fact there cannot be philosophical originality in the sense in which we employ the word of a poet or musician. Thomas McFarland has argued eloquently that Coleridge's borrowings 'though skirting and sometimes crossing the bounds of literary propriety' were not the thefts of a poverty-stricken mind, but 'the mosaic materials of a neurotic technique of composition.' But it may be added that this mosaic habit is not merely neurotic but a response to the objective character of permanent problems by viewing them through the vocabulary and the arguments of their greatest exponents. Coleridge himself stated that he had not read all Plato's writings 'because I soon found that I had read Plato by anticipation.' And it was Plato in the *Phaedo* who said that all learning is in actuality a process of recollecting what we already know. If this seems a too high-flown idealism for some of us, let us on a more mundane level remember those occasions when we have seized with excitement on an idea in a writer which appears to embody in a finished and persuasive form thoughts we have already entertained in em-

bryo. It is what is meant by Keats's phrase, 'A wording of our own highest thought.' In any case, the fact remains that in his early political pamphlet *The Watchman* (Bristol, 1796) Coleridge could anticipate his later theory of the plastic nature of the imagination years before he could have read Schelling or any German philosophy: 'Man . . . is urged to develop the powers of the Creator, and by new combinations of those powers to imitate his creativeness.' So we see that the charge of plagiarism in its crude form, like the charge of indolence, must decisively be rejected.

Charles Lamb's appreciation of 'the inspired Charity-boy' adds something to Hazlitt's picture. It tells us that Coleridge's metaphysical interests went back to his school years and that he was an omnivorous reader from the start — in his own words 'a Library Cormorant' — not someone who turned to 'abstruse research' when the poet in him died, but one in whom 'Logician, Metaphysician, Bard' were parallel and related.

Lamb also gives us another clue. His mention of Iamblichus and Plotinus shows that from the beginning Coleridge was prepared to give serious consideration to mystical thought which pre-supposed a gradation or hierarchy of forms in the universe leading man up to pure spirit or God (in the persons of the two prinicipal Neo-Platonist philosophers of antiquity). In *Biographia Literaria* he is still referring with admiration to the *Enneads* of Plotinus. So although he moved from one style of thought and one hero of thought to another there is a sense in which he was able to impose on his own development, as he looked back upon it, the kind of circular unity he attributed to the ideal poem:

> The common end of all *narrative,* nay of all Poems, is to convert a *series* into a *Whole:* to make those events, which in real or imagined History move in a *strait* line, assume to our Understanding a *circular* motion — the snake with it's Tail in it's Mouth.
>
> Letter to Joseph Cottle 7 March 1815
> *(Collected Letters* IV.545)

There is a dynamic movement in his theorizing and a wish to reconcile contraries:

> My system, if I may venture to give it so fine a name, is the only attempt I know, ever made to reduce all knowledge into harmony. It opposes no other system, but shows what was true in each; and how that which was true in the particular, in each of them became error, *because* it was only half the truth. I have endeavoured to unite the insulated fragments of truth, and therewith to frame a perfect mirror . . .
>
> *Table Talk,* 12 Sept 1831.

This is a relevant to the highly important question of the history of Coleridge's opinions. I mean the transition from a phase of near-materialism, following of sensationalist philosophers in the English empirical tradition, republicanism and libertarian experiment with communes, to German idealism, intellectual conservatism and nationalism, and Anglican theology. It is interesting that the two most important recent treatments of Coleridge's thought employ totally different approaches to this question. McFarland in the work already mentioned consciously and pointedly ignores the historical development. For him the chronology is unimportant: the main body of concepts is there at the start or being anticipated at the start. Basil Willey in his *S.T. Coleridge* (1971) takes a contrary approach. For him Coleridge's mind is to be seen in evolution, trying and rejecting certain approaches, solving certain problems, slowly moving towards a body of tested doctrine. I wonder whether the truth may not lie somewhere in between the two positions. A mind so clearly, at any rate up to about 1815, in constant movement must have been moving somewhere, and this is why we should attend to Professor Willey's account of these directions and arrivals. On the other hand the uncompromisingly achronological approach of McFarland does have the advantage of bringing out those vital elements of the thought — e.g. the inclination to mysticism, the desire for totality, the adumbration of a creative theory of the imagination — which were there in the 1790s.

Coleridge grew up in a peculiarly English tradition of radical politics and enlightened, rational Christianity. He was for a time a Unitarian (the expression he himself frequently employs is Socinian, a follower of the sixteenth-century Socinus, the founder of the sect) — one who rejected the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity and believed that Jesus was divinely chosen as a teacher, perhaps even born of a virgin, but not the Son of God. This movement, mainly Nonconformist, aimed at making religion philosophically reasonable and socially progressive. The aim of reconciling religious feeling with the human reason continued to be an overriding concern of Coleridge. The predominant philosophy of this movement was empirical, based on experience, and taking its cue as much as possible from the findings of natural science: in fact, the tradition springing from Locke, Berkeley and Hume which enjoyed prestige with most thinking Englishmen in the eighteenth century. There are no innate ideas, and in cognition the mind is passive, receiving impressions from the outer world like impressions on soft wax or the images reflected in a mirror; ideas in the mind are simply the stored-up form of the impressions transmitted in sensation. What is extraordinary about much of this thinking is its capacity to combine an apparently materialistic

psychology and theory of consciousness with enthusiastic religious fervour. David Hartley, after whom Coleridge named his first child, actually tried to get round the difficulty of this type of theory of knowledge by a species of physiological guess-work. The difficulty is that implicit in epistemology since Descartes: given a complete separation of spirit or consciousness from the outer world, from what is perceived, how can knowledge take place? how do the impressions turn into ideas? Hartley without the slightest experimental warrant but with considerable ingenuity proposed a scheme of 'vibratiuncles' or minute vibrations communicated to the brain along tiny capillary-like tubes. Coleridge was enthusiastic about Hartley for a time and he pays tribute to him in *Religious Musings:*

> he of mortal kind
> Wisest, he first who marked the ideal tribes
> Up the fine fibres through the sentient brain.

Hartley managed to erect on the base of this physiological theory a pyramid of speculation. Increasingly complex associations of what at first are simple ideas produce, first, man's capacity for practical decision, next, his moral feelings, domestic affections, etc., and finally, when knowledge of an ordered pattern implies the existence of an ordering being, the existence of God forms the apex of the pyramid (David Hartley, *Observations on Man,* 1749; second edition by Joseph Priestley). Coleridge was not content for long with the crude materialism of Hartley's system; what had attracted him was its bold attempt to attack the problem — to try to throw a bridge between the one and the many, the I and the It. As he says in an epigram which occurs both in a letter and in the later *Table Talk:* 'Socinianism, cold moonlight; Methodism a stove; O for some force to unite heat and light!' Soon he was having his second son christened Berkeley as he moved on to an idealist way out of the empirical dilemma; it did not work for long, and the unfortunate Berkeley did not survive to be present at the next transmogrification of his father's continuing quest. The next child was named Derwent and did survive: the presence of Wordsworth and the Wordsworthian joy in nature was thus always present to him; the river by which his friend had been nurtured, sporting 'a naked savage in the thunder shower,' was a perpetual reminder of that world of feeling which could not be suppressed in any satisfactory philosophical view of human life but which needed to be described in the language of reason.

Coleridge's religious sensibility was profoundly orthodox. That is to say, he believed in the fallen nature of man and the consequent need for a redemption. As he says, 'A Fall of some sort or

other — the creation, as it were, of the non-absolute — is the fundamental postulate of the moral history of Man' (*Table Talk* 1 May 1830). Cf. 'I profess a deep conviction that man was and is a fallen creature . . . diseased in his will, that will which is the true and only strict synonyme of the word, I, or the intelligent Self.' The ultimately cold rationality of Unitarianism could not provide a Redeemer, only a purely human compassion or Christian sentiment — help for the poor, help for the vagrant discharged soldiers of the American war like the figures in Wordsworth's poems, support through political clubs for the beginnings of the French Revolution until the cauldron boiled over into the terror. Furthermore, Coleridge came to believe that Unitarianism with its one God, a mere demiurge behind the universe, governing all things by necessity, led inevitably to pantheism like that of Spinoza, and that this was in effect atheism. So he was led by a logical series of steps towards a Trinitarian position. Life was not a mass of atoms or monads, nor was it all in the mind, mere figments of our consciousness; it was relationship, polarity and organic growth. The love of the creator for his creation is mediated through his wisdom (Christ, the Logos) and put into effect by the power of the Holy Spirit. Thus for some time Coleridge inclined to a purely speculative belief in the Trinity like that of the Neo-Platonists, but he grew to accept it as an historical doctrine of the Church related to the moral life and to redemption from sin: 'Solely in consequence of our Redemption does the Trinity become a doctrine, the belief in which as real is commanded by our conscience' (*Literary Remains,* 'Confessio Fidei').

By 1801–2 Coleridge had accomplished his personal philosophical revolution. In a letter to Poole of 16 March 1801 he says that he has 'overthrown the doctrine of association as taught by Hartley, and with it all the irreligious metaphysics of modern infidels — especially the doctrine of necessity.' In a compressed account like this it is impossible and undesirable to attempt a full discussion of Coleridge's theory of the imagination. If I may seem to be backing down that is after all what S.T.C himself does at the end of *Biographia Literaria* Chap. xiii. I prefer to refer you to the widely differing interpretations of I.A. Richards *(Coleridge on Imagination,* 1934) and D.G. James *(Scepticism and Poetry,* 1937) and the later very clear summary by Basil Willey *(Nineteenth Century Studies,* 1949) and that by Owen Barfield *(What Coleridge Really Thought,* 1972). I take for granted that common to all these accounts is the recognition that Coleridge believes the mind to be active, not passive, in experience, that it imposes categories, space, time, etc. on the raw material of perception in the mode of Kant, and that the artistic imagination works as a model or special version of the ordinary (primary) imagination which serves in all

of us to organize our perceptions. I only want to make one or two points which may be linked to the question of Coleridge's influence and importance down to our own time.

First, the doctrine of the imagination is connected at every step with the evolution of his religious views and the movement of those views towards an orthodox Trinitarianism. In another letter to Poole written a week later than the one I have just quoted he says that the mind cannot be passive if it is made in God's image, 'and that, too, in the sublimest sense, the *Image of the Creator* . . .' There is a sort of triune pattern, the creative imagination of God which gives us ourselves and the universe, the primary imagination of man which makes possible for him the apprehension of that world (apprehension but not comprehension, S.T.C. would say), and the act of the poetic imagination, 'dissolving, diffusing, dissipating, in order to recreate,' which partakes of the love of God and sympathy with his creatures ('no man can be a good poet without at the same time being a good man') and as it were returns the universe to God its originator.

The other observation I want to make is to note the comparative simplicity of the central idea of Coleridge. It was a dialectical opposition which with a slight change in terminology and direction could be applied to a host of problems: reason/understanding, imagination/fancy, organic/mechanical. The highest acts of the mind spring from the will and the human consciousness of its identity as a reasonable self. The ability of the reason to know certain truths immediately and intuitively corresponds to the rational structure of the universe which the human mind is able to read. These truths fall into two classes: scientific principles, like the axioms of geometry which do not derive from observation, and are not judged according to the senses, and the laws which man derives from the contemplation of his own moral life — supremely the intuitive belief in personal immortality and the existence of a just and wise God. The understanding, on the other hand, collates and arranges the data presented by the senses. It conducts the business of analysis and then reflects or generalizes on a number of concrete instances. It carries on the main work of the special sciences. It is important at this point to stress that Coleridge was not at his best mystical or anti-scientific, in spite of the high-flown transcendental language of some of his writings. His omnivorous mind had absorbed a great deal of natural science; he attended Davy's lectures on chemistry at the Royal Institution and took abundant notes which survive in the *Notebooks;* at one time he contemplated setting up a chemical laboratory with Wordsworth and their friend Calvert; when seeking to define the reason and the understanding in *Aids to Reflection* (Aphorism VIII, Comment) he refers aptly to the experimental work of

Hüber on bees and ants to show that insects possess a collating power similar to the understanding — all this a century before Wolfgang Köhler's chimpanzees piling up boxes to reach the shelf. What Coleridge distrusted was the bogus extension of the scientific method to fields for which it was entirely unfitted. He objected to attempts to order an organic community, like a nation, a family, or a group of craftsmen, by purely economic considerations or any other form of expediency. In fact he completes a reasoned argument for that opposition of Burke to the new middle class liberalism, the 'age of sophisters and economists', which in Burke remains largely sentimental. This side of Coleridge's thinking is even more relevant today than it was in the age of the Napoleonic wars and their aftermath. Behaviourism, the cult of productivity, B.F Skinner, and experimental research into human sexuality, are all in their different ways examples of the triumph of the understanding. The reason has taken a bad beating in modern times, and ironically enough some of the rods were pickled in romantic salt mines adjacent to those in which Coleridge delved for a wisdom that might have spared reason the assault, a conception not of frigid enlightenment in which reason is confused with the understanding but of rational wisdom acknowledging the sphere of the emotions and of what Coleridge called enthusiasm: '. . . Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm. For what is enthusiasm but the oblivion and swallowing up of self in an object dearer than self, or in an idea more vivid? in the genuine enthusiasm of morals, religion and patriotism, this enlargement and elevation of the soul above its mere self attest the presence, and accompany the intuition, of ultimate principles alone. These alone can interest the undegraded human spirit deeply and enduringly, because these alone belong to its essence, and will remain with it permanently.' *(The Statesman's Manual)*. So the formula reason/understanding can be used to probe the encroachments of pseudo-science into the study of politics or society (how much today a truly based sociology needs this guide!) or it can be employed to fix the standard of a poetry of the high imagination as against the cleverness or elegant modishness of mere versifying (in literary terms Coleridge uses the word 'fancy' for the literary equivalent of the understanding). Now of course it is possible with our perspective to say that Coleridge on poetry was just another prejudiced ideological thinker with romantic views, putting down Pope as a writer of mere wit, setting up Shakespeare and heading him off for the bardolatry of the later nineteenth century, and so on; but the valuable thing in his application of the dialectic of reason/understanding was that it is still a living instrument to distinguish current poetic stereotypes from fresh imaginative vision, and criticism will always need tools like

this to do its work of discrimination, especially in periods like our own when poets tend to talk to each other or to a Public (S.T.C always branded the horrid thing with a capital) instead of pursuing the difficult job of building from a common language individual insights (acts of the imagination) available to all men of good will as individuals, not as factors in an abstract public or mob. To be sure, the constant use of the formula of dichotomy can be wearisome or tendentious — but the successes outweigh the failures — as when in a brilliant aperçu he sees Don Quixote as the reason, Sancho Panza, his faithful, earthy, analysing companion, as the practical reason.

Genius is infectious of its own patterns and I am conscious that I am spinning round in Coleridgean circles. Perhaps I should have kept my eye on more mundane targets: what his century and a half of influence has given and, more interestingly, what is there still to give if we have misinterpreted or misread him? We have been made aware that he was the intellectual architect of the nineteenth century (the nineteenth century as a movement of thought and human reform as against the rise of the bourgeoisie, the dead weight of Victorianism). John Stuart Mill declared that Coleridge and Bentham were the two great seminal minds of the age, Bentham always asking from a blank slate whether an idea was true, Coleridge asking how it had come about that such an idea could have been entertained and therefore working in an historical dimension which the new liberal and utilitarian thought denied. In the whole subsequent period, the last century or the present one (and how little they differ) how little real development other than that technology which must be always of the surface has taken place, where change seems to separate man from history, it is useful if not salutary to be reminded of the human past and man as a creature with a past, individual and communal. This Coleridge does. And the instrument for remembering history is language, not mere philology but the consciousness of semantic change. S.T.C. may have perpetrated some rather crazy games with language, in the manner of his German romantic influences and Heidegger after them, but he was capable also of original language making. Some of it took, in the language of inoculation, some of it did not. 'Esemplastic' for the unifying imaginative power, well, that was one of his special coinages for a special purpose and we read it in the *Biographia Literaria* if we read the *Biographia Literaria.* But what about 'intensify' and 'sex' in the modern usage and 'clerisy' which hasn't survived but gave the idea for our 'intelligentsia', and 'existential': in his word-making as much as in any other sphere Coleridge was the architect of our modern age. More important even than his coinages is his sense that distinctness in expression

must march step by step with distinctness of thought if the processes of civilization are to be kept pure and clear. We have perhaps not sufficiently considered that S.T.C., that great enemy of positivism, was no enemy of the logical positivists' and their successors' regard for linguistic precision as the only guide to philosophical truth. After a brief succession to Coleridge in the nineteenth century idealists T.H. Green and Bradley, English academic philosophy returned to empiricism and provinciality. Coleridge with his awareness of the whole European tradition of thought from Plato to Leibnitz and Kant provided an escape from parochialism and a way into a cosmopolitan world of ideas.

I may seem to have spoken very little of those aspects of his work which primarily engage students of literature: his poetry and his criticism. I hope what I have said has justified my emphasis on Coleridge the metaphysical pioneer, part original thinker, part brilliant propagandist dragging his countrymen screaming and protesting to consider something beyond plain commonsense. All his criticism is generated by the philosophical drive and depends on the distinction between imagination and fancy: 'Milton had an imaginative, Cowley a very fanciful mind.' Where does the poetry enter into all this? If one thinks for a moment of the disparity in quality between the great visionary poems and the rest — *The Ancient Mariner, Kubla Khan,* and *Christabel* standing apart even when a special grouping of the so-called 'conversation poems' is made, apart because different in character and tone of voice as well as in quality — then it becomes apparent that there is polarity and a dialectic of contraries at work here too. Coleridge had before him a continuing model for his own distinction between the higher poetry and the lower, between the vital life of the imagination and mechanical talent or reflective sentiment. And in addition to the fissure in his own poetry there was always there the monumental presence of Wordsworth to stand for real poetic wholeness, 'the deep power of joy' playing over all things and organizing them into unity. He was, as Eliot said, one of whom it could justly be said that he was in the conventional phrase visited by the Muse. Those infrequent but extraordinary visitations provided further material from which the existentialist philosopher could build his model of the contradictions and mysteries of human consciousness.

ARE WHITE SOUTH AFRICANS AFRAID TO TRACE THEIR ANCESTORS?

by ELEANOR PRESTON-WHYTE

Afrikaners 'not afraid to trace ancestors'

PRETORIA—The Human Sciences Research Council yesterday denied claims that Afrikaners were afraid to trace their ancestors because they might have been black.

The council reacted in a statement to a report quoting Mr. Harold Brooks-Baker of Debrett's Peerage in London as saying Afrikaners were unwilling to delve into their family trees.

The statement said Mr Brooks-Baker's statement had come as a surprise.

The council had not been aware that Debrett's had attempted to advertise its work among South Africans.

'One would have expected them in due course to get in touch with the genealogy section, seeing it is the only official genealogical body in the Republic,' the statement said.

'If they had done so they would have been informed what the actual situation was.

'The facts utterly contradict Mr Brooks-Baker's allegations,' the council said.

Of the genealogists who conducted family research as a hobby who were known to the genealogy section of the council, 444 were Afrikaans-speaking and 200 were English-speaking.

'Of the members of the Genealogy Society of South Africa, 230 are Afrikaans-speaking and 160 English-speaking,' the council said.

It published family registers compiled by amateur genealogists. Of the 25 manuscripts already submitted to the council, 18 dealt with Afrikaans, five with English and two with German families.

Of the approximately 250 books and manuscripts on South African families in the council's library, almost 100 had been compiled by Afrikaans-speaking authors, the statement said.

The handbook for genealogical research in South Africa, written by Dr R.T.J. Lombard of the Human Sciences Research Council and published in both official languages, is in almost equal demand by English and Afrikaans-speaking persons.

'These facts, coupled with the number of inquiries received from and visits by the public to the genealogical section, show that Afrikaners, like their English fellow-countrymen and those speaking other languages have a healthy interest in their family histories.' — (Sapa)

The Natal Mercury, Thursday, June 25, 1981.

'Tracing one's ancestors' is big business today — the Mormons do it, most Americans, notably Black Americans following in the footsteps of Alex Hailey, do it; Debrett's it seems have always done it for the select few; and in South Africa, professional researchers at the Human Sciences Research Council, and the 444 Afrikaans and 200 English-speaking amateurs mentioned above, do it . . . There are, both here and overseas, commercial firms which will, for a sizeable fee, do it for one, though for many true enthusiasts the fun lies as much in doing the research oneself as in finding one's forebears. What has the social anthropologist, who has traditionally had a professional interest in recording and ana-

lysing the genealogies of the people he is investigating, got to say about the current interest in genealogical research in so many parts of Western society and, in particular, amongst White South Africans?

A cross-cultural perspective basic to social anthropology is useful here. We have evidence from other societies that the kinds of people who are included in genealogies, and those who are left out, may indicate a good deal about the structure of that society, about access to authority and resources, and about values and belief systems. Analyses of the way in which genealogies are constructed, negotiated and manipulated are, indeed, commonplace in contemporary social anthropology (Malinowski 1948; Bohannan 1952; Comaroff 1974; Tonkin 1981) and I have suggested elsewhere that insights from other African societies may be useful in understanding genealogical charters in our own society (Preston-Whyte 1981). The problem which will be dealt with here, that of colour and genealogy, may seem less weighty, but it is one which is close to the heart of most White South Africans — witness the prompt denial by the Human Sciences Research Council of the claim by Mr. Brooks-Baker of Debretts' Peerage in London, that Afrikaners are 'afraid to trace their ancestors' — presumably in case they come across coloured forebears.

In this controversy, I must come down on the side of the Human Sciences Research Council. There *is* considerable interest and also actual involvement in the field of genealogical research amongst Whites in South Africa. The membership of the Genealogical Society of Southern Africa may seem paltry given our total population, but it must not be forgotten that the Society publishes the journal *Familia* which, drawing its contributions solely from within the country, has four editions each year, in each of which appear on average between eight and ten scholarly papers covering the history of particular South African families, excerpts from family registers, and other papers of local genealogical interest. In addition one often comes across letters in the press which call upon people of particular surnames to contact the author who is compiling a 'family tree' or *geslagsregister.* There is also a considerable demand in reference libraries and at book stores for books on genealogy and on how to go about genealogical research, not to mention the publications on particular South African families. The response to a letter which I sent to national and local newspapers some years ago, inviting all those people working on family histories and genealogies to contact me, was overwhelming. Replies ran into 500 in the first two or three weeks — and letters are still arriving. Family gatherings (family reunions, *familiefeeste* or *familiesaamtrekke*) and family associations *(familiebonde)* are a further manifestation of this interest. The establishment in 1971

of the Unit for Genealogy at the Human Sciences Research Council, which has a staff of three full-time researchers and a sizeable annual grant from the government, seems to indicate also the seriousness with which these matters are taken in this country.

On the other hand, I must also agree with the spirit of Mr. Brooks-Baker's remark. Race or colour *does* present problems for White South African genealogy. This has been acknowledged to me quite openly by both professional and amateur genealogists, and it is fascinating to see how this problem is dealt with both in research and publication. Significant changes have taken place in the attitudes to and treatment of colour in genealogical studies since the turn of the century, when White South Africans began seriously to collect this type of material. Over the last decade in particular, these changes seem quite dramatically to have mirrored more general intellectual controversies over 'race' and the nature of black-white relationships. These are the topics which will be examined below in an effort to answer the questions of why and how, despite its obvious pitfalls in a race-conscious society, the genealogical movement in South Africa has gone from strength to strength.

First, however, the nature of the research and publications arising out of an interest in genealogy and family history must be described, for these are by no means all of a kind, or of the same standard of scholarship. It is also important to consider the type of people doing the research and writing, their aims and their methods.

Genealogical Publications and their Authors

Publications in the genealogical field stretch from the purely anecdotal, derived largely from romantic family tradition, to the rigidly 'scientific', represented by painstaking studies based on the examination of archival material and private papers. The latter involve the use of what their authors consider to be the most stringent critieria of historically admissible evidence. While the former are often the more readable, the latter, because of their methodology, carry the weight and stature of 'science' as well as of tradition. Works which are purely genealogical[1] tend to be used largely for reference — that is for identifying descent and mapping current agnatic and affinal relationships. Family histories contain skeletal genealogical information together with fuller information and anecdotes about certain forebears and eulogies of the past and present achievements of the people listed.[2] Some authors attempt to combine both aspects into one book[3] and in one case at least a family genealogist has produced two publications, the one a popularly written *gedenkboek* (commemorative or remem-

brance book) and the other the *geslagsregister* which was financed and published by the H.S.R.C.[4] Other families have also produced *gedenkboeke* to honour their forebears or to commemorate large *feeste*[5]. These are usually financed privately by contributions and pre-publication orders from family members. In addition to printed works, there are in the field of genealogy and family history numerous typed and cyclostyled lectures and essays, as well as transcripts of talks given by family enthusiasts and circulated to their intimates, family society newsletters and speeches prepared for family gatherings. As in published works, the use of data in these items depends on the author, his objectives and his knowledge of how to use genealogical and archival sources.

For many people genealogy is a pleasant and variously time-consuming activity which is begun for their own personal satisfaction or for private family consumption. Few plan from the start of their researches to publish the results. Initial interest may be stimulated by references to well-known forebears in the popular press or in historical works, or by finding or inheriting old letters, a family bible or other family memorabilia. In a few cases it seems to have arisen from complete lack of knowledge of parents or grandparents, as in the case of orphans, but it is far more often a result of some positive encouragement in the sense that the researcher has a fairly good idea that he will uncover something of which he and the 'family' can be proud. Genealogy may also be an interest inherited from an elderly kinsman (or woman) or stimulated by stories told by the older generation. Some people, mainly those of the older generation who were raised in rural areas or in small towns surrounded by many related families, have a fair store of genealogical knowledge and take pride in the extent of their knowledge and ability to 'keep up with the family'. These folk are really only dabbling in genealogy and perhaps Firth's term 'kinkeepers' (1969:134–142) is most appropriate for them. Some may commit their knowledge to paper, but on the whole it tends to be unwritten until an event such as a *fees* or anniversary stimulates them to begin a family tree or *stamboom.* Kinkeepers are respected within the family for their knowledge, but few have the training or the inclination to pursue their interest in a fully scientific manner. Even when they compile a 'tree', most have no aspirations beyond making a few copies of their work available to family members.

In contrast to such 'kinkeepers' are self-styled family historians and genealogists, men and women whose objective is to collect as complete as possible a record of the history and kinship ramifications of their family (or families, as some people work on the families of both parents or even all grandparents). These are the people who are often self-consciously scholarly in their approach,

who seek the help of the H.S.R.C. and join the Genealogical Society. Their aim from the start may even be to compile a book or books for publication. It is the work of this second type of genealogist which will be concentrated upon, exploring, in particular, what they themselves believe that they are doing and achieving, and the methods which they use. These issues are important as they influence attitudes to problematic issues such as the one of colour.

First and foremost family historians and genealogists see themselves as being in search of 'the truth'. They believe that this can be pieced together by hard work and by the use of appropriate 'scientific' techniques. These techniques they borrow largely from the social historian and it is stressed that only the highest standards of scientific endeavour, accuracy and validation are acceptable. The head of the Unit for Genealogy at the Human Sciences Research Council, Dr. R.T. Lombard, has coined the term 'Genealography' to describe this endeavour (1977:11). In explaining this term to me he said 'You know the word Historiography? Well . . . this is the same thing, but only for genealogy . . .'. In his handbook on how to do genealogical research in South Africa the problem of evaluating sources is given particular attention, using the appropriate 'scientific' terminology:

> As with any other human sciences, the genealogist's research task falls into three parts, namely the locating of sources (heuristics), the external assessment of the sources, and the interpretation of the contents of each source. The latter is also known as hermeneutics . . . In internal criticism or hermeneutics, the contents of each source are critically analysed and compared with other sources to try to determine their accuracy. Information appearing in different sources is not necessarily more reliable than that mentioned in only one.
>
> (Lombard 1977:21)

Most white South Africans working actively in the field of genealogy and family history are extremely sensitive to suggestions that their work and that of colleagues may be biased or unscientific. A number of articles appeared in the early issues of *Familia* aimed at raising the readers' awareness of research problems and methodology. In one case the editors chose to reprint an article originally published in a popular magazine which they felt made unjustified and unscientific genealogical claims based almost solely on 'the shape of a nose'. The article was followed by a sharp note criticising this type of conjecture (*Familia* 1967). Professional genealogists and members of the Genealogical Society invariably stress the importance not only of using 'scientific techniques', but of 'educating the public'. They contrast 'modern' genealogy and

family history with that which 'was fashionable in the not very distance past' and which 'took its cue not from science but from romantic family legend'. As one man perceptively commented:

> When it comes to one's own ancestors, it is a great temptation to claim more than the evidence allows . . . especially as it is one's family pride that probably got one into genealogy in the first place . . . . It is this which we have to fight . . . and also snobbery . . . genealogy must be a science.

The claim to be a science carries with it problems other than those of correct techniques of collecting and assessing data — it also necessitates a willingness not to hide unpalatable facts. 'Colour' is of course the issue which comes to mind first in this connection, but other social irregularities such as incest, illegitimacy and common law unions also present problems. One of the professional genealogists interviewed pointed out that 'some information may hurt people who are still alive'. In response to a direct question, he acknowledged that he himself treats all these cases 'on their own merits . . . sometimes things must be suppressed . . . but I try not to . . .'.

It is on the score of revealing social irregularities, including those of colour that members of the public are often hostile to genealogical investigations. To quote a well-known genealogist:

> People who are not sure about their ancestry (i.e. about its being 'pure white') prefer not to go into it. They get upset when they find somebody doing this sort of research . . . I had one man come to me and I knew that he would find (i.e. evidence of colour) . . . so I told him where to go and look . . . and I never saw him again . . . he was afraid it would become public.

Another man, this time a 'kinkeeper', rather than a family genealogist, admitted:

> Well . . . when a family has colour you can't expect them to do a genealogy . . . take the case of the —s, the old ladies know what happened . . . and not so long ago either . . . and they don't want this to come out . . . quite naturally.

He added:

> . . . and the coloured —s know also where the link comes, but they wouldn't want to say as it brands them as the descendants of a prostitute . . . perhaps this is too strong a word . . . but their great-grandfather was illegitimate . . . now that's not very nice either. . . .

It would seem, then, that however much modern South African genealogists strive for scientific accuracy, there are major obstacles to its achievement. In a society where colour is the dominating indicator of social interaction, status and achievement, genealogy and family history must be doubly bedevilled. Since 1957 marriages and sex between white and black have of course been illegal and even before this were heavily sanctioned. Both sex and marriage 'across the colour line' have, however, occurred since the earliest days of black-white contact at the Cape. If they are accurate, family histories and in particular genealogies ought to reflect these occurrences. We may explore the extent to which these writings do indeed reflect colour; and, where colour is present and admitted, the way in which it is treated. We may ask also what sort of reality is being reflected in genealogies which exclude certain kinship or blood connections. The issue of colour in the history of a family reflects, of course, not only on the members of that family and their affines, but also on the supposed racial purity of white South Africans in general, and it is in this connection that it is instructive to examine the changes in the attitudes to colour which have occurred over time in South African genealogical circles.

Genealogy and Colour in Historical Perspective

It was as early as 1894 that the first genealogical work, Christoffel Coetzee de Villiers' *Geslacht-Register der oude Kaapse Familiën* was published. This book has served as a 'Who's Who' of Cape (Afrikaner) families ever since and has it seems to me created something approaching an élite consisting of those families mentioned in it. Prepared for publication by editors after de Villiers' death, the work deals with families at the Cape before 1810 and is based on material available in the Cape Archives and in particular in baptismal and marriage records of the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk which, for the first 150 years of White settlement, was the only Christian denomination at the Cape. De Villiers is invariably hailed as the founding father of genealogy in South Africa (Heese 1975: 123–127; Lombard 1977: 11–12; Pama 1966: Introduction) and is portrayed as working virtually alone in an era when genealogy was hardly considered important in this country, let alone accredited the standing and 'scientific' status of today. Attention is also drawn to the painstaking nature of his research. It is, however, a fact that his work has served as one of the foundation stones of the myth of the White racial purity of the Afrikaner nation in general and of certain families in particular. Despite the fact that the early Cape records he consulted, particularly those of the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk, con-

tain information on coloured members of the Cape population and of marriages and births across the colour line, only the genealogies of families considered at the end of the nineteenth century to be white were included. A few 'coloured' families are listed, but this was either because de Villiers or his editors were not aware that they were, in fact, considered coloured, or because they were branches of large white families which, unknown to the author or editors, had not remained 'white'. Information on the slave or Hottentot origins and of coloured contributions to families considered to be white was not included in the register and where marriages or unions had occurred with 'women of colour', entries on the parentage of their offspring simply read 'mother unknown'. To quote one authority on South African genealogy: '*In die meeste gevalle was die moeders wel bekend, maar die opsteller het dit veiliger geag om die moeders se name nie te noem nie.*' (Heese 1975: 120)

At the turn of the century there seems to have developed a preoccupation among certain White South Africans with their European origins and heritage. Using the *Geslacht-Register* as his basic source, A.T. Colenbrander argued in *De Afkomst der Boeren*, published in 1902, that the ethnic composition of the Afrikaner nation owed 50,4 per cent to the Dutch, 27 per cent to Germany, 17,25 to France and less than one per cent to any slave origin (Colenbrander 1902: 121). Although there was subsequently considerable disagreement about the exact contribution of the various European nations (Pama 1966: XXXVII–XIV), the basic thesis of virtual White Afrikaner purity was vigorously propagated and widely accepted for the next 60 years. It is noteworthy, however, that this view did not go entirely unchallenged. In 1938 a lecturer in German at the University of Stellenbosch, J. Hoge, attacked it in a paper written for a German journal on early German settlers at the Cape. At first this work received little attention, but when it was republished in 1946 in a South African archival publication, it caused what was described to me as 'a good deal of soul-searching and anger'. Hoge's later publication (1958) was also controversial in that using the sources available to de Villiers, he exposed many inaccuracies and omissions in the *Geslacht-Register*, in particular those pertaining to the slave ancestors of a number of Afrikaans families.

The upheaval caused by Hoge's work extended outside genealogical circles in South Africa and it was suggested to me that it inhibited a move which was then afoot to establish either a genealogical society or an official government Bureau for Genealogy. After the publication of Hoge's work, to quote one informant, 'many families knew that their ancestors had coloured blood. I think Mr. — (a cabinet minister) put a stop to it because (his fam-

ily) are also descended from a slave . . .'. When I asked how it was 'stopped' he explained that, as the body behind the move (*Die Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns*) was funded by government, a denial of funds for this project crippled the initiative. This view is also expressed in the following quotation from J.A. Heese:

> *Familievorsers is veral bang dat hulle op 'n stamouer sal afkom, wat 'nie-blanke bloed' in sy of haar are gehad het. Hierdie vrees was juis die oorsaak dat dit so lank geduur het voordat 'n Suid-Afrikaanse Buro vir Genealogie tot stand gekom het.* (1975: 119).

During the 1950's there were other isolated scholarly attacks on the myth of racial purity. Franken (1953) pointed to the achievements of the descendants of an early recorded marriage between a 'European' (White) and the Hottentot woman called Eva and in 1959 and 1960 articles and letters appeared on the topic by an archivist, M.K. Jeffreys, in the black-oriented magazine *Drum* (1959a and b; 1960a and b). Though the articles caused some annoyance, they did not have very much impact on the White community as a whole because few Whites read *Drum*. In 1966 a second edition of the *Geslacht-Register* came out revised and edited by Pama (1966). This did include Hoge's information on the slave ancestry of various families, but was in other respects not very different to the original. At the same time the Genealogical Society of South Africa eventually came into being. However, the extent of the feeling against encouraging genealogy which was present even then can be gauged from the following statement on the uses of genealogy by the South African *Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns* in 1963:

> *Die Akademie wil hier beklemtoon dat die vrees wat sommige koester dat by sulke genealogiese navorsing onthulling oor gekleurde bloed by sekere stam-moeders gedoen kan word, van alle betekenis ontbloot is, na sulke onthullinge reeds klaar gedoen is, onder andere in die* Argiefjaarboek vir S.A. geskiedenis *(9e Jaargang) wat handel oor die tydperk 1652–1806 toe gemengde huwelike soms plaasgevind het.*
>
> (quoted in Heese 1975: 120)

This was, of course, a period of considerable social and political reassessment and it is not surprising that the influence of wider ideas about race and colour should be reflected in genealogical circles. It may be, in addition, that the effects of nearly 20 years of the Mixed Marriages Act had been to lessen the likelihood of recent close colour links in many white families.[6] At all events, the Unit for Genealogy was established at the H.S.R.C. with State funding and status equal to that of other historical and social

scientific projects supported by Government. Most significantly the 'seventies saw the intensification of academic challenges to the myth of racial purity by respected Afrikaner scholars and genealogists. One such attack which percolated widely to non-academics was launched by J.A. Heese in his book *Die Herkoms van die Afrikaner* (1971). Using the same research methods as Colenbrander, but calling on wider sources of data, including Hoge's work, Heese has concluded that the composition of the Afrikaner nation of 1867 owed at least 9,6 per cent to slave and coloured stock. At the earlier date the percentage was even higher. At much the same time Botha (1972) reported in the *South African Medical Journal* that he had found 7,2 per cent of White Afrikaner school children to carry gene factors unique to black or coloured people. Further socio-historical researches have thrown light on the nature and incidence of racial mixture in the early days of the Cape (Boeseken 1977; Elphick and Giliomee 1979; H.F. Heese 1979) and Dr. J.A. Heese is at present preparing a third edition of de Villiers' work in which he is planning to make use of all available sources of information to document all families, white and coloured, living at the Cape until 1830. In discussing this work with him, I asked if he thought that his new work would cause a stir. He answered in the negative — 'It is already all known from Hoge . . . and my own book'. It was apparently not known to Mr. Brooks-Baker, amongst others!

Despite these changes in attitude, the issue of slave ancestors and coloured blood is, as we saw above, still a sensitive issue amongst many White South Africans. Discussing the matter even with professional genealogists and with academics has its pitfalls, for there is always the fear that one is seeking sensational material for the press. One professional genealogist assured me that where he came across 'colour' he, as a scientist, was forced to take it into consideration and 'not hide it'. He then qualified his statement somewhat by saying '. . . a slave ancestor is so far in the past it doesn't really matter . . . with more recent cases it is far more difficult . . . one does not want to hurt people . . .'. Linking colour and other social 'abnormalities' such as incest and illegitimacy, he pointed out that one well-known amateur family genealogist had written sections of his family register in Italian (perhaps he didn't know Latin) 'so that these things were not all public'. Yet another professional genealogist referred to his own origins and claimed to be undisturbed and even proud to count a slave amongst his forebears 'on my mother's side. . . . But', he added, 'my grandmother (my mother's mother) would never believe it . . . when the story came out she just said it was not true and she sticks by it . . . I just say that the Indian must have been *slim* to have married a white girl'.

In discussing family research with two men who are at present compiling *geslagsregisters*, I learned that they have themselves investigated the issue of 'coloured blood' in their families. The one has drawn up a line of indirect descent from the Hottentot woman Eva, and the other made visits to coloured families living nearby of the same name as himself. In neither case, however, has this information been published. In fact, the second man admitted that 'his family' would be very angry indeed were he to do so. It is, however, significant that in one of the recent H.S.R.C. genealogical publications (Raubenheimer 1978: 39) mention is made of the origin of a coloured branch of the family. Further genealogical details are not, however, included on these people. A similar straw in the wind is provided by a review (Heese 1980) of the recent Viljoen *Geslagsregister* in which the author takes the compiler to task for giving details of American Viljoens who have left South Africa, but failing to include information on South African coloured Viljoens:

> *Dis baie interessant dat die Amerikaanse nakomelinge van genl. Ben Viljoen opgespoor is (p. 414 e.v.). En hier wil ek sommer 'n klip in die bos gooi. Hier in die Boland is ons goed bekend met Bruinmense wat met reg die familienaam Viljoen dra. Dis ook bekend dat van hulle op veral onderwysgebied presteer het. Moet hulle nie ook in die Viljoen-boek voorkom nie? Heel moontlik het hulle groter betekenis vir Suid Afrika as die Amerikaanse Viljoens.*
>
> (Heese 1980: 89)

An intriguing twist in recent genealogical attitudes is the distinction which I have found to be quite consciously drawn between descent from a non-African slave as opposed to an indigenous Black. One genealogist told me that he always points out to people who are upset by slave origins that most of the slaves at the Cape came from India or Indonesia. African slaves, he argues, were sent inland to work on farms and there was not much sexual contact between them and Cape Whites. 'I tell them that slaves from the East could even have been descended from Rajahs and the like. . . . You don't have to worry, I say, the colour does not come from a Hottentot . . . and in any case it is only on the mother's side . . . and a very long time ago'. Such interpretations acknowledge the facts, but still serve to distance South Africans who may find 'colour' in their ancestry and who are classified as 'white', from the mass of Blacks in this country. Firstly, the ancestor is classified as non-African — and from noble and romantic stock at that. Secondly, he or she is stated not to be in the main line of descent, patrilineality being emphasized, both in South African law and social life. Thirdly, the time dimension is stressed as if to suggest that the event is too far in the past

to be of any significance. Indeed, a tradition that 'blood' is diversified and its various qualities weakened 'over the generations' seems to be gaining ground in many quarters. Folk explanations such as these easily help to justify and make palatable facts which cannot be denied.

The remarks of a well-known academic and genealogist sum up the present position:

> I tell all people, 'don't be too sure of yourself' (i.e. don't take it for granted that you have no coloured blood in the family) . . . as in my case — my mother wouldn't have believed that she was descended from a Hottentot. And so you can say every South African, every Afrikaner, can't be sure . . . If it happened to the X-s and to the Y-s, it can happen to any family, therefore, I tell the people 'don't throw a stone at anyone — people living in glass houses can't throw stones'. And *if* that is realised I think that this thing is going to fade out — I hope so.

Another professional genealogist echoed this last sentiment by saying that over the next decade '. . . it should become less and less important not to have coloured blood . . . at least so I say'.

The types of argument exemplified in the above statements about how colour is and should be treated, are vital if genealogy in this country is to continue on the path of scientific respectability. Evidence of colour is going to be revealed by research, but these facts must be accommodated either in a series of folk explanations of the implication of colour, or in the denial that colour is in reality an important issue. To deny that coloured ancestry has any relevance today is, in effect, radical in the extreme. It could be suggested that a study of who is included and who is excluded from a genealogy reflects not only the compiler's ideas of kinship relations, but also important social boundaries in his or her society. The exclusion of black and, particularly, of whole 'branches' of coloured relatives is in effect a clear statement of who belongs to the compiler's ingroup and who is 'beyond the pale'. A call for the boundaries of colour to be breached must also be a call for an open society in terms of race. It might be interesting to know if the people who call for the end of white exclusiveness in genealogies in the interests of science, recognise the logical end of their argument. It seems improbable — but as social scientists know only too well people are not always logical in the different areas of their thoughts and action — what has been termed situational selection occurs at all levels of human activity (Epstein 1958).

Colour Versus Professionalism in Genealogical Research

So it would seem that Mr. Brooks-Baker is incorrect, and on the face of it genealogy in South Africa is not only alive and well, but

is committed to the path of scientific accuracy despite the evidence of black forebears which this might, in some cases, reveal. The battle for public acceptance and official support have been won. Genealogy is not only respectable, it is now a prestigious form of employment for some, and a highly regarded leisure time activity for many others. In practice, accommodations to revelations of 'colour' occur, but the accepted ideal is to have everything out in the open and to hope, piously perhaps, that it is attitudes which will change. This 'public face' and indeed the general tenor of the H.S.R.C.'s reply to Mr. Brooks-Baker is, it may be suggested, a logical outcome of two trends in the development of genealogy in South Africa over the last twenty years. Both can be summed up in the concepts of professionalism and professionalisation.

Earlier in the paper an important distinction was made between informal kinkeepers and a new breed of scientifically oriented family historians and genealogists. It is striking that the majority of the latter are well-educated, professional people. Most have basic university degrees and postgraduate work to the Master's and even the Ph.D levels is by no means unusual. Nearly all have been reared in positivist intellectual traditions which they now seek to apply to genealogy and family history. The coining of the term 'Genealography' is, perhaps, the best illustration of this point. Part and parcel of the use of the tools of science, the new breed of South African genealogists stress the highest degree of professionalism in research and publication. Data collection must be done painstakingly and in the correct manner — and it is the self-imposed task of the H.S.R.C Unit for Genealogy and of the Genealogical Society to publicise and popularise these techniques and processes. It is not surprising, therefore, that there is no place in family history and genealogy for the hiding of unpalatable facts such as those of colour.

There is another side to the same coin. If family histories and genealogies are to be taken seriously and read as history they must be able to stand professional scrutiny by other scientists, especially in this case by historians and social scientists. I have argued elsewhere that these works *are* accepted as valid history in South Africa and the basis of this claim must be continually verified by a stated willingness to treat all data equally and not to select on any subjective or emotional basis. From the point of view of the ordinary reading public the stress on 'being scientific' is part of a validation process by which the *truth* of family histories and genealogies is established. The charter (Malinowski 1948) for these documents is paradoxically not so much 'the past' as the present in the sense that it is today's 'scientific' tradition which vouches for the accuracy of family histories and for the tables of

descent reproduced in the *geslagsregisters*. 'Being scientific' is, of course, part of a wider cognitive orientation which White South Africans share with the members of other Western societies who put their faith in that which has the stamp of 'science' and 'scientific expertise'. The techniques of science can be viewed as the equivalent of magic and ritual which in some social systems seal off certain areas of life from examination and questioning by the laymen. The use of titles, particularly academic and scholarly ones, before and after the author's names on many of these publications is part of this process.[7]

Professionalism implies the creating of a profession with the opening up of jobs and, in this case, the making available of research funds. The establishment of the Unit for Genealogy within the H.S.R.C. may be seen as a good example of this process. What was once the preserve of the amateur and dilettante, is now controlled and organised by an increasingly formalised set of 'rules' — these being set out clearly in the Head of the Genealogical Unit's guide to doing genealogical research. It must be stressed that the intention is in no way to detract from this excellent manual — merely to point out that its writing and publication are part and parcel of the move to institutionalise and professionalise genealogy. This trend is by no means limited to South Africa. Books on how to do this type of research have been published in other countries and the regular international conferences of genealogists are another aspect of the growth of worldwide professionalism of this field. At the end of last year no less than 11 000 people attended a Genealogical Congress at Salt Lake City on the theme of the preservation of genealogical records. Some 401 papers were given by 244 different people. According to one report on this Conference, the advertisement of a paper presented by Alex Hailey on 'How to Trace your Heritage to Africa: the Voice of Experience' raised so much interest that its place on the programme had to be changed from a panel presentation to a limited audience to plenary session held in Great Hall of the Salt Palace, which seats 15 000 people (Lombard 1981).

The impetus for genealogical research in the case of the Mormons is clearly religious. In South Africa the interest in family history and genealogy among the general public — on the origin of which I will not attempt to speculate here — has of course been fostered by the very promotion of professionalism to which I am referring. People who hear and read about the H.S.R.C. Unit for Genealogy are naturally enough impressed by this evidence of the importance 'government' places on genealogical research. The impact of the Genealogical Society is similar and we are dealing with a process of growing public awareness. Looked at in histor-

ical perspective, it seems that the genealogical movement in South Africa began with a few enthusiasts who, through their association with the Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns, fought to have genealogy officially recognised and who founded the Genealogical Society (Heese 1975). These institutions in their turn have promoted greater and widespread enthusiasm for the family history. Within the movement itself the bugbear of colour has had to be dealt with in order for the claim that genealogy is a science to be maintained, a claim upon which funding and official recognition in turn rest.

All professions must have a justification for their existence and some basis for their claim to recognition and funding. Genealogy is no exception, as the following quotation from a privately circulated family newsletter suggests. Those working in this field often ask themselves where the value of their research lies, and answer along these lines:

> *Ons bou aan militêre, geestelike en geestesweerbaarheid. Die familiegeskiedenis en -samehorigheid tel sekerlik onder die hoekstene van geestesweerbaarheid en is die belegging in familieregisters en nuusbriewe myns insiens die paar Rand werd!*

Similar sentiments are expressed by Dr. Lombard in his *Manual.* In a section devoted to the aims of genealogy we read:

> The primary objective in the pursuit of any science is truth, but scientific research is not merely a quest for knowledge as such. One must also inquire into the fundamental significance of that knowledge. Genealogical knowledge, for example, can serve society in various ways . . .

After discussing generally the point that most people want to know about their origins and demonstrating the importance that this knowledge may have in the case of Black South African political succession, Dr. Lombard turns to a discussion of genealogy in the context of modern society:

> The great demands made by present-day materialistic society, the rapid tempo of life, gregariousness and the impact of cultures in large cities, the continual change in moral standards and norms, all arouse a feeling of uncertainty and even defeatism in the hearts of many. The genealogist can do a great deal towards combating this attitude, heightening man's spiritual resistance and strengthening his hold on the standards from which he is drifting away. Genealogy helps him to identify himself intimately with the spiritual values, culture and traditions of his ancestors and serves as a deterrent to superficiality, revolution and destruction. The wealth of a family, community or nation is only partly made up of material possessions.

> The spiritual heritage forms the foundation on which every society is built and the loss of it leads to total collapse.
>
> (Lombard 1977:5)

Need more be said about the creation of a need for this particular branch of enquiry, or its justification? To reiterate a major theme running throughout this paper, in order to survive and maintain a 'place in the sun', as far as funds and jobs are concerned, those with a stake in genealogy have to be sure, and also have to convince others of the scientific validity and practical use of what they are doing. For this to be the case, fear about colour must, perforce, take a secondary place.

* * *

It may be asked whether the willingness amongst White South Africans to trace their ancestors and to discuss and investigate matters of colour in their genealogies can be taken as evidence that our countrymen are less race conscious than before. This is not necessarily so. Indeed, family historians who feel that their researches have excluded the possibility of coloured ancestry may even, as the following words suggest, regard the publication of their findings as important and commendable:

> *Dit mag wees dat ons binne die volgende geslag of twee 'n era van kleurblindheid sal betree en dan is dit nuttig, vir wie dit van belang mag wees, om te weet waar jy vandaan kom.*

Openness about colour must, it is suggested, be seen rather as a result of major trends in genealogical studies in South Africa over the last 20 years — notably the stress on scientific objectivity which has gone hand in hand with the development of genealogy from an informal and quaint hobby to a respected professional undertaking. It is the view which today's genealogists and family historians hold of themselves and their work which dictates their treatment of and acceptance of colour. No body of professionals — or amateurs for that matter — could be expected to relish the stereotype summed up in the French saying quoted by Heese, *'Hy lieg soos 'n genealoog'* (1975: 121).

University of Natal,
Durban

NOTES

1. Amongst others Beddy 1971; Kotze 1978; Naude 1974; Retief (n.d.); van der Bijl 1978; van Dyk 1975; van Heerden 1969; de Villiers 1977.
2. Amongst others Churchhouse 1976; de la Bat 1972; Rock (n.d.); Raubenheimer 1978; Miller 1978; McIntosh 1974; Uys 1974.

3. For instance Krige 1973; van der Bijl 1968.
4. See Viljoen *et al* 1977; Viljoen 1978.
5. See Smit 1949; du Preez 1962.
6. I am indebted to Professor M. Whisson of Rhodes University for this suggestion.
7. On the title page of the following books the author is given his full academic titles. Thus —
   The *Viljoen Geslagsregister* is by Professor H. Christo Viljoen;
   Die Familie Krige by Johan D. Krige, Pr. Ing.;
   Greatheart of the Border by Basil Holt, M.A., D.D.;
   The *Gedenkalbum van die Mentz-geslag 1749–1949* by Ds. A.P. Smit, M.A.;
   The Handbook for Genealogical Research by R.T. Lombard, D. Litt. *et* Phil.

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LANGUAGES OF DECEPTION IN 'VOLPONE'

by MARTIN R. ORKIN

Multiple levels of trickery and deceit — from the most intelligent and subtle to the most obvious and stupid — diversify the action of *Volpone.* Moreover, because the process of deception in the play is perforce primarily verbal, the play is certainly, as some critics suggest, a comedy of language as much as it may be a comedy of humours. We are treated to the sophisticated manipulation of language by Mosca and Volpone, the less impressive attempts of the gulls, and the obvious folly of the Politic-Would-Be's.

An interest such as Jonson exhibits in the different ways in which language may be exploited to deceive, is not surprising in an age which set great store by literature and rhetoric — as means not only to the private but also to the public good. The proper use of language to communicate the truth was, Thomas Starkey wrote, a duty incumbent on every good individual:

> to this [end] all men are born and of nature brought forth: to commune such gifts as be to them given, each one to the profit of other . . . [for] virtue and learning, not communed to other is like unto riches heaped in corners never applied to the use of other.[1]

Jonson shared this humanist concern with the proper use of language:

> I could never think the study of *Wisdome* confin'd only to the Philosopher: or of *Piety* to the *Divine:* or of State to the *Politicke.* But that he which can fain a *Common-wealth* (which is the *Poet*) can governe it with Counsels, strengthen it with *Lawes,* correct it with Iudgements, informe it with *Religion,* and Morals; is all these. Wee doe not require in him meere *Elocution;* or an excellent faculty in verse; but the exact knowledge of all vertues, and their Contraries; with ability to render the one lov'd and the other hated, by his proper embattaling them.[2]

Volpone provides a polychromatic display of the ways in which this humanist ideal may be abused. The structure of the play, furthermore, leads the audience to an increasingly profound perception of the different levels of deception of which man is capable. However, Jonson's strong moral concern simultaneously reveals itself until, in the final act, the humanist impulse achieves satisfaction in the judgements passed upon those who have perverted its tools.

1

Jonson endows his two knaves in *Volpone* with brilliant linguistic skills, and demonstrates their effectiveness within their own society in the early acts of the play. Thus Volpone and Mosca reveal their motives to the audience in Act I but the major business of the act concerns their interaction with the three gulls. Mosca firstly patronises Voltore's hopes of becoming Volpone's heir and during their exchange Jonson articulates directly about abuse of language. Claiming that he reports his master's praise, Mosca pays ambiguous tribute to the lawyer's art with words:

> I, oft, haue heard him say, how he admir'd
> Men of your large profession, that could speake
> To euery cause, and things mere contraries,
> Till they were hoarse againe, yet all be law;
> That, with most quick agilitie, could turne,
> And re-turne; make knots, and vndoe them;
> Giue forked counsell . . . (I iii 52–58)[3]

Mosca identifies, in the lawyer's expertise with language, an expedient eloquence that does not take into account the 'exact knowledge of all vertues and their Contraries' with which Jonson himself is so concerned in *Timber: or Discoveries*. Furthermore, in his exchange with the lawyer, Mosca's own language is 'forked', allegedly encouraging the gull's hopes but continually resonating with ironic counterstatements. He tells Voltore, for instance, that he may dream of swimming in 'golden lard' (I iii 70). The image identifies the lawyer's motive, infusing it at the same time with the resonance of repellent and excessive pinguescence. Everywhere in Act I Mosca speaks deceptively to persuade Volpone's clients. At the same time his skill enables him to establish additional satiric meanings for the audience, as A.H. Sackton puts it, just beyond the grasp of his victims.[4]

In Act II Jonson provides a central display of Volpone's abilities to misuse language which complements the performance of his servant in Act I. Jonson brings his audience to the mountebank scene by way of Sir Politic-Would-Be, the foolish foil to Volpone.[5] After the nonsense of Sir Politic's language — a jumble of monstrosities — we encounter Volpone's 'intelligent' perversion of the linguistic tools upon which humanist education, as many scholars of rhetoric have shown us, partly depended. The scene exemplifies the vice common to both knaves and gulls in such a *milieu*. Visually, on stage, it emphasizes the process of deception which relies so heavily upon dubious skill with words. At the centre stands the false Scoto of Mantua, promising the illusion of a better world. He is flanked on one side by his 'intelligent'

contriver and on the other, by Sir Politic together with Volpone's bizarre, mishapen entourage — visual emblems of the monstrous inner reality which the dissembler and his servant, in the attempt to gull all the onlookers, conceal. There are, Jonson seems to be reminding his audience, different degrees of language abuse, on the one hand the cunning trickery of a Volpone or a Mosca, on the other the idiocy of the Politic-Would-Be's. The focal point in the scene is the use of language itself, for there is no action apart from the satisfaction of Volpone's urge to catch a glimpse of Celia. Jonas A. Barish has commented fully on the performance, during which Volpone's monologue 'is a piece of bravura rhetoric, seasoned with Italian phrases and jawbreaking medical terms, in which [he] contrives to use — and pervert — every effect known to classic oratory'.[6] Such a display must have been fascinating to an audience living in an age imbued with the spirit of humanism.

Jonson's sense of the potency with which evil can use words to deceive modulates a few moments later into a depiction of Corvino's interaction with his wife. Corvino's moral sentiments contrast with the mercenary motives which Jonson has already allowed him to reveal to the audience.

At the commencement of Act III, Mosca's praise of the true parasite provides a kind of summation of the talents to which we have been exposed in the first two acts. During his self-congratulatory eulogy about the power to deceive, he salutes the ability of the deceiver to skip out of his skin 'like a subtill snake' (III i 6), and 'change a visor, swifter, than a thought' (III i 29) — the masks which the knaves don and discard throughout the play are of course primarily verbal. At the same time, as Mosca speaks, Jonson captures the deviousness of the intelligence he celebrates in the joltingly paradoxical alternations in movement Mosca's language also suggests, when he depicts the fine elegant rascal who

> . . . can rise,
> And stoope (almost together) like an arrow;
> Shoot through the aire, as nimbly as a starre;
> Turne short, as doth a swallow; and be here,
> And there, and here, and yonder, all at once; (III i 23–7)

This is only one of many hints at criticism which Jonson adds to his depiction of the two charismatic knaves, throughout the play. To this criticism we must for a while turn more directly.

2

Jonson balances his presentation of the satiric effectiveness of Mosca and Volpone, where their own society is concerned, by his

use of hyperbole, a device in the play often commented on by critics. When Mosca for instance records the rapacity of his society

> You shall ha' some will swallow
> A melting heire, as glibly, as your *Dutch*
> Will pills of butter, and ne're purge for't;
> Teare forth the fathers of poore families
> Out of their beds, and coffin them, aliue,
> In some kind, clasping prison, where their bones
> May be forth-comming when the flesh is rotten:
> But, your sweet nature doth abhorre these courses;
> You lothe, the widdowes, or the orphans teares
> Should wash your pauements; or their pittious cryes
> Ring in your roofes; and beate the aire, for vengeance (I i 41–51)

he renders the ruthlessness of an acquisitive world with lethal accuracy and a vigour which knows no limits. The lines possess a denunciatory energy similar to the practice of invective which J.G. Nichols suggests as a feature of Jonson's poetry.[7] But at the same time the excessive nature of Mosca's mordant, almost cannabalistic imagery, suggests a relish in the suffering of the victims which exceeds the bounds of moral propriety. Such hyperbole, operative here and elsewhere in the play, detaches the audience from the speakers, as L.C. Knights long ago observed, and contributes to the 'double aspect' of *Volpone* which produces a'double attitude in the audience'.[8]

The experience of self-deception especially, places his characters for Jonson's audience. The early acts depict not only the skill with which others may be deceived, but also the extent to which language and what it may suggest can become a smokescreen to hide fundamental truth and inner motivation from the self. Thus in Act I the gulls dream of inheriting Volpone's fortune, forgetting that they themselves are not immune to death. Yet the dramatic situation, three men lusting for the death of another who pretends to be actually dying, and the language, which is full of references to the facts of disease, the physical exhaustion of old age, and the advent of death, both point continually to the reality of mortality which the gulls try to deny. Jonson makes clear the extent to which vicarious involvement in the gaping mouth, hanging eye-lids and freezing numbness of Volpone's 'slow death' enables each of the gulls to find new energy and strength. Their longing for gold intensifies, obscuring from them even further the inevitability of their own end, almost as if Jonson in his depiction of each gull had decided to take Chaucer's gentler portrayal of a character such as the Frankelyn, with his unthinking love of the pleasures of this world, to its extreme.

Jonson gives to Volpone a clear enough understanding of the need which this avoidance of mortality bespeaks. After the departure of Corbaccio he comments:

> Nay, here was one,
> Is now gone home, that wishes to liue longer!
> Feeles not his gout, nor palsie; faines himself
> Yonger, by scores of yeeres, flatters his age,
> With confident belying it, hopes he may
> With charmes like *Aeson* haue his youth restor'd:
> And with these thoughts so battens, as if fate
> Would be as easily cheated on, as he,
> And all turnes aire! (I iv 151–59)

while in the mountebank scene he plays directly upon the illusory promise of eternal youth, with powder 'that made *Venus* a goddesse . . . kept her perpetually yong, clear'd her wrincles, firm'd her gummes, fill'd her skin, colour'd her haire . . . extracted, to a quintessence: so that, where euer it but touches, in youth it perpetually preserues, in age restores the complexion . . .' (II ii 235–246). The details in language like this, far from evoking any condition of aeonian juvenescence, suggest just as readily those to be found in the treatment of *contemptus mundi* themes.

Yet, despite his awareness of the folly of the gulls, Volpone is shown to be himself subject to self-deception. From the start Jonson exposes us not only to his inverted values but especially to the energetic art with language Volpone displays in communicating those values. The famous inversion in his opening speech, when he musters religious diction to describe his love of gold, inaugurates a skill with language that remains vigorously evident throughout the play. But at times Jonson indicates that the skill mesmerizes the wit of the speaker, blinding him to his own inner emptiness. We are made aware of this bankruptcy of soul not merely because of the juxtaposition of Volpone's own expressed values against the tissue of references to mortality in the general texture of the play's language, or because of the presence of hyperbole in the poetry Jonson gives to him. Jonson makes his point most significantly in his depiction of Volpone's pursuit of Celia.

Volpone wins a glimpse of Celia during the mountebank scene, as I have already remarked; later in Act II Jonson contrasts the insincerity of Corvino with Celia's innocence. In Act III however, Jonson delays the seduction scene. His attention initially directs itself more carefully than hitherto in the play to the imitative faculty, upon which the process of deception, already demonstrated in sections 1 and 2, partly depends. Firstly, he follows Mosca's praise of the parasite at the beginning of Act III with Mosca's pretence at support for Bonario's predicament. Mosca's performance

convinces Bonario that his grief cannot be a 'personated passion' (III ii 35). The word Jonson gives Bonario here, identifies the mimetic talents needed by the dissembler, and that faculty is mentioned again in the following scene when one of the monstrous offspring sings

> . . why doe men say of a creature of my shape,
> So soone as they see him, it's a pritty little ape?
> And why a pritty ape? but for pleasing imitation
> Of greater mens action in a ridiculous fashion. (III iii 11–14)

Then, before the seduction scene itself, Jonson gives us two further examples of language used imitatively to create particular impressions. With Lady Politic-Would-Be, the impression she seeks is sophistication. But she can only offer imitative nonsense that suggests the mimicry of the parrot, affected language about medicine, — perhaps a stupid echo of Scoto of Mantua — knowledge, art, and love. 'Another floud of wordes! a very torrent!' (III iv 64) cries Volpone, his role inverted from persecutor to victim, as he endures her hail of words and eternal tongue that literally does assassinate knowledge. With Corvino, who enters the stage together with Celia, the impression he seeks is moral rectitude. Corvino imitates the language of moral outrage to condemn his wife for refusing to comply with his demands, but it is the threatened frustration of his inner greed which drives him to frenzied denunciation.

It is therefore especially interesting that Volpone refers at one point in the seduction scene to his own capacities for role playing, claiming himself to be now as fresh, as hot and as high

> As when (in that so celebrated *scene*,
> At recitation of our *comoedie*,
> For entertainment of the great *Valoys*)
> I acted young *Antinovs*. (III vii 159–62)

Moreover, precisely at this point, when Jonson stresses the element of play-acting in Volpone's claim to love, he includes the beautiful song to Celia which he also included in *The Forest*. The effect of the poem when we encounter it in *The Forest* is entirely different from Volpone's use of it at this moment in the play. On his lips the delicate balance between secrecy and adultery on the one hand and love on the other, set against time, evaporates. Instead of lightness, the furtive, adulterous, and persuasive tones gain a darker urgency. Nevertheless, the lyricism of the piece does not entirely disappear so that the dislocation of sensibilities that results provides a further *frisson* for the audience: even the

language of lyricism and love can finally become a mere function of the inner motives of the speaker.

And if Jonson emphasizes the imitative and manipulative quality of Volpone's performance here, his character also speaks elsewhere in ways suggesting not only the urgency of his passion but also his blindness. Volpone really believes he offers Celia untold riches: his words and the grotesquely sensual vision they create are enough for him. He perceives neither Celia's moral position nor appreciates the emptiness of his own pretence at love, thus providing for the audience a glorious display of deceiver and deceived rolled into one.

Critics often examine the poetry in the seduction scene without acknowledging how climactic it is in its dramatic context. Moreover the way Jonson has structured the events preceding the scene does not simply heighten our sense of the imitative, fraudulent nature of Volpone's own experience of love. His claim to the urgency of youthful feeling links up with Jonson's frequent ironies about the fact of mortality in the early acts of the play. Jonson also makes the connection for Volpone himself specific when Volpone describes his love for Celia in Act II as the vital creative force which will restore him. The flame of love burns within him,

> As in a fornace, an ambitious fire,
> Whose vent is stopt. The fight is all within me.
> I cannot liue, except thou helpe me, *Mosca*;
> My liuer melts, and I, without the hope
> Of some soft aire, from her refreshing breath,
> Am but a heape of cinders. (II iv 6–11)

Jonson's conceit involving the furnace tends as much towards the image of incineration as it does towards imagery of breath and air. Just before the realisation of his meeting with Celia, Mosca encourages Volpone's escapism:

> Your hopes, sir, are like happie blossomes, faire,
> And promise timely fruit, if you will stay
> But the maturing . . .

to which Volpone responds

> My blood,
> My spirits are return'd; I am aliue . . . (III v 30–35)

Even before the seduction scene itself such lines lead us directly to the futility of Volpone's commitment to a moment of enforced passion with Celia. Describe it how he may, it is no different from the delusions about gold that dominate the other gulls. Sexual po-

tency subsitutes for an inner wealth of soul as easily as does the desire for gold. Yet inner riches alone might ensure for all these gulls an escape from the personal death which they so perversely ignore, into eternal life. The pretence at dying in which Volpone indulges provides the play's great ironic image: it is a reminder but it also anticipates the real death that must await the perpetrators of such folly.

3

Jonson's concern with the virtuoso use of language to deceive others or to intensify self-deception, explored with ever increasing levels of concern in Acts I, II and III, comes to a climax in the seduction scene. From there, Jonson moves to the crucial problem the humanist confidence in language could never eradicate — the extent to which the tool of language may actively be used not merely to delude the corrupt, but to destroy the good.

The discrepancy between the appearance and the reality of things, one of the recurring themes of seventeenth-century drama, becomes the major concern of Act IV. After Lady Politic-Would-Be's false accusation against the innocent Peregrine, Jonson presents us in the trial scene with the false accusation against the innocent Celia and Bonario. The Avocatori at the start of the trial aver that 'the gentlewoman has beene euer held/ Of vn-reproued name' and 'so, the yong man' (IV v 3–4) while Bonario asserts his faith in the appearance of things by demanding that Volpone be brought 'that your graue eyes/ May beare strong witnesse of his strange impostures' (IV v 17–18).

But during the trial scene Volpone's behaviour easily distorts the truth, Corbaccio denies his natural bond in order to prevent the exposure of his greed, and Corvino conceals his indifference to his wife and his own readiness to act as bawd for gold. Mosca, too, lies, out of loyalty to his own perverted intelligence and love of trickery while Lady Politic-Would-Be prevaricates because she is as it were the fool absolute. By the end of the trial scene evil appears to have triumphed: the alleged 'feigning' of the two innocents is taken as true. The word has been entirely separated from the thing and this especially, with its crucial relevance to humanist notions of language, occupies Jonson during the trial.

For the attack upon the good is spearheaded by the lawyer, skilled in rhetoric, not fully aware of the extent of the evil he is effecting by his arguments, but self-interested nevertheless, determined to win his case. Sackton describes Voltore's rhetoric here as among 'the most effective in Jonson's plays'.[9] Brief examination of a rhetorical handbook reveals the extent of Voltore's set manipulation of rhetorical principles — topics of invention, figures and schemes, emotional appeals etc. Its importance lies how-

ever in the success with which the brilliant use of this tool of the humanist not only slanders the essentially innocent but also helps to clinch their conviction.

4

Jonas A. Barish observes that in Jonsonian comedy 'society is conceived as a collection of disconnected atoms, in which each character speaks a private language of his own, collides from time with other characters, and then rebounds into isolation'.[10] When Volpone woos Celia in Act III, as I remarked earlier, he cannot hear her; in the face of other words and other values, her language is meaningless. For something to be communicated, a common language that reflects common realities acknowledged by every participant in an encounter is necessary. The lack of real communication between the characters in *Volpone* results from the different deceptions which knaves and gulls practise.

But side by side with the different languages of deception in the play, Jonson continually acknowledges common realities. Such acknowledgement may be found in the satiric remarks which the knaves themselves offer sporadically — Volpone's comments on Corbaccio, or Mosca's about Voltore. In Act V Mosca puts his finger on the private and deluded quality of the vision of each of the gulls, about which we have just seen Barish commenting:

> Too much light blinds 'hem, I thinke. Each of 'hem
> Is so possest and stuft with his owne hopes,
> That any thing, vnto the contrary,
> Neuer so true, or neuer so apparent,
> Neuer so palpable, they will resist it (V ii 23–27)

Furthermore the omnipresent hints of mortality in *Volpone,* which we have noted, set up a linguistic pattern that provides a counter to the language of deception in the play. This language reflects the truths about human experience, the crucial Christian truths about death and its consequences that prompted humanists to strive for the proper use of language in everyday communication.

Appropriately, in the final act of the play, Jonson's use of language acknowledging this truth intensifies. He pointedly makes Volpone glimpse for a moment at the beginning of the act the reality behind his illusions — the cramp in the left leg, the fear of some villainous disease, and the need which these prompt for a bowl of 'lustie wine, to fright/ This humor from my heart' (V i 11–12). Inevitably irony accompanies Volpone's subsequent comment upon drinking the wine, 'This heate is life; 'tis bloud by this time' (V i 17), while Jonson underlines the significance of Volpone's endless avoidance elsewhere in the play of what he

glimpses here when Volpone cries out 'Any deuice, now, of rare, ingenious knauery/ That would possesse me with a Violent laughter,/ Would make me vp, againe' (V i 14–16). More than gold and sexual pleasure, the love of trickery itself is for Volpone the supreme distraction, an opium in seventeenth-century terms, that keeps him from proper recognition of the religious significance of mortality. Despite this, Mosca reminds Volpone in the last act that during the mountebank imposture ' 'T seem'd to mee, you sweat, sir' (V ii 37); Volpone himself instructs Mosca to give it about he is dead, his body corrupted; and Mosca embellishes this with 'it stunke' and was 'coffin'd vp instantly' (V ii 79–80). Mosca's praise of gold, during the same scene, lauds its power to conceal the 'sweate' of mortality:

> Why, your gold,
> Is such another med'cine, it dries vp
> All those offensiue sauors: it transformes
> The most deformed, and restores hem louely,
> As 't were the strange poeticall girdle. *Iove*
> Could not inuent, t'himselfe, a shroud more subtile,
> To passe *Acrisvs* guardes. It is the thing
> Makes all the world her grace, her youth, her beauty. (V ii 98–105)

The 'shroud' directs us to what the words 'offensiue sauors' and 'deformed' also suggest, despite Mosca's apparent eulogy. Everywhere in the final act the scent of death may be sensed, rendered all the more potent because of the damnation which it forebodes. Behind Volpone's pretended demise the real event moves inexorably closer, colouring too, as I noticed, the macabre wait of the prospective heirs seeking through gold their own immortality. Volpone's 'immortality' in the streets of Venice after he has 'died' will be the only one he will ever experience — in terms of Jonson's joke, the fox will really in due course be mortified.

5

Jonson wrote in *Timber: or Discoveries* that

> *Language* most shewes a man: speke that I may see thee. It springs out of the most retired, and inmost parts of us, and is the Image of the Parent of it, the mind. No glasse renders a mans forme, or likenesse, so true as his speech.[11]

The extent to which language and rhetoric is abused in *Volpone* offers only an apparent challenge to this basically humanist tenet. The language pointing to mortality present in the play is one means whereby Jonson makes us aware, even as his characters speak, that their natures are conniving; that however hard they

try to deceive, they are also the deceived. The presence of hyperbole in the mode of speaking underlines the deformed inner nature of the speakers.[12]

Such emphases in the texture of the language undercut Volpone's successes but the play nevertheless acknowledges the real danger that exists in the use of words which falsify and distort the true and the good. The threat posed by such deceptions is itself given an ambiguous power by imagery suggesting, in context, death without salvation; death seen as an annihilatory force, something suffocatingly there in the play — 'I am turn'd a stone' (IV v 155) says the third Avocator when he has, unwittingly, lost sight of the truth completely. The manipulations and distortions of language and the folly these suggest may amaze, entertain and even delight us, but that language also continually evokes the presence of a rich and luxuriant corruption which darkens our pleasure. Intelligent evil is not, in too many contexts, merely a laughing matter.

University of the Witwatersrand
Johannesburg

NOTES

1. Quoted in G.K. Hunter *John Lyly: The Humanist as Courtier*, London, 1962, p. 14.
2. *Timber: or Discoveries* (1640) ed C. Herford and P. Simpson, Oxford, 1954, vol. VIII, p. 595.
3. All quotations from *Volpone* are taken from *Ben Jonson* ed. C. Herford and P. Simpson, Oxford, 1954, vol. V.
4. *Rhetoric as a Dramatic Language in Ben Jonson*, London 1948, p. 141.
5. The function of Sir Politic-Would-Be as foolish foil to Volpone has been examined in J.A. Barish 'The Double Plot in Volpone' reprinted in *Jonson: Volpone* ed. J.A. Barish, London 1972, pp. 100–117.
6. *Ben Jonson and the Language of Prose Comedy*, Harvard, 1960, p. 143.
7. J.G. Nichols *The Poetry of Ben Jonson*, London, 1969, pp. 50–3.
8. L.C. Knights *Drama and Society in the Age of Jonson*, London, 1937. More recently Alexander Leggatt (*Ben Jonson: his vision and his art*, London, 1981 pp. 226–7, 275) writes of the 'unexpected largeness of vision in the work' which promises to 'scourge and reform the world — and then demands our applause' and Douglas Duncan (*Ben Jonson and the Lucianic Tradition* Cambridge 1979, pp. 144–164) suggesting the influence upon Jonson's satire of Lucian, Erasmus and More, writes of the dangerous fascination exerted from moment to moment by Volpone and of the way in which the audience is 'trapped into accepting Mosca as distributor of justice'.
9. Op. cit. p. 144.
10. Op cit. (1960) p. 83.
11. Op. cit. p. 625.
12. See for example both L.C. Knights (op. cit.) and A.H. Sackton (op. cit.).

'HAWK, THRUSH AND CROW' THE BIRD POEMS OF TOMLINSON AND HUGHES

by SHEILA SCHLESINGER

Charles Tomlinson and Ted Hughes, countrymen and contemporaries, share an interest in the natural environment and in particular the birds that inhabit it. Both poets are acutely aware of the 'otherness' of birds, the unique nature of their being. There is a shared belief in the vitality and authenticity of these creatures, depicted in the poetry with amazing perception and accuracy. Meticulous description tends to be a hall-mark of these poets. Where Hughes and Tomlinson diverge is in their underlying philosophies, the main thrust of their poetry, in the ideas that give their work form, coherence and a totality of vision. This article will be concerned with both similarities and contrasts in their work, employing the common theme of the bird poems.

Ted Hughes who was born in 1930 at Mytholmnoyd, Yorkshire, and rapidly achieved recognition while still in Cambridge, tends to use the harshness of the Scandinavian remnants in English with its repetitions, hard consonants and rough diction. His poetry has a strong element of sensuous vigour. John Press refers to his work as a 'naked apprehension of physical reality',[1] and to Hughes himself as 'anatomist of violence'.[2] Charles Tomlinson was born three years before Hughes on 8th January, 1927 in Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, 'a boy from the provinces'.[3] In his final year at Cambridge, Donald Davie was his tutor, and Tomlinson received his M.A. from London University. Although deeply steeped in a love of the English countryside, Tomlinson broke away from the poetic style of his countrymen, to absorb the lessons of the Americans — Williams, Stevens and Marianne Moore — and concretised his images, rooting them in the world of 'things rather than ideas'.[4]

Tomlinson's approach is a perceptual one and he uses his sense impressions to discover the world around him. Being a painter, his sense of sight is particularly acute and his descriptions are extremely sensitive. A major theme is that of relationship or encounter — interaction and contrariety in people, animals and objects in the environment. This is particularly marked in the bird poems. In 'Encounter'[5] Tomlinson is trying to arrive at a knowledge of the inner nature of the bird by contrasting its movement with the stillness of the bush:

> Birdless, the bush yet shakes
> With a bird's alighting. Fate

Is transmitting flight
That rootwards flows,
Each unstilled spray
Tense like a dense arrival of targeted arrows.

Only through scrupulous observation can we even approach this knowledge. It is the time factor in the encounter between the bird and the bush that determines its nature. It is swift and sudden: 'Tense like a dense arrival of targeted arrows', and captures, like the eye of a camera, the split-second timing which is so peculiar to a bird. Tomlinson cleverly combines past and present in order to focus on one precise moment:

Birdless, the bush yet shakes
With a bird's alighting.

The essential qualities of the bird — flight and movement — abruptly oppose the rootedness of the bush. The energy of the bird's flight is transmitted down the very roots of the bush like 'targeted arrows'. The contrariety in the relationship between bird and bush confirms the identity of each.

In 'How Still the Hawk',[6] the theme of contrariety in relationship is presented differently:

How still the hawk
Hangs innocent above
Its native wood:
Distance, that purifies the act
Of all intent, has graced
Intent with beauty.
Beauty must lie
As innocence must harm
Whose end (sited,
Held) is naked
Like the map it cowers on.
And the doom drops:
Plummet of peace
To him who does not share
The nearness and the need,
The shrivelled circle
Of magnetic fear.

Gitzen comments: 'Naturally vision alone cannot reveal all of the qualities of an object or an event . . . The observer may marvel at the beauty and grace of the hawk's deadly stoop, but it is not beautiful to the hawk, activated by its "need", nor to the prey. . . .'[7] With these relative perspectives, the observer safely distant from these conflicting emotions, sees only beauty in the scene.

There is, therefore, no question of an accepted morality in the situation, because of these 'relative perspectives'. Perceiving, Tomlinson seems to be saying, like Nature, has no morality, but simply exists. This is expressed in succinct paradoxes:

> Beauty must lie
> As innocence must harm

The divergent points of view are perfectly synthesised due to the temporal progression of events in the poem. Firstly, in a suspended moment, the hawk hangs poised in the air. The series of h's in 'how', 'hawk', and 'hangs' lengthens the moment into infinity.

Suddenly the suspended moment is broken, and the two d's emphasise the heavy beats on 'doom drops'. Rhythm admirably parallels the events in the poem. 'Plummet of peace' echoes both rhythm and alliteration of 'doom drops' and through 'peace' restates the observer's distance which:

> . . . does not share
> The nearness and the need.

Tomlinson restates his key theme of relationship in a brilliant last image:

> The shrivelled circle
> Of magnetic fear.

The 'circle' encloses both hawk and victim. 'Magnetic' clearly applies to the relationship between aggressor and victim, as though they are in some way inexorably linked. Here is the ultimate in encounter, and Tomlinson adds much to it by the feeling of *impending* action. The actual kill is not described. This is one of Tomlinson's best poems, taut and pared to the bone, devoid of the prosy verbosity which often mars the bite and snap of his images.

The poem discussed above has many parallels with Hughes's 'Hawk Roosting':[8]

> I sit in the top of the wood, my eyes closed.
> Inaction, no falsifying dream
> Between my hooked head and hooked feet:
> Or in sleep rehearse perfect kills and eat.

'Hawk Roosting' takes up the question of morality mentioned earlier in the discussion on 'How still the Hawk'. Hunter states: 'The conflict between moral judgements and aesthetic judge-

ments is implied here together with the conundrum which natural ferocity always presents to one who attempts to judge right and wrong'.[9] This statement is relevant to both poems. Both poems accept that the hawk has the right to kill for that is its nature, its 'need':

> My manners are tearing off heads

and

> No arguments assert my right:

Hughes, however, presents only the viewpoint of the hawk while Tomlinson also gives other 'relative perspectives'. Yet we sense the voice of the poet undercutting that of the bird — the voice of a man well aware of the strictures and rules of society.

In both poems, we are aware of the air, the natural habitat of the bird. Just as Tomlinson's hawk 'hangs' poised far above the earth, Hughes's hawk proclaims that:

> The air's buoyancy and the sun's ray
> Are of advantage to me;

Both birds see the earth from far up. For Tomlinson's it is a 'map', while in 'Hawk Roosting', the hawk has:

> . . . the earth's face upward for my inspection.

Also, there is an awareness of the element of flight:

> . . . doom drops

and

> . . . the one path of my flight is direct

Tomlinson and Hughes share the awareness of the living bird, its nature and its element. This awareness is portrayed with vigour and clarity. Tomlinson's hawk is seen at a distance which results in a subtlety and an intricacy that Hughes's poem lacks.

Typically, Hughes has a simple, direct appeal. His persona is that of the hawk itself, the voice of untamed violence, a bird that sees the universe as 'an extension of his eyes and claws'.[10] Yet the reader does tend to judge the hawk and we are doubtful about its claim, that it will 'keep things like this.' Jim Hunter's view that the hawk is 'a fanatic in power, a natural evil, a hostile creator'[11] could perhaps refer to the crow of Hughes, but not to this hawk

which has a slightly bombastic air about it. However, Hughes is moving away from a perception of the bird itself towards a metaphysical stand. In this he differs from Tomlinson. Hughes postulates that hostile forces underlie the behaviour of living things as in 'Thrushes'.[12]

> Terrifying are the attent sleek thrushes on the lawn,
> More coiled steel than living — a poised
> Dark deadly eye, those delicate legs
> Triggered to stirrings beyond sense — with a start,
> a bounce, a stab

Hughes begins with sharp observation of the birds, their sleekness, their delicate legs, dark eyes, their method of spearing their prey. They are 'attent', 'poised'. 'Terrifying' is the first word of the poem, sets the atmosphere and is developed throughout the poem. Images are mechanistic, the thrush's body is a collection of weapons — 'coiled steel', 'dark, deadly eye', 'trigger', 'bullet and automatic purpose'. This is explicitly stated in 'More coiled steel than living.' Even the legs, delicate and therefore not very functional, are subservient to the larger needs of the birds. The beak is dagger-like. These birds are designed for killing. The fact that they are 'triggered beyond sense', gives them an almost demonaic and animistic quality, and a power beyond man's. Yet their deadly instincts extend to the human animal too. The motive power behind a great musical genius and that of a predatory bird is identical. The 'heroisms on horseback' are a sop to man's killer instincts.

Hughes succeeds in using his birds as symbols, a means for examining his underlying metaphysical concerns. This, however, is not the case with Tomlinson. When he moves beyond his acute perception of reality into the realms of the metaphysical, his poems lose force and impact. This occurs in 'Hawks'.[13]

> Hawks hovering, calling to each other
> Across the air, seem swung
> Too high on the risen wind
> For the earth-clung contact of our world:
> And yet we share with them that sense
> The season is bringing in, of all
> The lengthening light is promising to exact
> From the obduracy of March. The pair,
> After their kind are lovers and their cries
> Such as lovers alone exchange, and we
> Though we cannot tell what it is they say,
> Caught up into their calling, are in their sway.
> And ride where we cannot climb the steep
> And altering air, breathing the sweetness

Of our own excess, till we are kinned
By space we never thought to enter
On capable wings to such reaches of desire.

The birds become symbolic — the heights to which they are able to soar represent spiritual union and attainment. This is a parallel movement to Hughes whose birds, especially those in the 'Crow' series, symbolise certain concepts. (In Hughes's case, this is usually evil or violence underlying the natural world.) Tomlinson's strength is in his grasp of detail and in his truth to reality. 'Reaches of desire' reads like an afterthought and detracts from the poem.

Althogh metaphysical concepts do not integrate well into Tomlinson's poetry, theories on aesthetics and on the function of poetry are well handled by him, adding to the richness of his lines. 'A Prelude'[14] is a comment on the function of the artist:

I want the cries of my geese
To echo in space

The poet's voice is heard in the use of the personal pronoun, and the tone is one of excitement and anticipation for the coming summer. The geese, besides being heralds of summer, represent the poet's creativity and his poems. The poet is aware of his function, his creative role and his ability to communicate joy at the promise he sees about him. It may be said that Tomlinson's poetry parallels the work of the perceiver, who tries to see the world in its actuality. Donald Davie corroborates this: 'Tomlinson's poetry is founded on confidence in the world and in language: and it proceeds on the assumption that world and word are cognate.'[15] Tomlinson's philosophy includes a fundamental belief in the integration of art and life. The poet's function is to remove the curtain between them, to find a growing vocabulary to echo the peaks and plains of Nature and Experience.

In this way he and Ted Hughes part ways. The divergence is made explicit in the vast difference between the two poets in dealing with the crow. Tomlinson's 'Crow'[16] is beautifully realised in a series of carefully-observed statements about the bird.

The inspecting eye
shows cold
amid the head's
disquieted iridescence.
The whole bird sits
rocking at a vantage
clumsily. The glance
alone is steady
and a will behind it

rights the stance,
corrects all disposition
to ungainly action.
Acting, it will be
As faultless as its eye
in a concerted drop
on carrion; or watch
it fly — the insolence
transfers to wing-tip
and the action wears
an ease that's merciless,
all black assumption,
mounting litheness.
The blown bird,
inaccessible its intimations
of the wind, 'Stay
where you are' is
what it says and we
poor swimmers
in that element
stay, to bear
with clumsy eye
affronted witness at its ways in air.

The crow is seen both on land and in the air. Its essential ability to fly and to swoop down onto its prey is focused on here. Tomlinson begins the poem with a close-up of the bird's eye.

The inspecting eye
shows cold
amid the head's
disquieted iridescence

'Inspecting' indicates the eye as a focus of intelligence, 'cold' reinforcing this by pointing to the evaluating quality that the bird has in accordance with its nature. Contrast is a powerful weapon in Tomlinson's arsenal, and the detached stillness of the eye is set against the restless showy plumage, hinting perhaps at the flashy showmanship in the air. Yet the eye will dictate the future actions of the bird, and its functionalism is greater than the shining plumage. The functionalism may be compared with that of Hughes's thrushes, but Tomlinson never goes beyond the bird itself and the exigencies of its own nature.

Now the reader's attention is drawn to the whole bird, out of its natural element and weighed down by its awkward body:

The whole bird sits
rocking at a vantage
clumsily.

The many syllables of 'clumsily' and the way in which the word is isolated by the full-stop, weighs down the stanza, just as the bird sits heavily on the earth. Yet its awkwardness contradicts its readiness to act, its alert waiting stance, indicated by 'at a vantage'. The contradictions are resolved as the bird is put into flight, and discrepancies are now brought into direct view as it 'corrects' all disposition/ to ungainly action.' We become aware of its impending flight and such factors that belong to it — poise, balance, speed, and 'a will behind it'.

> Acting, it will be
> as faultless as its eye
> in a concerted drop
> on carrion:

The reader is taken into the poem, and shares the poet's awe at the bird's transformation as it takes off into the air:

> or watch
> it fly — the insolence
> transfers to wing-tip

'Assumption', 'insolence', 'ease', introduce the next sub-theme — contrast between the bird, master of the air, and the earth-bound human being, a theme seen before in Hughes's 'Thrushes'. The powerful phrase 'mounting litheness' carries connotations of conquest both of the air and of the prey — and also of sexual conquest. In its flight, the bird is 'blown', as much a part of the air as the wind. The bird is given a voice:

> 'Stay
> where you are' is
> what it says

to proclaim its domination over the human being. A telling phrase here is 'poor swimmers', stressing our ineptitude in the air, and now the word 'clumsy' is used to describe the eye of the human being, vastly different from the one that has the will of the bird behind it, straining upward in a vain attempt to follow the flight. This bird is geared towards one end — its ability to fly in order to survive. Tomlinson's tone is one of admiration, wonder at the complex and intricate structure, its ability to act according to its nature. Tomlinson is only too ready to grant his birds the fact of their own natures. His use of the word 'black' (to represent death) — 'all *black* assumption' — forms part of his awareness of the larger cycles of life and death. Even here, there is wonder and envy, but no horror. Tomlinson accepts that causing death is a

prerequisite for the bird's existence but the poet stops short of any metaphysical considerations.

This is far from the case of Hughes's crow. Its blackness is used symbolically to represent evil:

> Even, like the sun
> Blacker
> Than any blindness.[17]

There is also an archetypal use of black as evil in 'Two Legends',[18]

> Black the within tongue
> Black was the heart

and:

> Black also the soul, the huge stammer
> Of the cry that, swilling, could not
> Pronounce its sun.

In *Crow,* Hughes takes his idea of a bird personifying the darker side of Nature, a principle of violence operant within the universe, to its ultimate extrapolation. The crow is an archetypal creature with its origins in the chaos of pre-creation, its roots in myth. Indeed, Hughes in this book turns to both Biblical and Greek legends for his ethos.

Crow becomes a handyman of Satan, an anti-god, pitted against a God who is helpless and impotent or merely fast asleep during the crucial period after creation.

> 'Well, said Crow, 'What first?'
> God, exhausted with creation, snored.[19]

Crow was the originator of Primal Sin:

> And crow retched again, before God could stop him.
> And woman's vulva dropped over man's head and tightened.
>
> The two struggled together on the grass.
> God struggled to part them, cursed, wept —
> Crow flew guiltily off.[20]

Hughes tempers his portrait of Crow with macabre humour and even a little pathos. Crow is sometimes seen as innocent, in spite of his monstrous nature, which destroys both the world around him and himself. He is 'smashed into the rubbish of the ground'[21] in his very attempt to be born. Morals are overturned, birth becomes death, and Crow himself boasts:

'Where white is black and black is white, I win'[22]

Thus Hughes proclaims an immoral and devastated world with an evil fate governing it, and the crow as a cosmic force.

It may be seen from the aforegoing that Hughes's development is towards treating his birds as symbols, in an effort to come to terms with the metaphysical questions of Man's being and the nature of existence. According to Dannie Abse, Hughes is 'out on a black tangent, over a black chasm.'[23] He sees a vitality in violence that provides the mainspring for existence. In contrast to Hughes, Tomlinson has a sense of wonder in the existential reality of his birds. He attempts to pierce beneath the superficial skin of appearance to grasp the unique essence of 'birdness' and is always willing to grant the bird its particular identity, untouched by the perceiver's subjectivity. This leads, eventually, to a concept of holism in his work where all things in the universe find a common unity, while existing in their uniqueness and their individuality.

Thus it may be seen that although Charles Tomlinson and Ted Hughes explore different territory, they share a similar starting-point. The statement that '[There is] a strongly implied rejection of the Romantic view of Nature'[24] is true of both these poets for they demarcate with accuracy both the inner nature and the outward appearance of birds. In the words of Ted Hughes:
'. . . it is occasionally possible, just for brief moments, to find words that will unlock the mansion inside the head and express something — perhaps not much, just something — of the crush of information that presses in on us from the way a crow flies over . . .'[25]

Johannesburg College of Education

NOTES

1. John Press. *A Map of Modern English Verse.* London, OUP, 1967, p. 256
2. Ibid, p. 255
3. Charles Tomlinson. 'Some American Poets; A Personal Record', *Contemporary Literature,* Vol. 18 No. 3 Summer 1977, p. 279
4. Charles Tomlinson. ed, *William Carlos Williams: A Collection of Critical Essays,* Harmondsworth, Middlesex, Penguin, 1972, p. 27
5. 'Encounter', *Seeing is Believing,* London, OUP, 1960, p. 55. Tomlinson being more of a 'poet's poet' than Hughes is not as widely read. In this volume his poems have been printed in full.
6. 'How Still the Hawk', ibid, p. 11
7. Julian Gitzen, 'Charles Tomlinson and the Plenitude of Fact'; *Critical Quarterly,* Vol. 13 No. 4, 1971, p. 357.
8. 'Hawk Roosting', *Selected Poems,* London, Faber, 1972, p. 39.
9. Jim Hunter, ed., *Modern Poets Four,* London, Faber, 1972, p. 39.
10. P.E. Strauss, 'The Poetry of Ted Hughes', *Theoria* Vol. 38 May, 1972, p. 53.

11. Jim Hunter, *Modern Poets Four,* p. 120.
12. 'Thrushes', *Selected Poems,* p. 53.
13. 'Hawks' *Written on Water,* London, OUP, 1972, p. 25.
14. ' Prelude', *A Peopled Landscape,* London, OUP, 1969, p. 1.
15. Donald Davie. 'Charles Tomlinson', *The Open University,* Unit 31, Walton Hall, Milton Keyes, Open University Press, 1976, p. 27.
16. 'Crow, *A Peopled Landscape,* p. 11.
17. 'Crowcolour', *Crow,* London, Faber, 1974, p. 66.
18. 'Two Legends', ibid, p. 13.
19. 'Crow Communes', ibid, p. 30.
20. 'Crow's First Lesson', ibid, p. 20.
21. 'A Kill', ibid, p. 16
22. 'Crow's Fall', ibid, p. 36.
23. Dannie Abse, ed., *Modern Poets in Focus,* No. 1. London. Woburn Press, 1971, p. 36.
24. John Press, *A Map of Modern English Verse,* p. 256.
25. Ted Hughes, *Poetry in the Making,* London. Faber, 1967, p. 124.

FORD MADOX FORD: ART CRITICISM AND 'PARADE'S END'

by CHRISTOPHER BRIGHTMAN

Frank Kermode once observed that while Ford Madox Ford's *The Good Soldier* is marginally canonical, *Parade's End* lingers among the great unread books of English letters.[1] Clearly, many readers have felt that the trilogy's self-indulgent prose together with the unseemly aspirations of its hero, Christopher Tietjens, to Anglican sainthood, militate against its entry into the canon. Their judgment may be correct. I would claim, however, that the trilogy possesses considerable virtues, and that these lie in the construction of the narrative itself. The examination of Ford's critical ideas and narrative technique that follows is especially indebted to Richard A. Cassell's study of the novels, in particular to his chapter on Ford's view of Pre-Raphaelite painting. Cassell observes that 'the criteria by which Ford discovered the Pre-Raphaelites' weaknesses and their virtues laid the foundations of his later criticism of fiction and for his own fictional theory and practice.'[2] Here, then, is my starting-point.

Readers of Ford's literary criticism will have noticed that he employs visual metaphor to express his perception of the relation between reader and text. He always describes himself as an Impressionist, though he has little to say about Impressionist painting. He uses the term instead to describe the rendering, by means of certain technical devices, of the impressions he has received. In an article written in 1914, the year before the publication of his first mature novel, *The Good Soldier,* Ford offers an impression of Impressionism. He says: 'I suppose that Impressionism exists to render those queer effects of real life that are like so many views seen through bright glass — through glass so bright that whilst you perceive through it a landscape or a backyard, you are aware that, on its surface, it reflects a face of a person behind you.'[3] The observer sees the view through the window, the reflection of himself and of the person behind him. Ford cannot resist the drama in his scene: in a continuation of the same piece, he insists that 'a picture should come out of its frame and seize the spectator'.[4] There are, it would seem, two dramas: the drama of the mind and memory (the face behind you can be a remembered face and you, the reader, can become the protagonist) and the drama of the relationship between the text (whether bright glass, a painting or narrative prose) and the spectator/reader. The first of these dramas, that of mind and memory, is enacted in Ford's fiction by means of the time-shift; the second, that of text and reader, by means of what he calls the 'progression of the effect,'

and what we might call the structure of the text. Before leaving the bright glass analogy, I should add the point that it provides us with a clue to Ford's perception of the modernist text. In pre-modernist fiction, we may infer, the text is transparent, giving us an uninterrrupted view of the landscape of the *histoire* with some authorial guidance about where we are to look and how we are to look. The modernist text, on the other hand, confronts us with the 'thingness' of the text, a reflexive construct that frustrates our expectations and can, indeed, threaten us its readers who no longer have the comfort of a genial narrator's guiding hand. This is, of course, the view of a man writing in 1914; we post-moderns might find the issue less clear-cut.

The foundations of Ford's modernism have already been identified by Cassell in Ford's reading of Pre-Raphaelite painting. Ford's involvement with the Pre-Raphaelites was unavoidable: his maternal grandfather was Ford Madox Brown, painter of *Work* and *The Last of England*; he was a cousin of the Rossetti's and, if his accounts of his childhood are to be believed at all, he enjoyed (and suffered) the attentions of relatives and friends determined that he too should be 'trained for a genius'.[5] Ford's feeling for Pre-Raphaelite painting is expressed in the conclusion to his book on the Brotherhood: 'They never convey to us, as do the Impressionists, or as did the earlier English landscape painters, the sense of fleeting light and shadow. Looking at Millais' nearly perfect *Blind Girl,* or at Mr. Hunt's nearly perfect *Hireling Shepherd,* one is impelled to think, "How lasting all this is!" One is, as it were, in the mood in which each minute seems an eternity. Nature is grasped and held with an iron hand.'[6] It is the way the 'iron hand' works in controlling particular techniques of spectator-response that Ford observes most acutely, and which forms the focus of his dramatic and narrative concerns.

Drama is not difficult to find in Pre-Raphaelite painting, and D.G. Rossetti's portrait of Lucrezia Borgia, which possesses very obvious dramatic qualities, leads Ford to this observation:

> In the *Lucrezia,* in the mirror near the left shoulder of the sumptuous woman is shown Lucrezia's husband, Duke Alfonso of Biscaglia, whom she has just poisoned and 'who is being walked up and down the room by Pope Alexander IV, in order to settle the poison in his system.' This device of narrating in a mirror the happenings in the part of the room occupied by the spectator — of thus completing the anecdote — was a trick much beloved by both Rossetti and Madox Brown. The latter had already adopted it in his *Take your son, Sir.* In the *Lucrezia,* its use, dramatically speaking, is singularly effective and indeed admirable.[7]

Paul L. Wiley, in *Novelist of Three Worlds,* notes an echo of the

Lucrezia mirror in a passage in *Parade's End,* in which Sylvia, wife of Christopher Tietjens, is seated at her dressing-table; her lover enters the room, and the whole is observed through the dressing-table mirror.[8] Wiley may well be correct, but Ford's interest in the mirror in the *Lucrezia* has broader implications for his fiction, in particular for the rapport between reader and text. The *Lucrezia* 'anecdote' needs a spectator to observe and complete it, and, by encroaching on the space occupied by the spectator, it obliterates him in order to complete itself. The spectator, at first involved in the anecdote, becomes, in fictional terms, a victim of the action. I have to describe this effect as a process because language is sequential: a mirror in a painting can achieve such an effect instantaneously — paintings have no endings.

Rossetti's painting offers the spectator a threat: Lucrezia's expression suggests that she might well treat us as she has treated the unfortunate Duke. Madox Brown's *Take your son, Sir,* in which a newborn baby is offered out of the painting to the spectator, presents a threat too — at least to the male spectator — for we see in the mirror facing us near the woman's shoulder a bewhiskered seducer, hands spread in a gesture of despair. We note that Rosetti offers us merely a threat, whereas Madox Brown's painting is accusatory. Ford is not enthusiastic about the white wing of moral purpose he perceives in Pre-Raphaelite painting but attends instead to the device itself. The mirror that does not show us ourselves but projects the fiction upon us achieves, in spatial terms, what, in the dimension of fictional time, can be achieved by the ending of a Maupassant short story. 'The short story of genius,' says Ford, 'demands from the reader — nay, it exacts — an amount of strained, of breathless attention that is nothing short of a cruelty; and the final *coup de pistolet* — the last word — is the killing of a living thing, the breaking of a back, since it finishes the vital rapport between writer and reader.'[9] This achieves the same effect as Rossetti's mirror in that it breaks the reader's connection with the story and, at the same time, reflects back upon the story with a sudden explosion of understanding. Maupassant's *The Field of Olives,* in which the last sentence reveals the possibility that the murder has been committed by the intended victim, is an example of the use of the *coup de pistolet,* and is a story which Ford often recommended for study.

Both the mirror and the *coup de pistolet* are devices clearly useful in the creation of engrossing narrative, narrative of the kind Ford had admired from his youth. His early reading was, he recalls, 'advanced', but he read adventure romances and Gothic novels with equal enthusiasm: *Melmoth the Wanderer, The Mysteries of Udolpho, Frankenstein, Lorna Doone,* and *Westward Ho!*[10] His early enthusiasm remained with him; assertions of the

following kind appear frequently: 'art is nothing more nor less than the faculty, conscious or unconscious, of engrossing the attention of passers-by',[11] and 'the real great novelist . . . has the sense to see that the reader must be caught by his humanisms and retained by his tale'.[12] The application of principles such as these to the reading of paintings is nowhere clearer than in Ford's biography of Ford Madox Brown, published in 1896. Ford notes that Madox Brown chooses to illustrate moments of drama and sentiment, in, for example, *Parisina's Sleep,* of which Madox Brown himself says, in his *Catalogue of the Piccadilly Exhibition* of 1865:

> Parisina in her sleep mutters a name which first gives weight and direction to the suspicions already planted in the mind of her husband, the Prince Azo:
>
> 'He plucked his poinard in its sheath,
> But sheathed it ere the point was bare;
> Howe'er unworthy now to breathe,
> He could not slay a thing so fair . . . .'[13]

Madox Brown's illustration for *The Corsair,* his *Death of Sir Tristram* and *Christ Washing Peter's Feet* provide further examples of dramatic subject-matter. The last of these, the *Christ,* has an additional element mentioned by Ford later in relation to *Take your son, Sir*: the direct appeal to the observer. Madox Brown says, of the nimbus of Christ: 'This, however, everyone who has considered the subject must understand, appeals *out* of the picture to the *beholder* — not to the other characters in the picture.'[14] As an alternative to a dramatic moment, Madox Brown may choose a special and momentary effect of light, as he does, for example, in *Chaucer at the Court of Edward III.* Of the painting *Work,* Ford claims that it 'was not to be, and should not be regarded as, a work of generalisation or allegory, but as an actual moment, caught and recorded.'[15] Within this recorded moment a number of complex relations are shown. Of *Cromwell on His Farm,* Ford says, 'the exposition of the subject, the maze of references and cross-references in the picture, is every whit as astounding as in *Work* itself.'[16]

The internal references that Ford notices raise a further point of comparison between Ford's treatment of narrative and painting. In 1914, Ford reviewed an anthology of Imagist poetry for *The Outlook.* In common with many of his reviews, his subject-matter extends beyond the work under review and here he finds himself led to discuss Futurist painting in terms of its narrative qualities, claiming that it achieves much the same effect as Flaubert and Maupassant aimed at in their writing: 'They [Flaubert and Maupassant] gave you not so much the reconstitution of a

crystallised scene in which all the figures were arrested — not so much that, as fragments of impressions gathered during a moment of time, during a period of emotion, or during a period of travel.'[17] In paraphrase, the rest of Ford's review goes on to say that a Futurist canvas tells a story without chronological sequence: there are many images in it and they appear simultaneously. The painting does not alter our fundamental perception of the nature of an object as a Cubist painting might, but is instead an example of 'materialist-realist' art, that is to say, it alters our perception of the relation between objects rather than our perception of the objects themselves. He continues, 'Futurists are only trying to render on canvas what Impressionists *tel que moi* have been trying to render for many years. (You may remember Emma's love scene at the cattle show in *Madame Bovary*.)'[18] He raises, incidentally, the criticism that Futurists are literary painters, but avoids the issue, significantly, by abruptly concluding that all experiment is self-justificatory and not to be labelled. Although Ford professes to admire the Cubist analysis of matter, he regards himself, by 1914, as entrenched in the 'materialist' school. The comparison he draws between the seduction of Emma by Rodolphe and the multiple images of a Futurist painting suggests that he sees narrative as being like a number of lines on a flat canvas — the lines can interweave in a complex fashion, but they all do so on the same plane of recorded observation.

Turning now to Ford's practice of fiction, I shall attempt a new reading of the structure of *Parade's End* in the light of Ford's narrative-conscious reading of painting. *Parade's End* first appeared as a tetralogy, consisting of *Some Do Not . . .* (1924), *No More Parades* (1925), *A Man Could Stand Up* (1926) and *Last Post* (1928). Ford later dropped *Last Post,* saying that he had never liked the novel and had always intended to end with *A Man Could Stand Up*. That the three books were intended to form one whole there is no doubt. Ford wrote in a letter to Percival Hinton in 1931: 'I think the GOOD SOLDIER is my best book technically unless you read the Tietjens books as one novel in which case the whole design appears.'[19]

The trilogy opens with Christopher Tietjens and Vincent Macmaster, both public officials in the Imperial Department of Statistics, travelling on the 11.40 from London to Rye to play golf. Everything in their compartment is brand-new, like the novel and themselves; even the mirrors under the luggage-racks look as if they have reflected very little. Macmaster, small precise, Scottish, from a humble background, is correcting the proof-sheets of his first book (on the Pre-Raphaelites) with a specially purchased gold pencil. He is disconcerted to find that no corrections need to be made. Tietjens, large, untidy, son of a Yorkshire landowner, is

immersed in his own thoughts which carry us back to a point four months before when his wife Sylvia ran off to Brittany with a man called Perowne. On the morning of the train-journey a letter has arrived from Sylvia in which she asks to be taken back. Markers are introduced into the flow of Tietjens's thoughts — *at breakfast, in the cab* — in order to locate them in the fictional chronology of the novel and to prepare the reader for the time-shifts or chronological loops that follow. The first of these loops opens with Tietjens sitting in his hotel bedroom playing patience. He starts violently when Macmaster enters. Their conversation is fragmented and largely incomprehensible since it evidently refers to events that have not yet been narrated, but which have already occurred during their afternoon's golf. Macmaster then recalls these events but during the course of his recall events are narrated that he does not know about: in this way recall slips into narration. The loop ends after thirty-seven pages with Tietjens suffering the same shock that it opened with:

> Back in his room under the rafters, Tietjens fell . . . at once a prey to real agitation. For a long time he pounded from wall to wall and, since he could not shake off the train of thought, he got out at last his patience cards, and devoted himself seriously to thinking out the condition of his life with Sylvia. He wanted to stop scandal if he could; he wanted them to live within his income, he wanted to subtract that child from the influence of its mother. Those were all definite but difficult things . . . Then one half of his mind lost itself in the rearrangement of schedules, and on his brilliant table his hands set queens and kings and checked their recurrences.
> In that way the sudden entrance of MacMaster gave him a really terrible physical shock. He nearly vomited: his brain reeled and the room fell about. He drank a great quantity of whisky in front of Macmaster's goggling eyes; but even at that he couldn't talk, and he dropped into his bed faintly aware of his friend's efforts to loosen his clothes. He had, he knew, carried the suppression of thought in his conscious mind so far that his unconscious self had taken command and had, for the time, paralysed his body and his mind.[20]

Usually, the content of loops is recalled by the principal protagonist in the events of the loop, but here Tietjens has been consciously avoiding recall of the events of the day — an attack on a Cabinet Minister by two suffragettes and their escape, facilitated by Tietjens — so these events are introduced instead by a passage of Macmaster's recall. As the loop progresses, however, omniscient narration takes over, with Tietjens at the centre of the action and Macmaster on the periphery. Macmaster, then, is not permitted the whole of the loop he has begun and is relegated to the status of a secondary character by the construction of the loop itself, confirming the reader's initial impression of him as small,

precious and weak. The rest of the loops in *Some Do Not . . .*, except for the last, are given to Tietjens. It is, incidentally, quite appropriate to treat Tietjens in this way since he has the capacity to perform tasks and think about a number of other matters at the same time. He is also not a man to discuss his personal affairs. Towards the end of the novel a long loop is given to Valentine Wannop, Tietjens's prospective lover, establishing her importance to him and to the remainder of the trilogy (III, 284–342). Episodes between loops are presented in straightforward narrative: either because Tietjens is not present, or because he plays only a small part in them. In the latter case, small loops covering only four minutes or so of fictional time are given to those playing major rôles in the action. At a breakfast given by the Reverend Duchemin, for example, Macmaster is allotted a small loop as the hero of the hour for subduing Duchemin, who suffers in public a fit of scatological lunacy (III, 122).

The reader's response to chronological looping is a more complex one than such an elementary device would appear to warrant. Clearly, looping is dramatic: the reader is invited to enter the loop if he wishes to discover the cause of Tietjen's state of mind. Looping is, equally clearly, not a grossly dramatic device: the reader knows the outcome of the events contained in the loop before they begin. The loops enact, then, a drama of mind and memory and invite the reader's participation in the often taxing experience of unravelling their complicated chronology. The loops recall, too, the bright glass analogy discussed earlier. Throughout the reading of the loop, the outcome remains in the reader's memory as though imprinted on the text, or reflected in the window. Tietjens shares this experience, though for him the events of the moment correspond to the landscape on which his thoughts are superimposed. The reader's sympathetic interest in Tietjens and his sufferings leads him through a beguiling sequence of loops in which he shares Tietjens's most intimate reflections. Interspersed with the loops are episodes of conventional narrative treating Sylvia, who first appears in the company of her mother and her mother's priest at Lobscheid, 'an unknown and little frequented air resort' deep in the pinewoods of the Taunus Wald. The setting is redolent with evil: ' "Sometimes," the priest said, "at night I think I hear the claws of evil things scratching on the shutters. This was the last place in Europe to be Christianised. Perhaps it wasn't ever even Christianised and they're here yet." ' (III, 43). Sylvia, looking 'like a picture of Our Lady by Fra Angelico,' sits well amidst these surroundings as she horrifies the priest with her plans to haunt and persecute the wretched Tietjens. Sylvia's episodes contrast sharply with Tietjens's loops, not only in construction (Sylvia has no recall-sequences) but also in

texture. The heavily adjectival and metonymic language of the Sylvia scenes contrasts with the spare prose of Tietjens's recall. Tietjens is not a man accustomed to think comparatively and his rare similes burst upon him accompanied each by an exclamation mark. It is the beginnings and the endings of loops that capture Tietjens for us in fleeting moments, fragments of time held and extended at length for the reader's inspection of the interweaving lines on the canvas.

At the end of each loop, whether long or short, the reader is snapped back, like an elastic band stretched and released, to that moment in the text as much as sixty pages before, where he left Tietjens or Valentine musing. Ford's remarks about the ending of a Maupassant short story come to mind: if the loop is the anecdote, the ending of the loop severs the reader's connection with that narrative, completing the story and bringing him, not to the very end but back, in circular fashion, to the point the reader began with. Ford's comment on the mirror in the painting of Lucrezia Borgia bears repetition here too: 'This device,' he says, 'of narrating in a mirror the happendings in the part of the room occupied by the spectator — of thus completing the anecdote — was a trick much beloved by both Rossetti and Madox Brown.'[21] At the end of a loop, then, the reader, intimately concerned with the narrating consciousness of Tietjens or Valentine, is brought back to the beginning: he is no further forward but has been carried for a considerable length of reading-time through a loop that is, in terms of the fiction, timeless. He is carried by his own effort and enjoyment, flattered perhaps by the intimacies confided to him, precisely nowhere. He has merely caught up with the moment he began reading the loop. What Rossetti achieves in the mirror — the completion of the anecdote by means of the anecdote's encroachment upon the spectator's space — is achieved in the loop by virtue of its own sequentiality: the reader gives time but gains none.

By the end of *Some Do Not . . .*, the reader has grown accustomed to the association of loops with characters who are presented sympathetically and to the association of conventional narrative with the evil Sylvia. All this begins to change in the second volume as the 'progression of the effect' becomes clearer. There is, however, one more aspect of the series of loops in the first volume to consider. Part One of *Some Do Not . . .* takes place two years before the outbreak of the First World War and is set in England, except for the one episode with Sylvia at Lobscheid. Part Two of *Some Do Not . . .* is again set in England three years into the war, with Christopher Tietjens coming to the end of his invalid leave and in the process of being ruined by one of Sylvia's admirers and the machinations of English polite society. The

circularity of the loops may well represent the hopeless struggles of Christopher and Valentine to escape the social net cast around them (their thoughts make no progress). The loops may also, more generally, reflect the stasis of pre-war English society. The last sentence of the first volume, in the past perfect tense, 'He had caught, outside the gates of his old office, a transport lorry that had given him a lift to Holborn. . . .' (III, 356) prepares the reader for the plunge into the dreadful continuous present of a transport depôt in Flanders during an air raid in *No More Parades*.

The second volume opens with language that is metaphorical and onomatopoeic:

> An immense tea-tray, august, its voice filling the black circle of the horizon, thundered to the ground. Numerous pieces of sheet-iron said, 'Pack. Pack. Pack.' In a minute the clay floor of the hut shook, the drums of ears were pressed inwards, solid noise showered about the universe, enormous echoes pushed these men — to the right, to the left, or down towards the tables, and crackling like that of flames among vast underwood became the settled condition of the night. (IV, 9.)

Tietjens, now a seriously overworked transport officer, has little time for reflection. No chronological loop follows the first shock that he receives, and the loop that follows the first event of importance in his personal life is of an unusual kind. Instead of being made up of shifting reflection and recall, the loop records Tietjens's thoughts about his marriage as he writes them down on paper in the style of a military report. He records all the main events of his relationship with Sylvia, summarising in chronological order the complex narrative of the previous volume (IV, 68–87).

The change in technique in this loop signals a change in the movement of the whole trilogy. The first part of the second volume, devoted mainly to military matters, contains a number of bizarre parallels with the world of peace in Part One of *Some Do Not*. . . . A runner is killed and dies bloodily in Tietjens's arms, recalling for him an injury done to a horse he drove in *Some Do Not*. . . . As he waited for the knacker's van at the end of the first part of the first volume, so he waits for an ambulance stretcher on bicycle wheels at the end of the first section of *No More Parades*. The injury to the horse was caused by a car driven by General Campion, the same General now commanding the Front. Tietjens is billeted with a lunatic brother officer who, it transpires, is Macmaster's nephew; Tietjens's treatment of him recalls Macmaster's handling of the lunatic clergyman Duchemin. The changes that have overwhelmed Tietjens's world extend even to Syliva. In Part

Two of *No More Parades* a loop is given over to Sylvia's reflections on the subject of a reconciliation with Tietjens, whereas in *Some Do Not . . .* her thoughts were never revealed. She is transformed from an evil icon to a conscious, though still perverse, human being. Her efforts in the direction of a reconciliation lead to Tietjens's arrest for striking her lover, now Major Perowne.

At this point in the final part of *No More Parades* the construction of loops is decisively changed. The narration of the circumstances in which Tietjens strikes Perowne is held back in the usual way, the loop opening with Tietjens already under arrest (IV, 193). One of the General's staff officers elicits the details of the assault from Tietjens and an explanation is offered to the General himself. The loop, however, never closes: the circularity of reflection in *Some Do Not . . .* is slowly opened out in the course of *No More Parades* to the point where the open-ended loop leads the reader forward in fictional time rather than leaving him in the stasis of the closed loop.The rubber band, it seems, can now be stretched indefinitely; the reader no longer enters loops with the expectation of being drawn back when they end. The reader's relation with Tietjens is no longer defined by the loop; both are freed. In the scene immediately following the unclosed loop, a small closed loop is allotted to the General, who, we can infer, is still held bound to the structure of the first half of the trilogy and to the social codes of pre-war England (IV, 217–224). The offer of freedom from loops and codes, however, has as we shall see in the next volume, a fatal consequence for the relation of the reader to the text.

The third volume of *Parade's End,* with a tentative modal in its title — *A Man Could Stand Up* — brings us to the end of the war, the beginning of Tietjens's life with Valentine, and, of course, the severance of the reader from the text. Ford, throughout the earlier part of the trilogy, has presented us with the intimate reflections of people intensely private, both by nature and station; Tietjens affirms that he would rather be dead than an open book (IV, 70). Paradoxically, with the gradual liberation of Christopher and Valentine, the reader, equally gradually, becomes less and less privileged to share loops with them. The only loop in *A Man Could Stand Up* appears at the beginning and traps Valentine between a telephone call and an interview with the Head of the girls' school at which she teaches at the very moment the maroons are sounding to announce the cessation of hostilities. She escapes her loop with a speculation:

> 'No more respect . . . For the Equator! For the Metric system. For Sir Walter Scott! Or George Washington! Or Abraham Lincoln! Or the Seventh Commandment!!!!!!'

> And she had a blushing vision of fair, shy, square-elbowed Miss Wanostrocht — the Head! — succumbing to some specious-tongued beguiler! . . . That was where the shoe really pinched! You had to keep them — the Girls, the Populace, everybody! — in hand now, for once you let go there was no knowing where They, like waters parted from the seas, mightn't carry You. Goodness knew! You might arrive anywhere — at county families taking to trade; gentlefolk selling for profit! All the unthinkable sorts of things! (IV, 272.)

After this a fast and fantastic narrative takes charge, peppered with exclamations, capital letters and snatches of music, until the final scene with Valentine and Christopher dancing together on Armistice Night 1918, described by Graham Greene in his Introduction to the trilogy as 'a day out of time — an explosion without a future.' (III, 6.)

The reader, accustomed to the beguiling but frustrating techniques of the earlier part of *Parade's End,* accustomed too to the text's insistence that he be drawn into its complexities, delayed, frustrated, leaping forward only to return to the beginning again, is now confronted with narrative that moves forward with dangerous speed. The prose of *A Man Could Stand Up* is explosive and no longer beguiling. The privacy of Christopher and Valentine is asserted; the anecdote no longer needs the listener; the mirror reflects its own story, not ourselves. The lovers, amidst the confusion and excitement, the carnival of the trilogy's end, are no longer accessible to Sylvia, to society's codes or to us. We, the readers, are no longer required; our time is no longer measured alongside fictional time. The severance of reader and text is made complete: Valentine and Christopher have each other but have excluded us; with the connivance of the text they have achieved true privacy, not merely that of loops. Loops no longer appear, the intimacy they offered is ended; we read ourselves out of the text and are left alone at our point of severance from it. The drama of reader and text is over; we diverge from the text and find at last that special, lonely freedom of the text's ending.

University of the Witwatersrand,
Johannesburg

NOTES

1. 'Posterity,' *London Review of Books,* 3, No. 6 (1981), 3 and 5.
2. *Ford Madox Ford: A Study of His Novels,* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1961), p. 12.
3. 'On Impressionism,' *Poetry and Drama,* No. 2 (June 1914), p. 174.
4. 'On Impressionism. Second Article,' *Poetry and Drama,* No. 2 (Dec. 1914), p. 328.
5. *Thus to Revisit,* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1921), p. 211.

6. *The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood: A Critical Monograph,* (London: Duckworth, 1907), pp. 164–5.
7. *Rossetti: A Critical Essay on His Art.* (Lond: Duckworth, 1902), p. 107.
8. *Novelist of Three Worlds,* (New York: Syracuse Univ. Press, 1962), p. 54.
9. 'Literary Portraits, 34: Miss May Sinclair and *The Judgment of Eve,' The Outlook,* 2 May 1914, p. 599.
10. See Arthur Mizener, *The Saddest Story: A Biographty of Ford Madox Ford,* (London: The Bodley Head, 1971), p. 11; F.M. Ford, *The English Novel From the Earliest Days to the Death of Joseph Conrad,* (London: Constable, 1930), pp. 108–10.
11. 'Literary Portraits, 9: Mr. Thomas Hardy and *A Changed Man,' The Outlook,* 8 Nov. 1913, p. 642.
12. 'Joseph Conrad,' *John O'London's Weekly,* 10 Dec. 1921, p. 323.
13. Quoted by F.M. Ford in *Ford Madox Brown: A Record of His Life and Work,* (London: Longman, 1896), pp. 29–30.
14. Quoted by F.M. Ford in *Ford Madox Brown,* p. 81.
15. F.M. Ford, *Ford Madox Brown,* p. 165.
16. F.M. Ford, *Ford Madox Brown,* p. 415.
17. 'Les Jeunes and *Des Imagistes.* Second Notice,' *The Outlook,* 16 May 1914, p. 682.
18. 'On Impressionism,' *Poetry and Drama,* No. 2 (June 1914), p. 175.
19. Richard M. Ludwig, ed., *Letters of Ford Madox Ford,* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1965), p. 204.
20. *The Bodley Head Ford Madox Ford,* ed. Graham Greene, (London: The Bodley Head, 1963), III, 103–4. All subsequent references are to this edition.
21. F.M. Ford, *Rossetti,* p. 107.

CORRESPONDENCE

TOWARDS A COMMON CORE CULTURE IN SOUTH AFRICA

The Editors,
Theoria.

The article by Ken Dovey, *Towards a Common Core Culture in South Africa (Theoria* 58) contains much that arouses one's sympathy. One feels, with him, that there need be no artificial barrier between Black and White, that one has much in common with all one's fellow-countrymen, that segregation in education is deplorable and that the social structures of Apartheid are grotesque. One agrees, also, with his proposition that human and social realities are the appropriate subject of art. In deploring one form of provincialism, however, Mr. Dovey has unwittingly introduced another variety, equally distasteful in its effects, if less obviously so.

The problem of Black-White provincialism is to be solved (in part of course) by teachers initiating 'their pupils into the artistic ceremony of re-discovering their fellow South Africans and their collective South African heritage'. Walt Whitman's call for 'new great masters, to comprehend new arts, new perfections, new wants' is quoted with approbation, but with little emphasis on the opening sentence of the Whitman paragraph:

> That huge English flow, so sweet, so undeniable, has done incalculable good here, and is to be spoken of for its own sake with generous praise and gratitude.

Whitman, it will be noticed, is carried away on the same current of enthusiasm as Mr. Dovey in speaking of the English flow of literature as something to be seen 'for its own sake' and not as a personal possession. Mr. Dovey is carried even further, however. In his attempt to see justice done in one direction, he does injustice in another; the effect of his article is that, in pleading for the good effect that local arts might have, he discounts all art that does not deal with present and local 'human realities'. The difficulty lies in one's conception of what constitutes 'human reality' of course, and I suggest that Mr. Dovey's conception has been made too narrow — so much so that the 'African experience' that he would like to see brought into focus is related, fairly closely, to the (Afrikaner) 'nationalized' consciousness that he finds perni-

cious. We are told that, 'We must re-connect our experience with our fellow Black South Africans' (agreed) and:

> This exploration of our communal experience is, in [the writer's] opinion, the most urgently required project of our time. We are so out of touch with our common human experience that we have begun to doubt that we have any experience in common.

Common human experience goes much further than the confines of South Africa and, in its effects, extends much further into the past than is here envisaged. For our day to day purposes these two extensions may be conveniently ignored, but when it comes to talking seriously of culture (in the serious sense of the word that takes language and the arts into account) then their inclusion is compulsory. Mr. Dovey reaches as far back into the past as his thesis suggests to him:

> . . . no ideology can easily wipe out three hundred years of collective experience in South Africa: that experience 'flashes back' whenever the institutionalized mystifications are lifted: whether it be South Africans of different colours seeking each other out in foreign countries, or through the 'conscious exploration' of our more authentic artists.

Yes, but if experience is collective it is older than three hundred years and wider than South African. When in Britain, Mr. Dovey found that 'the British people and I had, apart from language, little in common'. Letting the rest of the sentence pass, this statement shows no awareness of language as a complex cultural phenomenon with a very long history. Mr. Dovey's own cultural heritage is a high one because of its history and because of the intelligence of the men who have used his language and contributed to it during all its vicissitudes and changes. And the men from South Africa, whom he did find companionable, were so not only because they shared a common background, but also because they shared a common language and wide culture not very different from Mr Dovey's own. Black they may have been, but naked they came into the world, and the humanity in which Mr. Dovey found them dressed was older than three hundred years and only partly made in South Africa. Of course we all feel more comfortable with people from our own parish, but it is a mistake to suppose that language, culture or humanity were created spontaneously there.

My objection may be made more clear by referring to Mr. Dovey's approach to the arts. He complains that the Cape Education Department's syllabus for art 'draws almost exclusively on European Art', the syllabus for painting is 'de-humanized', 'de-pol-

iticized', 'removed from the human and social reality', 'emphasizes form as opposed to a meaningful analysis of content'. The syllabus for music 'similarly emphasizes form and technique, and nowhere in this syllabus is there any mention of South African music'. It goes hard to disagree with these statements; the makers of syllabi should look equally on all art with an eye only to quality (human quality) in making their choice and some South African artists, no doubt, would qualify; children should certainly be taught to see and paint the realities of their world; form has importance only as it contributes to meaning. On all these points one would agree, but behind Mr. Dovey's statement of them lies the assumption that quality (human quality) in the arts is to be sought exclusively in works that deal with the local and the present. There is no question of looking with an even and detached eye at the whole range of the arts in order to choose (in human terms) the best for study. It would be surprising if the detached and wider view would select much that is South African — our history is too short, our numbers are too few and our humanity too little exercised. Mr. Dovey says that the 'emergence of artists like David Kramer and *Juluka* in South African music is a healthy sign that we are beginning to recognize the fundamental link between the work of art and the "everyday events, doings and sufferings" of ordinary human beings'. Well this fundamental link is recognized by genuinely cultivated persons, and always has been, also Kramer did not invent music and he did not invent the sympathies and appreciations that are evident in his lyrics. These latter are as old as humanity, and are given adequate expression, also, by, say, Jane Austen and Virgil.

If a personal misconception of what is implied by 'culture' were all that was involved in Mr. Dovey's article, then I should not be writing, especially as I do admire the impulse (a humane one) that prompted him to write it. But the article is likely to be influential or, at any rate, to add its influence to a current that has set in among well-intentioned South Africans who wish to draw the community together, but are mistakenly attempting to throw overboard the means of doing so. Racism, provincialism, nationalism, are all products of a narrow culture, and symptomatic of an individual who has accepted that narrowness. There are many people in this country, inheritors of a high culture — a culture that has fostered in them the desire to widen their community — who, like Mr. Dovey, suppose that they can further their humane impulse by setting aside or diminishing their cultural heritage. They do not realize that their culture is inextricably entangled with their humanity, that cultures are the slow product of time, that they are high and low, that they are received and carried only by individuals, and only at the level that those individ-

uals are capable of supporting them. Culture, in short, is a matter of both chance and intelligence; we are required to be intelligent of our chances and to seize what may be offered us. We can't start manufacturing a culture, but we can add to one, though before doing so one must possess it sufficiently to know what developments are demanded.

D.G. Gillham

University of Cape Town,
Cape Town.