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Some of our readers may have noticed in our last issue and will remark again in this one that the articles on literary subjects significantly outnumber those which deal with the other fields of interest to *Theoria*.

. We feel that the imbalance is to be regretted and we would like to stress our continuing interest in studies in Humanities generally and in the Social Sciences.

THE EDITORS

BEATRICE AND BENEDICK

by C. O. GARDNER

Another essay on Beatrice and Benedick! . . . This one is offered, needless to say, in the belief that there is still more to be said about them. It is not offered, however, in the belief that most of what has been said so far is false. On the contrary, my impression is that, though misinterpretations and inadequate accounts have of course been perpetrated, a fairly large proportion of what has been written about these two characters — and perhaps indeed about Shakespeare's work in general — is valid. Shakespeare was, as Coleridge has said, myriad-minded; many different intuitions about the plays and many different points of view seem to be able to complement one another (though I don't believe, as some recent critics seem to, that two quite contradictory interpretations of a play are permissible). Moreover Shakespeare has called forth, as one might have expected, the liveliest imaginativeness in many of those who have tried to articulate their response to him.

If then this essay is in any sense a 'revaluation' of Beatrice and Benedick, it is certainly not an attempt to present a completely new assessment of these two characters and their significance. I am attempting, rather, to *revalue* them in the sense in which the word is now used by economists: I hope to increase their value, or rather (in literature it amounts to the same thing) to increase our awareness of their value. And indeed — particularly at a time when in the affairs of the mind and the heart as well as in the field of finance *de*valuation seems usual — there is perhaps some point in setting forth once again the notion that the best task of criticism is to add to our ability to apprehend, and our reasons for valuing, the greatest literature.

My subject is Beatrice and Benedict rather than *Much Ado About Nothing* as a whole. The reason for this is not that I believe that the two most important characters in the play can be completely detached from their context, but simply that it is about them — or, to be more precise, about the parts of the play which they appear in or affect — that I have something to say. A great deal has been written in the last twenty-five years about the play as a whole; the chief question that has been discussed is the success or failure of the Claudio-Hero plot. I do not propose to reopen the discussion here. I myself am content — or almost content — to acquiesce in the view of those who hold that the play *is* effectively unified — that it does indeed 'come off'.

I

What I wish to suggest is that, for all the perceptive and admiring comments they have evoked, Beatrice and Benedick have still not been given their full due. No critic, as far as I have been able to discover, has sufficiently recognized and accounted for the excitement and the fellow-feeling that from the very first — it seems to me — they arouse in reader or audience. We do not associate ourselves with them entirely, of course: we know that they are only partly conscious of what they are doing — playing an aggressive paradoxical game in which, fairly clearly, for both of them, failure and success are going to coincide. But there is, within and beneath their 'merry war', a node of magical, almost Dionysian delight which has not yet been given proper critical definition.

There has never been any difficulty in appreciating the liveliness, the intelligence and the wit of Beatrice and Benedick; but critics have failed properly to detect the undercurrents out of which the jets of life and humour erupt. We find J. R. Mulryne, for example, saying in a recent study:

> Critics have never been in doubt as to the dominant figures of the play's first movement . . . Nor is there dispute about the type of experience these two figures convey. 'The mirth of Beatrice (and no less that of Benedick) is an outbreak of the joyous energy of life' (Dowden); '. . . the exuberant quality of lively minds which strike fire by scoring off each other . . . *competitive* vitality' (Rossiter); 'gay, light-hearted critics of every illusion' (J. R. Brown). These are phrases typical of the agreed response: abundant vitality, gaiety, self-confidence, a brilliantly witty command of language, are the qualities all of us respond to, and which bulk large in our experience of the play's initial movement.[1]

These descriptions of Beatrice and Benedick are clearly very far from being false; indeed they seem to me vivid and eloquent. But they fall short of true comprehensiveness, I believe, in placing so much of their emphasis upon the spirit implied in 'mirth', 'competitive', 'light-hearted', 'gaiety': they do not suggest the stature and the *weight* of the two comic-heroic (not *mock*-heroic) protagonists.

An earler critic, George Sampson, recognizes something of this weight when he declares that 'it is not a paradox to say that the comedy of Beatrice and Benedick is the only serious part of *Much Ado*.'[2] But then he goes on to say that 'it is the best of human comedy, because it is near to tragedy' and to suggest that the two 'fine spirits' are 'conscious of each other's powers and therefore instinctively hostile through fear' — thus (while hitting part of the truth) misjudging the confident self-delighting energy which animates both of them at almost every moment, and which maintains a

pressure and a tone that we know are never really in danger of becoming tragic.

A few recent critics bring us somewhat closer to what seems to me a fuller account of the interplay between Beatrice and Benedick. David Horowitz quotes Professor Andrew Chiappe as saying:

> Benedick and Beatrice rail at each other, which is proper for civilized people in love, because love implies the greatest of indignities to be suffered: to give oneself.[3]

Horowitz himself adds, later: 'The very basis of their resistance to the notion of human love was their precise knowledge of what was at stake;' and: 'Their critical realism gives to the bond that is between them a resilient strength.'[4] Valuable as these remarks are, however, Horowitz does not tell us very much about the state of mind and heart from which such resistance and such 'realism' spring. We are told considerably more both about the protagonists and about their effect upon us by R. A. Foakes:

> Perhaps it is not so much the quality of their witty exchanges that makes them such powerful and vibrant figures, as the energy and skill with which they parry each other, and so preserve a stance of tough-minded independence.[5]

The words 'powerful', 'vibrant', 'energy', 'skill', and perhaps 'parry' take us towards the core of the relationship; but 'preserve a stance', though it is of course partly justified by the deceptions and self-deceptions that are an important aspect of what makes us laugh, fails to convey the *reality* of the desire, or partial desire, for 'tough-minded independence'. Foakes seems (to me) unable to conceptualize what he has intuitively felt. Later in his essay he slips into a more conventional and limited account of the play's concerns:

> The supremity of intelligence, or wit, in the values of the world of the play helps to account for both its brilliance, and its prose. The brilliance is achieved centrally in Beatrice and Benedick, but a price is paid for it; there is a coolness about the gaiety of this world, where to score a point in conversation matters most.[6]

Perhaps the best brief account of the significance of Beatrice and Benedick is that of G. K. Hunter. In his formulations we sense a responsiveness that is both highly sophisticated and thoroughly lively:

> Beatrice is admirable . . . as an independent person, whose high spirits express an individual control over her own happiness. It is not for her, in following the downward path described by Congreve's Millamant as 'by degrees dwindl|ing| into a wife', to have the independence knocked out of her by masculine violence, however jovial.[7]

> . . . The wariness and defensive banter of Beatrice and Benedick, their unwillingness to abandon self-sufficiency or commit themselves too far — as we may suppose Claudio does, with his 'I give myself away for you, and dote upon the exchange' — can be seen as a proper poise.[8]

Even these statements, however, seem to me to do less than justice to what I have tentatively called the Dionysian element in the emotions and reactions of the protagonists — the startling and wonderful ferocity of their exchanges. In fact Hunter appears even to distrust this ferocity when he says: 'But the nearness of Beatrice to a shrew must be faced and admitted if we are to preserve the balance of the play.'[9] It is true, of course, that Beatrice, like Benedick, is shown to be wrong, or partly wrong, in some of her earlier assertions, that she can be said to change her mind; but we are, I believe, so aware — consciously or unconsciously — of the creative vitality within her earlier attitude that we cannot accept the word 'shrew'. Hunter himself seems a little uneasy about the sentence that I have been commenting on, for he continues: 'Admitting the quality of aggression in her nature is not quite the same thing as condemning her . . .' The view which I shall put forward is that her aggression is an important part of what we feel to be her glory.

Useful contributions towards a full understanding of Beatrice and Benedick have been made by some of those critics who have responded to the fact that *Much Ado About Nothing* represents, more richly than any other play of Shakespeare's, the Renaissance spirit at its most assured and its most splendid — the spirit that we associate with Castiglione and with the portraits of young men and women painted by Raphael and Titian. Some of the statements made by D. L. Stevenson are particularly pertinent. Speaking of what he calls Shakespeare's 'love-game comedies', he says: 'Their criticism of the accepted behaviour of lovers takes nourishment from all the humanistic forces working through Renaissance life.'[10] Stevenson fills out this observation in his discussion of Lady Emilia Pia and Lord Gaspar Pallavicino, the two characters from *The Book of the Courtier* who have often been compared with Beatrice and Benedick:

> The similarity of these two attendants at the court of Urbino to two of Shakespeare's dramatic characters is, it would appear, not so much causal as parallel. That is to say, once the Renaissance assumed the social and emotional equality of the sexes, love generally became not a question of acceptance or denial (as it was to Elyot), but a quarrel between the ideal and the psychologically possible . . . It was a quarrel brought about by the sturdy, critical spirit of the age . . . The attempt

to accommodate a romantic attitude to the life of a gentleman and to the newly apprehended lady of the court, then, represents the intrusion of Renaissance reality into medieval courtly ideals whether illustrated in drama, in conduct book or in fact.[11]

Stevenson notes, too, that

. . . unlike the characters in *Love's Labour's Lost* and in *As You Like It,* Beatrice and Benedick remain as shrewdly enlightened creatures of the Renaissance after they have agreed to marry as they were before . . . Benedick's statement to Beatrice, 'Thou and I are too wise to woo peaceably,' is a fitting summary of the implications to be drawn from their particular courtship.[12]

II

Beatrice: I pray you, is Signor Mountanto returned from the wars, or no?

Messenger: I know none of that name, lady; there was none such in the army of any sort.

Leonato: What is he that you ask for, niece?

Hero: My cousin means Signor Benedick of Padua.

Messenger: O, he's returned, and as pleasant as ever he was.

Beatrice: He set up his bills here in Messina, and challenged Cupid at the flight, and my uncle's fool, reading the challenge, subscribed for Cupid, and challenged him at the bird-bolt. I pray you, how many hath he killed and eaten in these wars? But how many hath he killed. For indeed, I promised to eat all of his killing.

Leonato: Faith, niece, you tax Signor Benedick too much; but he'll be meet with you, I doubt it not. (I i 28)[13]

Beatrice's first, memorable question betrays the concern of a potential lover. Yet her tone is flecked with an irony that contrives to be both aloof and playful. What strikes us most forcibly, however, in the opening sentence of the 'merry war' is its implied *challenge* — a challenge which is amusing but none the less real. The war, we soon grasp, though merry, is a war indeed. Beatrice's interest in Benedick and her mocking resistance to him are communicated simultaneously; and she pictures him in a state of combat — as a fencer, as indeed a master of the upward thrust.

Beatrice's opening remarks show, as most commentators have stressed, a large degree of witty control: those actresses who have attempted to play her as a spinster with a broad streak of neurotic

cantankerousness have of course missed much of the humour and much of the point. But on the other hand we are in danger of losing contact with her – and, I believe, of denying some of our own deepest responses – if we allow ourselves to think of her as merely or mainly a witty young lady. Her control is superb; but it is something important that she is controlling, something which any lively and sensitive person must have had some experience of. What I wish to suggest is that Beatrice and Benedick evoke even more excitement than has been explicitly recognized because their concerns are more significant, more centrally a part of the human condition, than critics seem to have noticed.

Messenger: He hath done good service, lady, in these wars.
Beatrice: You had musty victual, and he hath holp to eat it; he is a very valiant trencher-man, he hath an excellent stomach.
Messenger: And a good soldier too, lady.
Beatrice: And a good soldier to a lady. But what is he to a lord?
Messenger: A lord to a lord, a man to a man, stuffed with all honourable virtues.
Beatrice: It is so, indeed; he is no less than a stuffed man; but for the stuffing – well, we are all mortal.
Leonato: You must not, sir, mistake my niece. There is a kind of merry war between Signor Benedick and her; they never meet but there's a skirmish of wit between them.
Beatrice: Alas, he gets nothing by that. In our last conflict four of his five wits went halting off, and now is the whole man governed with one; so that if he have wit enough to keep himself warm, let him bear it for a difference between himself and his horse; for it is all the wealth that he hath left, to be known a reasonable creature. Who is his companion now? He hath every month a new sworn brother.
Messenger: Is't possible?
Beatrice: Very easily possible: he wears his faith but as the fashion of his hat; it ever changes with the next block.
Messenger: I see, lady, the gentleman is not in your books.
Beatrice: No; an he were, I would burn my study . . . (I i 44)

Beatrice's is a remarkable virtuoso performance, and it is clear that she is deriving from it the same kind of pleasure as the

audience enjoys. Yet this is far from being mere performance. As a proud and noble creature she is displaying her plumage, but she is doing so not so much in order to show how worthy she is of a mate as to show how thoroughly she deserves to remain herself. She rejoices in herself, as well she might; but she feels her self-sufficiency threatened by the man to whom she is (largely unconsciously) attracted. The relentlessness with which she pursues Benedick with her mocking tongue indicates the gay and poised half-desperation of a person for whom attack seems somehow to have become the best method of defence. With comic exuberance she resists the menace so tryingly yet so piquantly thrown before her by life itself, indeed by her own emotions. She embraces Benedick in a spirit of joyous but serious contradiction and denial.

It is conventionally assumed that young men and young women drift naturally into love and mutual devotion and mutual service. Beatrice (like Benedick) is sufficiently proud and sufficiently perceptive to discern that this 'natural process' is in many respects highly *un*natural — that it is in fact something of an outrage. She knows that her emotional and intellectual quality, her force of personality, must be given its due, must be given its head. And in implicitly asserting this she is — even though the play proves her partly wrong in the end — neither an emotional cripple, nor a crazed blue-stocking, nor even, like Congreve's Millamant (for whom one has very considerable sympathy), a self-consciously bewitching and somewhat over-sophisticated mademoiselle. Beatrice's protest against what she feels to be the intolerable laws both of life and of society springs from the healthy and intelligent vigour of her own self-delight. And it is impossible for the audience to be deeply critical of Beatrice's valuation of herself when it finds itself largely sharing that valuation: we like Beatrice, and, though our critical faculties are not wholly converted by her, distinctly we like her as she is.

Benedick's stand (for it is a stand rather than a stance) is fundamentally the same as Beatrice's. It is perhaps slightly less astonishing than hers, since we are rather more accustomed to rebellions and surprises in the behaviour of men. But the two protagonists are fairly evenly matched in their energy and in their attractiveness, and it is this fact, of course, which makes us steadily more aware that a very fine *match* could be made between them.

Beatrice: I wonder that you will still be talking, Signor Benedick; nobody marks you.

Benedick: What, my dear Lady Disdain! Are you yet living?

Beatrice: Is it possible disdain should die while she hath such meet food to feed it as Signor Benedick? Courtesy itself must convert to disdain, if you come in her presence.

Benedick: Then is courtesy a turncoat. But it is certain I am loved of all ladies, only you excepted; and I would I could find in my heart that I had not a hard heart, for, truly, I love none.

Beatrice: A dear happiness to women; they would else have been troubled with a pernicious suitor! I thank God and my cold blood, I am of your humour for that; I had rather hear my dog bark at a crow than a man swear he loves me.

Benedick: God keep your ladyship still in that mind! So some gentleman or other shall 'scape a predestinate scratched face.

Beatrice: Scratching could not make it worse, an 'twere such a face as yours were.

Benedick: Well, you are a rare parrot-teacher.

Beatrice: A bird of my tongue is better than a beast of yours.

Benedick: I would my horse had the speed of your tongue, and so good a continuer. But keep your way a' God's name, I have done.

Beatrice: You always end with a jade's trick; I know you of old. (I i 108)

Again, one's immediate impression is of marvellously accomplished fun. But why is it that this snatch of dialogue is obviously so much more solid and significant than any fragment that one might select from Noel Coward or from Oscar Wilde or indeed from Congreve? In the words of Beatrice and Benedick, modulating as they do from controlled disdain to vigorous and brilliant abuse, there is a touch of living fierceness, an emotional pressure, which makes us constantly aware that we are in the presence not of skilled or even consummate artifice but of something which we are made — by the art, of course — to feel as a part of everyday reality.

I have expressed my disagreement with George Sampson's view that the drama of Beatrice and Benedick is 'near to tragedy': the tone of their exchanges is confidently and securely comic. But it is important to remember that great tragedy and great comedy, even at their purest, have rather more in common than perhaps we are in the habit of realising. Each represents a serious mode of apprehending human life. Even a discussion between Dogberry and Verges is appreciably less distant from the world of tragedy, less a denial of it, than a conversation between Algernon Moncrieff and Lady Bracknell. In this little altercation between Beatrice and Benedick — comic as it is — there are tensions and cross-currents of feeling that can perhaps be said to inhabit the same realm of

being as those which a few years later were to express themselves in tragedy:

> O, thou weed,
> Who art so lovely fair, and smell'st so sweet
> That the sense aches at thee, would thou hadst
> ne'er been born! (*Othello,* IV ii 66).

Indeed Shakespeare's great tragic period seems to result partly from his having recognized, as many other major Renaissance artists did, some of the flaws in — maybe the ultimate insufficiency of — the exuberant self-reliant world and spirit that *Much Ado* celebrates.

To pursue this line of thought, however, would be to leave the play behind. But it is necessary to grasp how real are the feelings, how sharp the cutting edge, embodied in the exchanges of Beatrice and Benedick. There may be some value, too, in bringing out a similarity that has not often been noted:

> No, uncle, I'll none. Adam's sons are my brethren, and, truly, I hold it a sin to match in my kindred. (II i 55)

> Why Hal, 'tis my vocation, Hal. 'Tis no sin for a man to labour in his vocation. (*I Henry IV,* I ii 104)

> Shall I never see a bachelor of threescore again? Go to, i'faith; an thou wilt needs thrust thy neck into a yoke, wear the print of it, and sigh away Sundays. (I i 185)

> I would you had but the wit: 'twere better than your dukedom. Good faith, this same young sober-blooded boy doth not love me; nor a man cannot make him laugh; but that's no marvel, he drinks no wine. (*2 Henry IV,* IV iii 85)[14]

Falstaff is, of course, incomparable; but no characters are closer to him, in some of his aspects, than Beatrice and Benedick. The movement of their lively and flexible prose cannot but remind us of his (it is interesting to note, incidentally, that *Much Ado* may well have been written immediately after *Henry IV*). Falstaff stands opposed to all the conventions of virtue and sober respectability and military honour; Beatrice and Benedick reject the norms of love and marriage. In him and in them we hear a call of nature that is wild, alarming, profound. Perhaps the chief feature of our response — if we allow ourselves to chart our feelings without prejudice — is a sense of liberation. We experience a gust of fresh and new air, not simply because it is delightful to abandon briefly the burdens of accepted knowledge and responsibility, but because Beatrice and Benedick and Falstaff are expressing and embodying a permanent, though perhaps inconvenient, facet of human truth. It is *true* that love and marriage — especially the

conventional versions of these things — are an imposition upon decent freedom and self-respect, just as reputable life and honourable death are an affront to the ordinary human vitality which in Falstaff reaches almost titanic proportions. It is because they boldy incarnate bracing, life-giving truths that these three can be said to be heroes — albeit comic heroes.

III

It is worth asking why, if the challenge that they offer to conventional wisdom is an important one, Beatrice and Benedick should nevertheless be so richly comic.

Obviously we laugh at them partly because they are deluded or half-deluded: they erect stong and proud barriers against love, but of course *amor vincit omnia.* This aspect of the comedy, central though it is, I don't propose to deal with; it has been discussed often. We laugh too, with them as well as at them, because they are genial, witty, gamesome, exuberantly non-tragic. Their critique of the ways of society, for example, is pointedly different from Don John's; indeed Beatrice's shrewd comment on the latter tells us a good deal about her own quality: 'How tartly that gentleman looks' (II i 3). But perhaps the deepest vibration in our laughter forms part of our response to precisely that essentially serious challenge that I have been attempting to define.

Bergson stressed that comedy is born when living people, who should be alert and flexible, behave stiffly and mechanically. Beatrice and Benedick become, amusingly, if not mechanical at least predictable when they succumb to love. But in so far as they defy the norms of love and marriage (and this defiance they maintain, to some extent, to the very end of the play) they have the laugh of all the others — not only Claudio and Hero, indeed, but the reader or audience as well. Shakespeare turns comedy inside out: part of our pleasure lies in our own discomfiture; or rather, one part of ourselves mocks another part.

But the mocking of mechanical actions and reactions is perhaps only the negative side of the comedy. The humour that springs from Beatrice and Benedick does not only chastise: it rejoices. We enjoy the truth and reality of their intuitions as we enjoy all truth and reality. But we *laugh,* we undergo that peculiar form of nervous release, because we find ourselves in the presence of forces of life that are powerful and exhilarating, forces that bear us upwards — just as, in tragedy, we feel fearful because we encounter forces that chill us and bear down upon us. Beatrice and Benedick strike us as funny because they reveal new or partly new ways in which life, the life within us, is or may be *fun;* and an ancient, boisterous, partially iconoclastic recognition stirs in our depths.

Laughter is a way of saluting life at its most propitious; almost effortlessly it searches out and proclaims nature beneath convention, the earth of the flesh beneath the air of theory, the heart's vital truth beneath the mind's cramped duty. Perhaps the key word or phrase is one that I have used once or twice already – self-delight. Self-delight, involving as it does relationships with other people's self-delight, is not a peaceful occupation, however: Beatrice and Benedick are 'too wise to woo peaceably' (V ii 66).

A maker of comedies, especially one who succeeds in getting us to laugh out at profound human truths, must write from a certain poise, a stance of relaxed humane vision. Stance and poise depend to a large extent, often, upon the state of the culture in which the writer finds himself; and yet the achievement itself must always belong ultimately to the artist himself. It is interesting to compare some of the assertions that Shakespeare formulates or enacts in Beatrice and Benedick with some rather similar assertions made or implied by D. H. Lawrence. Sometimes of course Lawrence can be very amusing in his treatment of the relationship between man and woman, as for instance at certain moments in the nouvelle *The Captain's Doll.* Perhaps rather more characteristic of him, however, is a passage like this, from *Women in Love:*

> The old way of love seemed a dreadful bondage, a sort of conscription. What it was in him he did not know, but the thought of love, marriage, and children, and a life lived together, in the horrible privacy of domestic and connubial satisfaction, was repulsive. He wanted something clearer, more open, cooler, as it were . . . On the whole, he hated sex, it was such a limitation. It was sex that turned a man into a broken half of a couple, the woman into the other broken half. And he wanted to be single in himself, the woman single in herself.[15]

In writing these words, Lawrence is clearly feeling the need to open up a new path for human attitudes and actions. The Shakespeare of *Much Ado,* on the other hand, seems almost to watch the new path opening of its own accord, and he enjoys fully the implications of what he sees. Lawrence, great as he is, tends often to *insist upon* the validity of the vision that he is expounding (even though, when he is writing at his best, he manages to detach himself from his protagonists), whereas Shakespeare, for all the punch and fire of Beatrice and Benedick, appears content to allow their vigorous truths to unfold freely and in the end to merge harmoniously into the total meaning of the play.

And yet at the same time, Shakespeare is never guilty of that partial irresponsibility which one associates with most of the comedy of the Restoration period: his humour is always deeply life-giving and therefore serious. Indeed, if Shakespeare's vision in this play is

on the whole more generous and relaxed than Lawrence's, it is obviously more wholesome than that of the Restoration dramatists. Their plays are marred by sophistication; the thought is often over-elaborated, while the feeling tends to become salacious. In Beatrice and Benedick wit and emotion, liveliness and humour are one.

The fact that the hero and heroine live and have their being *in prose* is not fundamentally to be explained in terms of (to use Foakes's words) 'the supremity of intelligence, or wit, in the values of the world of the play'. In *Much Ado,* as in several of the other plays Shakespeare wrote between about 1597 and 1602, prose is often the instrument of 'nature' as against artificiality or emotional narrowness. Our knowledge that Shakespeare is the greatest of poets seems often to blind us to the fact that in five or six of his plays he chose to make many of his most imaginative and disturbing formulations in prose rather than in verse. He seems at this time to have felt that the number of thoughts and feelings that could be crystallized in verse, or at least in his own verse as it had developed up to that point, was limited, and thus verse was able at times to become for him the vehicle for attitudes of mind and heart which lack the full weight of passionate commitment. One of Benedick's comments on the love-sick Claudio may well contain something of the playwright's own feeling on these matters:

> He was wont to speak plain and to the purpose, like an honest man and a soldier, and now is he turned orthography; his words are a very fantastical banquet, just so many strange dishes. (II iii 18)

There can be little doubt that the new vigour and flexibility that we find in the verse of the great tragedies stems from the period in which Shakespeare cultivated the virtues of prose.

IV

No critic of any importance has failed to respond to the brilliance and the power of the exchange in which Beatrice tells Benedick to kill Claudio. Its full significance and its relation to what has happened earlier in the play have not, however, been generally recognized. It is certainly true that the protagonists reveal themselves in this scene more richly and more movingly than they have done before; but — as my earlier observations imply — it is inaccurate to say that they are now for the first time 'reacting with real feeling', [16] that they 'shed briefly their armour of wit, and speak plainly and directly',[17] or even that they 'in the end uncover their hearts'.[18]

The whole exchange pulsates with energy, with the clashing and mingling of cross-currents of vitality. At first this energy is held in, understated, touched with a little humour, as Beatrice absorbs the meaning of the harrowing scene of the broken wedding and Benedick tensely and sympathetically watches her reactions. Because Beatrice is aware of the new development in her relationship with her 'antagonist', her kind concern for Hero flows naturally, inevitably, into a slightly veiled but nevertheless probing challenge:

Beatrice: Ah, how much might the man deserve of me that would right her!
Benedick: Is there any way to show such friendship?
Beatrice: A very even way, but no such friend.
Benedick: May a man do it?
Beatrice: It is a man's office, but not yours. (IV i 258)

Worked upon by the intimacy of these insinuations, and responding (as she does too) to a sense of crisis, Benedick utters his love. Beatrice hesitates, equivocates, at first shyly, then good-humouredly, and finally brings out a passionate yet poised declaration:

I love you with so much of my heart that none is left to protest. (282)

At this Benedick explodes with a lover's full-flowing liberality — 'Come, bid me do anything for thee' — only to find his impulse met by what strikes him as a violent contrary force: 'Kill Claudio'. At first, he fails to recognize the implications of what he is up against — of what he is involved with and in — and he gaily refuses to act; but the sheer power of her conviction overbears his opposition:

Benedick: *(taking her by the hand)*: Tarry, sweet Beatrice.
Beatrice: I am gone though I am here; there is no love in you. Nay, I pray you, let me go.
Benedick: Beatrice —
Beatrice: In faith, I will go.
Benedick: We'll be friends first.
Beatrice: You dare easier be friends with me than fight with mine enemy.
Benedick: Is Claudio thine enemy?
Beatrice: Is he not approved in the height a villain that hath slandered, scorned, dishonoured my kinswoman? O that I were a man! What, bear her in hand until they come to take hands, and then, with public accusation, uncovered slander, unmitigated rancour — O God, that I were a man! I would eat his heart in the market-place. (288)

By the end of the exchange Benedick is wholly convinced that his

love for Beatrice must make him fight Claudio.

We see, then, that the energy of the lovers — that which they possess as individuals and that which they generate together — runs in a number of different directions. But what is most important is that the 'field of force' that is displayed here is precisely the one that we have seen and experienced from the first.

Beatrice and Benedick were introduced to us as creatures with an intense sense of individuality — both their own and other people's — and with therefore, among other things, a keen awareness of sexual differences. Both because of the healthy turbulence of their emotions and because of the need to ward off soul-destroying influences, they were apt to be pugnacious, to conceive of life as a war — a 'merry war'. Their championing of themselves, however — quite unlike Don John's embittered and envious self-indulgence — by no means dammed up the flow of sympathy and generosity towards others; freely themselves, they were always free to respond where a response seemed called for. And it turns out that, though they have their moments of comic humiliation, even falling in love is not incompatible with dynamic self-assertion. They need them*selves*, but they also need what their selves need — and each self requires another complementary self, partly as something to fight with, something in terms of which and against which it may live and be defined, but also, of course, as a point of focus for that welling sweetness, that strange love of other life, which accompanies and interpenetrates the robustness of merry warriors. Only those who have achieved independence can give themselves fully in love. And self-aware beings naturally expect the highest standards in their sexual partners (as indeed Beatrice and Benedick have hinted from the first); the complementing, the mutual reinforcement, must be well done, and each must value the other's distinctive pride. Moreover this enlargement, this expansion of the area of self-fulfilment, must inevitably produce not introversion but an even wider sympathy, and not sentimentality but a toughness and crispness of feeling.

The scene that we have been looking at is thus a continuation and a blossoming of the movement of feeling which was begun in the first scene of the play. Of course it surprises us, as all great art must, and as all living human responses must. But at the same time we can recognize that it is right that Beatrice and Benedick should be so alert in their emotions, so subtly mobile in their moods. It is right, too, that Benedick's sympathy should make Beatrice implicitly both call upon and mock his manhood, and that this should lead to his declaration of love, in the course of which, newly conscious of his sexual identity, he refers to his sword, that sword that as Signor Mountanto he was wielding when first Beatrice brought him before our eyes:

Benedick: By my sword, Beatrice, thou lovest me.
Beatrice: Do not swear, and eat it.
Benedick: I will swear by it that you love me; and I will make him eat it that says I love not you.
Beatrice: Will you not eat your word? (270)

And the great 'Kill Claudio', astounding as it is, summarizes and fulfils the whole meaning of the relationship between Beatrice and Benedick. It is in itself the most concentrated and fierce of all her rapier-like utterances; in it she demands that Benedick make real use of his man's sword. Held within Beatrice's passionate command, beside her affection for the injured Hero and her contempt for the contemptible action of Claudio, is her burning knowledge (there is no trace of lukewarm calculation in it) not only that love must prove itself by a willingness to risk all and to commit itself entirely, but that in some ultimate sense to love — to live absolutely — *is* to fight. Beatrice and Benedick must, in various ways, continue to live by the sword, and Claudio's base act, like his earlier mawkishness, provides an occasion for them to show the mettle of which they are made.

Beatrice takes the lead (as the heroines so often do when Shakespeare is in an untragic mood), but Benedick follows her fairly swiftly:

Beatrice: Princes and counties! Surely a princely testimony, a goodly count, Count Comfect; a sweet gallant, surely! O, that I were a man for his sake, or that I had any friend would be a man for my sake! But manhood is melted into curtsies, valour into compliment, and men are only turned into tongue, and trim ones too. He is now as valiant as Hercules that only tells a lie and swears it. I cannot be a man with wishing, therefore I will die a woman with grieving.
Benedick: Tarry, good Beatrice. By this hand, I love thee.
Beatrice: Use it for my love some other way than swearing by it.
Benedick: Think you in your soul the Count Claudio hath wronged Hero?
Beatrice: Yea, as sure as I have a thought or a soul. (310)

The word 'soul' suggests the fullness of Beatrice's humanity. And it is a largeness and complexity which impresses us in Benedick's reply; he is sternly resolved, he shows his love for Beatrice and his concern for Hero, and yet even here there is a touch of the play's pervasive humour:

> Enough, I am engaged; I will challenge him, I will kiss your hand, and so I leave you. By this hand, Claudio shall render me a dear account. As you hear of me, so think of me. Go, comfort your cousin . . . (326)

V

What allows the slightest suggestion of laughter to colour Benedick's resolution is, of course, our knowledge that it can't end like this. Dogberry and Verges do their belated bit, mistakes are undone, and the proper comedy-conclusion is ushered in. The vivacity of the hero and heroine is able to stream back into the now harmonious warfare of bellicose affection:

> Benedick: A miracle! Here's our hands against our hearts. Come, I will have thee; but, by this light, I take thee for pity.
>
> Beatrice: I would not deny you; but, by this good day, I yield upon great persuasion; and partly to save your life, for I was told you were in a consumption.
>
> Benedick: *(kissing her)* Peace! I will stop your mouth. (V iv 91)

That kiss is impressive as well as funny because we know what lies behind it. And we feel the full weight of the protagonists' energy, firmly and creatively channelled, in Benedick's final invitation:

> Come, come, we are friends. Let's have a dance ere we are married, that we may lighten our own hearts and our wives' heels. (V iv 115).

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HUNTERS, HERDERS AND EARLY FARMERS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

by J. B. WRIGHT

Introduction

Southern African society today is essentially the product of interaction between two main cultural groupings, one indigenous to Africa, the other with its roots in western Europe. In the creation of this society indigenous and immigrant peoples alike have played important roles, yet in seeking to explain its origins historians have until very recently confined their attentions almost exclusively to the activities of the European-descended communities which, from the mid-seventeenth century onward, were establishing themselves in the sub-continent and progressively destroying or subjugating the African societies that they encountered. Themselves so far mostly of European descent and cultural affiliation, writers of African history have until recently tended to accept — as some, particularly in South Africa, still do — the stereotype that for centuries before the coming of the Europeans southern African society had been culturally static and therefore had little history worthy of record. But in the last decade or so, the accumulation of evidence from archaeology, social and physical anthropology, and linguistics, together with the revaluation of documentaty evidence and of African oral traditions, has enabled scholars to begin making fresh assessments of southern African history. It is now becoming clear that in the fifteen or twenty centuries before the coming of the first European settlers, the southern African way of life, far from being static, was in fact undergoing a radical, if slow, transformation that saw the foundations laid of the present-day society.

For almost all its period of human occupation southern Africa's inhabitants have made their living solely by gathering wild food plants and hunting wild animals.[1] It is not yet known when recognizably human forms first made their appearance in the sub-continent, but certainly societies of man-like Australopithecine hominids were living in what is now the Transvaal by at least two million years ago, and the earliest representatives of the genus *Homo* may have appeared soon after. A million years or more ago man the cultural animal was establishing in southern Africa a way of life based on hunting and gathering, and it was as hunters and

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gatherers that people in this part of the world continued to live until about 2000 years ago, when immigrant communities of pastoralists and farmers first began to settle in it.

The hunter-gatherer period thus covers more than ninety-nine per cent of man's history in southern Africa. It was this period that saw, on the one hand, the establishment of physically modern man in the sub-continent, and on the other, the evolution of human technology and social relationships to a point which enabled man to dominate the rest of the animal kingdom, but throughout there was no fundamental change in the nature of his subsistence base. At the end of the period, even if his foraging techniques were now far more efficient, he was still a hunter and gatherer, as he had been at the beginning. But the arrival of peoples who cultivated food plants and kept domesticated animals marks a break with the past that represents perhaps the major turning point in southern African history. The spread of their culture at the expense of the hunting and gathering way of life saw a new departure in terms of human behaviour patterns, a radical re-ordering of human-to-land and of human-to-human relationships, which still underlies the functioning of southern African society today.

The hunter-gatherer way of life

To understand the significance of the changes that took place it is necessary to consider the essentials of the hunter-gatherers' way of life as it is thought to have been prior to the disruption by farming and pastoral peoples. Though the absence of contemporary documentation makes impossible the detailed reconstruction of their 'pre-contact' cultures, recent archaeological research, together with field studies made of hunter-gatherer groups still or until recently surviving in the Kalahari, has provided evidence that enables some tentative generalizations to be made.[2] The historical hunter-gatherer peoples of southern Africa have usually been called 'Bushmen', though scholars today are tending to term them 'San' when referring to their way of life, and 'Khoisanoids' when referring to their physical type. Before the coming of pastoral and farming peoples, Bushman groups probably lived over most of southern Africa except for the heavily forested regions. Their particular cultural adaptations would have varied from one type of physical environment to another, but the general features of their way of life were probably much the same throughout the sub-continent.

The economy of the Bushmen was based on the extraction from the environment of naturally occurring food resources. In collecting edible plants, in hunting, and in preparing food for consumption they needed no more than a few simple implements made of raw materials readily to hand — bows and arrows, digging sticks, skin

carry-bags, containers of wood or bark or shell. Their basic kit of cutting tools was made of suitable stone; their only machines were the bow and spring snare. A few items of clothing and body-ornamentation completed the range of their manufactures.

Whether in the form of gathering, hunting, or manufacturing, economic activity was aimed primarily at meeting the immediate needs of the individual and his family, and of the group in which they were living at any particular time. Each community was normally self-sufficient since, as will be explained below, a hunter-gatherer society could survive in the long run only if it granted to all its members continued access to basic resources of food and raw materials. There was thus no incentive for individuals to produce a surplus either of food or manufactured goods for commercial exchange, nor was there any necessity for specialization of labour beyond the basic categories of male hunter and female gatherer.

The simplicity of Bushman technology was of fundamental importance in structuring the main features of their subsistence practices. Their lack of sophisticated devices for transporting and storing large quantities of food imposed on them a mobile pattern of living, for as the resources of one area became exhausted a point was reached where it became simpler to move camp to another, rather than carry food, water and firewood over increasing distances. But groups did not simply wander at random: each had a recognized 'beat', whose food resources were intimately known and systematically but carefully exploited as they became seasonally available. The hunter-gatherer way of life has until very recently been regarded by most outsiders as a constant and miserable struggle for a precarious existence, but studies of recent and present-day hunter-gatherers living in a wide range of environments in different parts of the world are leading to modification of this view.

The economy even of the Kalahari Bushmen, it has been argued, was broadly based, relatively stable, and had considerable reserves.[3] In pre-farming times, when the better-watered areas of southern Africa were still open to the hunter-gatherers, it is probable that the Bushmen in these regions would have had a similarly reliable living. While it is admittedly a dangerous exercise to extrapolate from the Kalahari to other types of environments, and from the mid-twentieth century to the 'later Stone Age', the viability of hunter-gatherer modes of existence is well attested by studies made elsewhere in Africa and the outside world.[4] It would be surprising if, through the millennia of hunter-gatherer existence in southern Africa, there had not evolved betwen the human population and its food resources a symbiosis which ensured, as in the case of any successful animal species, that in normal times individuals

usually had enough to eat. Though the ecological, physiological, and social mechanisms involved in the maintenance of this relationship are not yet fully understood, it is probable that in the long term the Bushmen, like other hunter-gatherers, were able to stabilize their numbers well within the carrying capacity of the natural environment, and hence to ensure that the resources on which they depended for survival were not depleted.

Equitable access to food resources for all members of Bushman society was achieved through the flexibility of their social structure, which was geared essentially to permit the deployment of the human population in optimum relationship to the resources available at any particular time. An ordinary human desire for communal life was an important factor in determing the composition of Bushman groups at any one time, but underlying it was a basic survival imperative which required that if the people were to be able to utilize their scattered food resources with maximum efficiency, individuals should be allowed maximum freedom of movement, so that as close a 'fit' as possible could be achieved between the distribution of population and the availability of food. Hence at different seasons of the year people would be found living in aggregations of different size. The basic subsistence unit or work group was the family; when food was scarce, individual families might choose to operate independently of others to make foraging easier, then, when the concentration of food resources became high enough to allow it, a number of families might coalesce for a time into larger groups, up to sixty or eighty strong. As resources were progressively used up over a wider and wider area, so people had to walk further and further to find them, until the point was reached where the costs of living in a larger group were felt to outweigh the benefits. At this stage the group would begin to split into its constitutent, families and family-clusters, and the whole cycle would repeat itself. Throughout the course of the cycle, family-clusters were themselves constantly forming and reforming as relations and friends of existing members arrived from, or departed on, visits to other clusters, the net effect being one of constant movement of people from one group to another.

It follows that group membership was not rigid, and the common idea of the Bushmen as living in stable 'bands' of more or less fixed size is not strictly true. Also in need of modification is the idea that they lived in fixed territories. Although it is clear that individuals did not wander at random and tended to be associated with a particular 'beat', the constant to-and-fro movement of people between different localities would have made rigid territorial boundaries impossible to maintain. The demarcation and defence of borders would in fact have proved a positive obstacle to efficient hunting

and gathering, in that free movement from one subsistence area to another would have been hindered. To ensure its own continued existence the population had to be able constantly to redistribute itself to areas where food was to be found at any particular time. Bushman communities thus had no permanent citizenry and no clearly defined territory.

The flexibility of the hunter-gatherers' social system was paralleled by the informality of their political organization. Public affairs centred primarily round subsistence strategy, and since all adults had an intimate knowledge of their natural environment there was unlikely to have been much serious argument in a community over the courses of action open to it at any time. The small-scale, face-to-face nature of Bushman groups allowed communal decisions to be made by an informal consensus of the members best fitted to do so — the older and more experienced hunters. A more formal system of rule by recognized chiefs and councils would have impeded the individual freedom of decision and of movement that was essential for efficient foraging. In the 'judicial' sphere, disputes could normally be settled on a person-to-person or family-to-family basis. If the group as a whole became involved, most issues were still simple enough to be decided by a consensus of public opinion, and in extreme cases a built-in social safety valve came into operation, in that parties who felt themselves wronged were able to walk out and join another group. Exposure to public ridicule was usually enough to bring dissidents into line with accepted norms of behaviour, and as a last resort persistent trouble-makers could be expelled from the community. Other means of bringing group sanctions to bear against deviants were not needed, and in any case could not have been implemented as Bushmen society lacked the institutional framework to put them into effect. Hence fines, imprisonment and executions were unknown.

These, in outline, were the probable basics of Bushman economic, social and political organisation before their way of life was transformed or destroyed by the advent of pastoral and farming societies.

The food-producing revolution: the Khoi pastoralists

The first people to challenge the age-old hunter-gatherer way of life in the western and southern parts of the sub-continent were pastoralists who can reasonably be regarded as ancestral to the historical 'Hottentots', or Khoi. It was once thought that the Khoi represented a distinct physical type, but physical anthropologists now see them as descendants of Khoisanoid hunter-gatherers like the Bushmen who had made the transition to a stock-keeping way of life.[5] Whether they were indigenes who had come to learn the techniques of animal husbandry in southern Africa from 'Iron Age'

stock-keepers, or whether they were originally immigrants from further north, is still a matter of debate, though scientific opinion is currently inclining to the former view.[6] When they acquired domestic animals is also not completely clear, although it is unlikely to have been much before about 2000 years ago, when, on present information, cattle and sheep first began to make their appearance in sub-equatorial Africa.[7]

Whatever the origins of their way of life, Khoi herders seem to have been established in southern Africa by the beginning of the Christian era, if not before. The earliest finds of pottery so far made at archaeological sites on the southern and western Cape coasts have been dated by the radiocarbon method to this period,[8] and although it is not always certain that the introduction of pottery was synchronous with the advent of pastoralism in any given area, the art of pot-making is normally associated by archaeologists with food-producing rather than hunting and gathering cultures. The Khoi were fairly certainly the only food-producers to inhabit the southern Cape before the coming of European settlers, and the recent discovery at other coastal sites of sheep remains dated to the end of the BC and beginning of the AD era serves to confirm the antiquity of their residence in this region.[9] By the time Portuguese voyagers and shipwreck survivors began producing the first written descriptions of southern Africa's coastal areas in the late fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries, the areas occupied by the Khoi extended from Swakopmund in present-day South-West Africa/Namibia along the coast into the Transkei, and there is some evidence that they may once have inhabited parts of Natal. In historical times they also lived along the Orange river and its tributaries, and the fact that hunter-gatherer peoples speaking languages closely related to 'Hottentot' still live in parts of Botswana may be an indication that the Khoi were once widespread over the western regions of the interior.[10]

The way of life that these herders brought to the regions which they occupied was, in terms of hunter-gatherer life, revolutionary.[11] Superficially their patterns of living had much in common, for the Khoi also hunted and gathered, and had to shift camp periodically to find fresh grazing for their sheep and cattle. Their local groupings also fragmented and coalesced according to seasonal fluctuations in the supply of food, although the milk products which they obtained from their animals provided them with a subsistence base which allowed them to live in communities of up to several hundred, larger than those of the Bushmen. But it would be misunderstanding the nature of herder society to see it simply as hunter-gatherer society with domestic animals added, for dependence on livestock imposed on the Khoi patterns of behaviour that

were essentially different from those found in Bushman society.

Among the Bushmen, human relationships were centred round the need for all individuals to have year-round access to widely scattered natural food resources. Among the Khoi pastoralists, whose staple foods were derived from the milk of their cows, relationships were centred round the need to maintain milk production at a level which could provide all members of society with at least a minimum share. Individuals certainly seem to have spent much time in foraging food from the land, but their crucial investment of labour was rather in tending their herds — that is, ensuring that their cattle always had adequate grazing and water available; protecting them from predators, whether animal or human; and regularly milking their cows.

To manage production of milk in the long term, Khoi society needed something more than the informal leadership structures found among the Bushmen. The husbandry of livestock was too delicate a business to be left entirely to individual whims and fancies: it was essential for society to have some generally accepted means of regulating access to grazing and water, and of concerting the labour required for milking, for day-to-day herding activities, and for protection of livestock. The necessary authority was vested in recognized chiefs and councils, whose powers, though usually very limited in scope, were based in the last resort on the use of physical force, to the point, in certain circumstances, of their being able to enforce executions. The contrast with Bushman culture could hardly be more marked.

This embryonic system of institutionalized government also served to maintain the rudiments of a hierarchical social organisation based on ownership of property in the form of livestock. Among the Bushmen, whose mobile pattern of living made it impossible for any individual to accumulate more goods than he could himself carry, society was by and large egalitarian, with an individual's status depending mainly on personality and skills in foraging. Khoi society, on the other hand, exhibited elements of stratification, with an individual's status determined largely by the amount of wealth he controlled. To maintain the stability of this system, some recognized means was needed of defining individual rights over livestock and of adjudicating disputes. Here again the role of chiefs and councils was crucial.

In short, Khoi society was characterized by dependence on a pastoral economy, government through a system of institutionalized authority, and the maintenance of a social hierarchy based on the private accumulation of wealth. In its ordering of human relationships it was fundamentally different from Bushman society, and much closer to that of the Bantu-speaking farmers whose ancestors,

at much the same time as the ancestors of the Khoi were establishing themselves in the west, were settling in the eastern parts of the sub-continent.

The food-producing revolution: the Bantu-speaking farmers

The term 'Bantu' is often used in South Africa to denote a particular physical type, but anthropologists do not recognize the existence of a Bantu 'race' distinguishable from other races by its own particular characteristics. They classify the dark-skinned African peoples of southern Africa as Negroid in type.[12] 'Bantu' (or more accurately 'Ntu') is a linguistic term that refers to a family of some 300—400 closely related languages spoken in the area extending from Cameroun and Uganda to the Cape. A recent classification recognizes eight sub-groups within this family, with Zulu-Xhosa, Sotho-Tswana, Shona, Venda, Tsonga and Chopi together forming the South-Eastern Bantu sub-group.[13]

From linguistic evidence a number of inferences as to the origins of the Bantu-speaking peoples can be made. Though scholars argue as to the exact relationship between the Bantu languages and those of West Africa, there is some consensus that all the former are descended from one parent language whose origins lie somewhere in the present-day Cameroun-Nigeria-Chad region.[14] From here, it is thought, some groups speaking early forms of Bantu moved east along the northern fringes of the Zaïre rain forests to the Great Lakes area of East Africa, while others slowly spread through the forests and eventually into the savannah regions of central Africa. From east and central Africa offshoot communities carried Bantu languages into southern Africa. The fact that these languages, though spoken over a very wide area, still show close affinities to one another, is taken as evidence that their radiation into sub-equatorial Africa took place comparatively rapidly.[15]

An indication of when and how this process of expansion might have taken place is provided by archaeological evidence.[16] The initial impetus probably came when, in about the fourth millennium BC, hunting and gathering communities living on the northern margins of the rain forest began to turn to cultivation of suitable root crops as a means of subsistence, and thus to provide the basis for an increase in local population. The circumstances in which this shift to agriculture took place are not clear, although the view is gaining ground that it represents the culmination of a long process of local cultural adaptation in which intensified gathering of particular plant species led to their eventual domestication. In any event, by about 3 000 BC population density seems to have built up to the point where communities practising a simple vegeculture

were beginning to colonize the rain forests to the south. Over the next two or three thousand years, farming peoples who cultivated yams and other plants suited to the forest environment spread slowly through the Zaïre basin until, probably towards the end of the first millennium BC, some groups reached the fringes of the central and east African savannah. In east Africa it has been suggested, some of them would have acquired domestic animals and cereals suitable for cultivation in the savannah from the 'Afro-Mediterranean' farmers who seem to have been in occupation of the east African Rift Valley by perhaps the beginning of the third millennium BC.[17] At much the same time, knowledge of iron-smelting was spreading for the first time into sub-equatorial Africa, either from West Africa, where iron-working was known in parts of present-day Nigeria by the fifth century BC, or from north-east Africa where an iron technology was well-established in the northern Sudan by the sixth century BC.[18]

Knowledge of cereal cultivation, animal husbandry, and metal-working, it is argued, provided the communities possessing these cultural features with the subsistence base and technology that allowed the population to build up and produce offshoot groups which fanned out to settle among the indigenous hunter-gatherer peoples in an area extending from Uganda and Kenya through central Africa into the Transvaal, Natal and the Eastern Cape.[19] The discontinuity between the 'Iron Age' cultures which they brought with them and the later Stone Age cultures of the hunter-gatherers, as revealed in archaeological excavations throughout this region, indicates that the former were not evolved spontaneously in sub-equatorial Africa, but were, in the first instance, imported from outside. The basic similarities between the various regional expressions of Early Iron Age culture is taken as evidence for their common origin, while radiocarbon dating shows that they were well established over the whole area within the first few centuries AD.[20] South of the Limpopo the earliest Iron Age datings so far published are ad 270±55 and 330±50 for the Silver Leaves site in the north-eastern Transvaal, 330±45 for Klein Afrika in the Soutpansberg, 400±30, 400±60 and 415±30 for Castle Cavern in Swaziland, 460±50 for Broederstroom west of Pretoria, and 490±50 for a site near Lydenburg.[21]

By the first half of the first millennium AD, then, it seems that farming communities were well established between the Limpopo and Vaal rivers. Very little Iron Age research has yet been done in Natal or the Eastern Cape, but dates of c.300 from St. Lucia, 630±40 from Ndumu in Tongaland, and 800±45 and 850±50 from Ntshekane near Muden indicate that areas east of the Drakensberg were being settled well before the end of the first millennium.[22]

The colder, bleaker plains of the southern highveld do not seem to have been occupied until later, but by the middle of the second millennium farming people were living along the river valleys of the northern Orange Free State, and in the Caledon Valley as far south as about present-day Ladybrand.[23]

The first direct evidence for the presence of Bantu-speaking peoples in southern Africa comes from written accounts produced by Portuguese survivors of ships wrecked on the south-eastern coasts in the second half of the sixteenth century. From their evidence it is clear that the peoples living on the Transkei coast at this time spoke what would today be called Xhosa, and by the end of the seventeenth century the main groups had been indentified by the names which they retain today. Oral traditions collected among these peoples in the nineteenth century indicate that their forebears had been living in much the same area for a period of many centuries.[24]

While not all Iron Age sites are necesarily associated with peoples who spoke Bantu languages, the close similarities between the material culture of even Early Iron Age communities and that of the historical Bantu-speaking peoples makes some sort of association between the spread of Iron Age culture and the expansion of the Bantu-speaking peoples inescapable. Archaeological excavation shows that over much of sub-equatorial Africa Early Iron Age peoples kept cattle and sheep or goats, practised a simple hoe cultivation, mined and worked metal, made pottery, lived in settled village communities and traded with one another on a small scale, in much the same way as peoples speaking Bantu languages were doing in the same regions 1 500 years later.[25]

It can be argued that if the forebears of the historical Bantu-speaking peoples had practised a type of culture essentially different from that of the Iron Age, archaeologists could expect to find widespread traces of it: so far they have not materialized. Alternatively, if the majority of Early Iron Age peoples had spoken non-Bantu languages, traces of these languages would presumably have survived to the present: again, they have yet to be discovered. The only languages other than Bantu spoken in southern Africa before the beginnng of recorded history seem to have been the 'Bushman-Hottentot' languages which, at least in the historical period, were not associated with people practising an Iron Age-type culture.[26] At a more positive level of argument, it should be pointed out that the great majority of people today living in sub-equatorial Africa exhibit predominantly Negroid physical characteristics, as do such skeletal remains as have been found in Early Iron Age sites. By contrast, in later Stone Age times the population seems to have been predominantly Khoisanoid in type, with no Negroid influence visible. The

most likely hypothesis is that the Iron Age peoples who were spreading into sub-equatorial Africa some 2 000 years ago were ancestral to the bulk of the present-day population.

This conclusion stands in sharp contrast to the common conception that southern Africa's Bantu-speaking peoples are comparatively recent arrivals, with the historically known 'tribes' having migrated in waves across the Limpopo from a point of origin often placed in the great lakes region of East Africa.[27] The picture suggested by the archaeological and linguistic evidence is rather one of a slow local build-up of population from early in the first millennium, with the intrusive farmers gradually increasing in numbers, interbreeding with the indigenous hunter-gatherers, and through time differentiating into geographically, linguistically and culturally distinct communities.[28] In the process it was the Bantu languages and Negroid physical type of the intruders that became dominant, though both were strongly influenced by contact with the Bushmen and, in some cases, the Khoi. The click consonants and some of the vocabulary of Zulu-Xhosa and southern Sotho are thought to be derived from the 'Bushmen' and 'Hottentot' languages,[29] while recent genetic studies have revealed that the present-day Negroid population of southern Africa exhibits a high proportion of distinctive Khoisanoid features.[30] This picture is not contradicted by the evidence which seems to be emerging from archaeological research for the occurrence of a series of local population movements over much of southern Africa at the end of the first and beginning of the second millennium.[31] No doubt such shifts would have added new components to the established populations, and would have given rise to new cultural and linguistic traditions, but on present evidence there is no reason to suppose that the societies which were evolving in southern Africa from early in the first millennium were not, indirectly at least, ancestral to the Bantu-speaking societies known to history. This is not to argue that there are direct physical, cultural, and linguistic continuities between specific Early Iron Age communities and the particular ethnic groupings of today, but merely to emphasise the point that the latter are the product of historical processes which have been at work in southern Africa for some 2 000 years. The existence of the historically identifiable Bantu-speaking communities of southern Africa cannot be positively confirmed before the beginnings of the period covered by their oral traditions.[32]

Another common misconception about the earliest farming peoples in southern Africa is that they spread out and settled over the land more or less at random. Whether as cultivators or as stock-keepers they would have been highly selective in the areas they colonized, with their preferred environments being warm,

well-watered regions that provided year-round grazing for their stock, sufficient land suitable for hoe cultivation, and areas for hunting and gathering. The relative absence of human and animal diseases, the availability of wood, and perhaps the presence of workable pockets of metal ores would also have been important factors in their choice of habitation areas. Sites favourable for settlement would have been comparatively rare,[33] and would presumably have been the first to be occupied. This probably helps to explain the comparatively rapid spread of Early Iron Age peoples over the area stretching from the great lakes of East Africa to the eastern Cape. The less favourable and marginal areas would have been settled only later as the carrying capacity of the initially preferred regions began to decrease as a result of their over-use.

So long as the farming population remained small, the hunter-gatherer peoples seem to have been able to maintain their own way of life in the more marginal areas, but as the farmers expanded into new territory, so the two cultures would have come more and more into conflict.[32] In the long run the farming communities had the upper hand. The fact that they were producers rather than foragers of food allowed them to develop a superiority in sheer numbers, and also provided them with a food surplus which would have enabled a proportion of the men to engage for extended periods in exclusively military activities, whereas the hunter-gatherers could not have abandoned regular foraging without serious disruption of their whole economic and social system. In addition, group cohesion and the authority exercised by leaders were much weaker among the hunter-gatherers, which would have made concerted action by a large body of men impossible for more than a very short time. Active resistance by hunter-gatherer groups to the encroachment of the farmers was, then, ultimately bound to fail. Withdrawal would have meant disruption of the delicate fabric of relationships between human and human, and humans and land, on which the foraging way of life was based. The only alternative was for the hunter-gatherers to become clients of the farmers, performing various services for them in return for food and protection. The existence of such relationships is widely attested in the historical period, and had probably been a feature of farmer-hunter contacts since the Early Iron Age, with the hunter-gatherers gradually being absorbed through intermarriage into the societies of their patrons.[35]

By the second millennium the farming population of southern Africa had increased to a degree which in certain areas provided the basis for the development of simple state systems. Though the factors involved in the growth of these centralized polities are complex and obscure, in the case of the first to emerge, Zimbabwe,

the main catalyst seems to have been the expansion of its external trade. From the end of the first millennium a flourishing if indirect commerce was growing up between the chiefdoms of the interior in the Zambezi-Limpopo region and the rising Muslim towns of the East African coast, with African gold and ivory being exchanged for exotic cloth, beads, and ceramics. By 1100 or so the Zimbabwe chiefdom was beginning to dominate its neighbours, and at the height of its power, between about 1350 and 1450, it supremacy was recognized over wide areas of present-day Rhodesia and Mozambique. After the decline of Zimbabwe in the second half of the fifteenth century, much of its power was inherited by an offshoot state, the Rozvi kingdom, which survived in western Rhodesia until the nineteenth century.[36]

South of the Limpopo, an as yet little understood interplay of environmental, economic, and demographic factors seems to have underlain the processes of agglomeration that were under way by the late eighteenth century in the eastern Transvaal and in the Phongolo-Thukela region of the eastern littoral.[37] In the latter area a struggle for supremacy about 1818–19 between Zwide of the Ndwandwe and Shaka of the Zulu touched off a period of war and social upheaval which affected most of south-eastern Africa, and in the 1820s and 1830s gave rise to the kingdoms of the Zulu, the Swazi, the Ndebele, and the southern Sotho.[38] These budding states were still in the process of consolidating themselves when, in the late 1830s, European-descended groups from south of the Orange began pushing their way into the interior, subjugating the Bantu-speaking peoples, settling among them, and forcing them into a new way of life.

Conclusion

The sudden irruption of the whites into the interior of southern Africa in what has become known as 'the Great Trek' has often been regarded as the central event of the region's history, but set against a time perspective of 2000 years this event can be seen in a different light. The Trek was certainly of major significance in the formation of present-day southern African society, but the roots of this society should also be sought in the developments that were taking place during the Iron Age. From this point of view, the decisive transition in southern African history was not the establishment of white rule, but the change from a foraging to a farming way of life, with all that this entailed in human economic, social and political behaviour.

Two thousand years ago southern Africans made their living entirely by hunting and gathering, with trade, mining, and manufacturing playing virtually no part in their economy. Individuals were associated in small-scale, fluid, foraging groups that followed

a mobile pattern of existence. Members of these were all of more or less equal status, and social cohesion was maintained informally, with very little use of coercive authority. Then, in the course of a cultural revolution begun by the coming of the first Iron Age peoples, a new way of life gradually came to supersede the old over most of the sub-continent. By the beginning of the historical era most of the inhabitants had come to be involved in a farming economy. Their main activities thus centred round stock-keeping and agriculture, but mining and manufacturing, even if on a very small scale, were widespread, and trade links over long distances were well established. The population was settled in villages varying in size from a few dozen to several thousand individuals, whose collective affairs were managed by recognized chiefs and councils.

The point has too seldom been made that in many ways the culture of the historical Bantu-speaking peoples was closer to that of the whites who came to dominate them than to that of the Bushman hunter-gatherers. Like the whites, but unlike the Bushmen, they had been conditioned by centuries of cultural development for life in communities based on farming.[39] When, from the late nineteenth century onward, their new masters proceeded to force them to participate in creating an industrial economy, they were able to adapt successfully, even if reluctantly, to the roles allocated to them. Today, in spite of 300 years of white expansion the population of southern Africa is still predominantly African in origin and cultural affiliation. If, when the Europeans first set foot in the sub-continent, they had found it occupied exclusively by hunting and gathering peoples, southern African society today would arguably be very different. As in North America and Australia, the population would be mostly of European descent and living in urban conglomerates, with the remnants of the indigenous peoples constituting a small and insignificant minority. But unlike the Bushman hunter-gatherers, or for that matter the Khoi pastoralists, the larger-scale, more cohesive communities of the Bantu-speaking farmers were well able to resist destruction at the hands of the whites. Though defeated in war, their societies were resilient enough to win a measure of recognition from the whites, and have since proved adaptable enough to absorb many elements of western culture into their own. In the second half of the twentieth century the Bantu-speaking peoples have been able, from a position of growing strength, to begin renegotiating the terms of conquest originally imposed on them.

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NOTES

1. Brief surveys of the 'Stone Age' history of southern Africa are given in J. D. Clark, 'Africa in prehistory: peripheral or paramount?', *Man* (NS), 10 (1975), 175–98; and R. G. Klein, 'The ecology of early man in southern Africa', *Science*, 197 (1977), 115–26. See also J. D. Clark, *The Prehistory of Africa* (London, 1970), chs. 2–4. Dating of hominid fossil deposits in southern Africa is discussed in P. V. Tobias, 'Recent studies on Sterkfontein and Makapansgat and their bearing on hominid phylogeny in Africa', in *Progress in Later Cenozoic Studies in South Africa*, S.A. Archaeological Society, Goodwin Series No. 2 (1974), 5–11.
2. In the field of archaeology, the only detailed survey of southern Africa's later Stone Age history to have appeared since the publication of J. D. Clark's now outdated *The Prehistory of Southern Africa* (Harmondsworth, 1959) is that in Sampson's much criticized *The Stone Age Archaeology of Southern Africa* (New York and London, 1974). Among the more important articles recently published on the later Stone Age are J. Deacon, 'Wilton: an assessment after fifty years', *S.A. Archaeological Bulletin* (henceforth SAAB), 27 (1972–73), 10–48; J. Deacon, 'Patterning in the radiocarbon dates for the Wilton/Smithfield complex in southern Africa', *SAAB*, 29 (1974), 3–18; R. G. Klein, 'Environment and subsistence of prehistoric man in the southern Cape province, South Africa', *World Archaeology*, 5 (1974), 249–84; H. J. Deacon, 'The Holocene and upper Pleistocene sequence in the southern Cape', *Annals S.A. Museum*, 71 (1976), 203–14. An important recent monograph is H. Deacon's *Where Hunters Gathered: a Study of the Holocene Stone Age People in the Eastern Cape*, (Cape Town, 1976). In the field of ethnography, I. Schapera's classic *The Khoisan Peoples of South Africa* (London, 1930) is still useful, but much of it has been supplanted by more recent research, the results of which are summarized in G. B. Silberbauer, 'The G/wi Bushmen', in M. G. Bicchieri, ed., *Hunters and Gatherers Today* (New York, 1972); R. B. Lee and I. DeVore, eds., *Kalahari Hunter-Gatherers* (Cambridge, Mass., and London, 1976); and L. Marshall, *The !Kung of Nyae Nyae* (Cambridge, Mass. 1976). Theoretical analyses of the hunter-gatherer mode of existence are to be found in E. R. Service, *The Hunters* (Englewood Cliffs, 1966); C. Meillassoux, 'On the mode of production of the hunting band', in P. Alexandre, ed., *French Perspectives in African Studies* (London, 1973); M. Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics* (London, 1974), ch. 1; M. A. Jochim, *Hunter-Gatherer Subsistence and Settlement* (New York, 1976); J. Suckling, 'A naive model of a Stone Age economy', *Current Anthropology*, 17 (1976), 105–115; J. Keenan, 'The concept of the mode of production in hunter-gatherer societies', *African Studies*, 36 (1977), 57–69.
3. See R. B. Lee, 'What hunters do for a living', in R. B. Lee and I. DeVore, eds. *Man the Hunter* (Chigago, 1968); R. B. Lee, '!Kung Bushman subsistence: an input-output analysis', in D. Damas, ed., *Ecological Essays*, National Museums of Canada Bulletin No. 230 (Ottawa, 1969).
4. See the chapters in Part II of Lee and DeVore, eds., *Man the Hunter*.
5. Inskeep, 'The archaeological background', in M. Wilson and L. Thompson, eds., *The Oxford History of South Africa, Vol. I* (Oxford, 1969), 23–4.
6. The most comprehensive discussion of the evidence is in R. H. Elphick, *Kraal and Castle: Khoikhoi and the Founding of White South Africa* (New Haven and London, 1977), ch. 1. See also E. O. J. Westphal, 'The linguistic prehistory of southern Africa', *Africa*, 33 (1963), 237–65; E. O. J. Westphal, 'The click languages of southern and eastern Africa', in T. A. Sebeok, ed., *Current Trends in Linguistics*, vol. 7 (The Hague and Paris, 1971).
7. Clark, *Prehistory of Africa*, ch. 6.

8. G. Avery, 'Discussions on the age and use of tidal fish-traps (visvywers), *SAAB*, 30 (1975), 112.
9. Ibid.
10. On the geographical distribution of the Khoi see M. Wilson, 'The hunters and herders', *Oxford History of S.A.*, vol. 1, 40; G. Harinck, 'Interaction between Xhosa and Khoi', in L. M. Thompson, ed., *African Societies in Southern Africa* (London, 1969), ch. 7; P. Vinnicombe, review of J. and I. Rudner, *The Hunter and His Art*, in *SAAB*, 26 (1971), 182.
11. The fact that Schapera's *Khoisan Peoples*, first published in 1930, still provides the most useful survey of Khoi culture indicates the dearth of publications on the subject. Information on Khoi life in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries can be gleaned from R. Raven-Hart, ed., *Before Van Riebeeck* (Cape Town, 1967), and *Cape Good Hope 1652–1702*, vols. 1 and 2 (Cape Town, 1971). See also M. Wilson, 'The hunters and herders', *Oxford History of S.A.*, vol. 1, 55–62.
12. P. V. Tobias, 'The biological invalidity of the term "Bantu",' *S.A. Jnl. Science*, 67 (1971), 517–20; P. V. Tobias, 'The biology of the Southern African Negro', in W. D. Hammond-Tooke, ed., *The Bantu-speaking Peoples of Southern Africa* (London and Boston, 1974), ch. 1; T. Jenkins and P. V. Tobias, 'Nomenclature of population groups in southern Africa', *African Studies*, 36 (1977), 49–55.
13. A. T. Cope, 'A consolidated classification of the Bantu languages', *African Studies*, 30 (1971) 213–36.
14. P. Schachter, 'The present state of African linguistics', in Sebeok, ed., *Current Trends in Linguistics*, vol. 7; J. H. Greenberg, 'Linguistic evidence regarding Bantu origins', *Jnl. Af. History* (1972), 189–216; D. Dalby, 'The prehistorical implications of Guthrie's comparative Bantu', parts I and II, *Jnl. Af. History*, 16 (1975), 481–501, and *Jnl. Af. History*, 17 (1976), 1–27.
15. See Dalby's articles as in note 14; also S. Lwanga-Lunyiigo, 'The Bantu problem reconsidered', *Current Anthropology*, 17 (1976), 282–6; D. W. Phillipson, 'Archaeology and Bantu linguistics', *World Archaeology*, 8 (1976), 65–82; D. W. Phillipson, 'The spread of the Bantu language', *Scientific American* (April 1977), 106–14.
16. Summarized in Clark, *Prehistory of Africa*, 194–206; R. Oliver and B. M. Fagan, *Africa in the Iron Age* (Cambridge, 1975), chs. 2, 3, 7, 9. See also R. C. Soper, 'A general view of the Early Iron Age of the southern half of Africa', *Azania*, 6 (1971), 5–37; T. N. Huffman, 'The Early Iron Age and the spread of the Bantu', *SAAB*, 25 (1970), 3–21; D. W. Phillipson, 'The chronology of the Iron Age in Bantu Africa', *Jnl. Af. History*, 16 (1975), 321–42.
17. Clark, *Prehistory of Africa*, 206–10; T. Maggs, 'Some recent radiocarbon dates from eastern and southern Africa', *Jnl. Af. History*, 18 (1977), 170.
18. For a region-by-region discussion of the appearance of metal-working in Africa see P. L. Shinnie, ed., *The African Iron Age* (Oxford, 1971).
19. See the reference in note 16 above; also R. J. Mason et al., 'Early Iron Age settlement of southern Africa', *S.A. Jnl. Science*, 69 (1973), 324–6; R. J. Mason, 'Background to the Transvaal Iron Age', *Jnl. S.A. Institute Mining & Metallurgy* (January 1974), 211–16; T. M. O'C. Maggs and M. A. Michael, 'Ntshekane: an Early Iron Age site in the Tugela Basin, Natal', *Annals Natal Museum*, 22(3) (1976), 705–40.
20. Annotated lists of radiocarbon age-determinations for Africa are published from time to time in the *Journal of African History*. To date ten such lists relevant to southern African history have appeared since the first in 1961. The length of radiocarbon years varies slightly from that of the conventional calendar year, hence uncorrected radiocarbon dates are expressed in years bc or ad rather than BC or AD.
21. See Mason's two articles as in note 19 above; also M. Klapwijk, 'A preliminary report on pottery from the north-eastern Transvaal, South Africa', *SAAB*, 29

(1974), 19–23; H. P. Prinsloo, 'Early Iron Age site at Klein Afrika', *S.A. Jnl. Science*, 70 (1974), 271–3.

22. A. Swift, 'End of a myth', *Sunday Tribune*, 10 July 1977; T. P. Dutton 'Iron smelting furnace in the Ndumu game reserve', *Lammergeyer*, 12 (1970); Maggs and Michael, 'Ntshekane', 709, 711.
23. The pre-European history of the southern highveld is treated in detail in T. M. O'C. Maggs, *Iron Age Communitites of the Southern Highveld* (Pietermaritzburg, 1976).
24. The evidence has been summarized in M. Wilson, 'The early history of the Transkei and Ciskei', *African Studies*, 18 (1959), 167–79; and M. Wilson, 'The Nguni people', in *Oxford History of S.A.*, vol. 1, 78–95.
25. 'Static' descriptions of the cultures of the historical Bantu-speaking peoples are given in Hammond-Tooke, ed., *Bantu-speaking People*. See also Wilson's two chapters on the subject in *Oxford History of S.A.*, vol. 1.
26. C. Ehret has argued in a number of articles that people speaking Central Sudanic languages were widespread in east and central Africa at the beginning of the Iron Age: see for instance his 'Patterns of Bantu and Central Sudanic settlement in Central and Southern Africa', *Transafrican Jnl. History*, 3 (1973), 1–27. His ideas have not become generally accepted by prehistorians.
27. This idea is deeply entrenched in text books on South African history. See for example C. F. J. Muller, ed., *Five Hundred Years: a History of South Africa* (Pretoria and Cape Town, 1969), 431; C. de K. Fowler and G. J. J. Smit, *Senior History* (Cape Town, 1973 ed.), 396; D. Wilson, *A History of South and Central Africa* (London, 1975), 43.
28. In the light of the recently produced archaeological evidence for the relatively early colonization of southern Africa by farming peoples, historians are also taking a fresh look at the oral traditions on which the conventional 'migration' theories are largely based. See the points made by M. Legassick, 'The Sotho-Tswana peoples before 1800', in Thompson, ed., *African Societies*, 92–3, 119–20; S. Marks, 'The traditions of the Natal "Nguni": a second look at the work of A. T. Bryant', also in Thompson, 131; S. Marks and R. Gray, 'Southern Africa and Madagascar', in R. Gray, ed., *The Cambridge History of Africa*, vol. 4 (Cambridge, 1975), 429–30; Wilson, 'The Nguni people', in *Oxford History of S.A.*, vol. 1, 87.
29. Westphal, 'The linguistic prehistory of southern Africa', *Africa, 33 (1963), 237–65.*
30. Tobias, 'The biology of the Southern African Negro', in Hammond-Tooke, ed., *Bantu-speaking Peoples*, ch. 1.
31. See Oliver and Fagan, *Africa in the Iron Age*, pp. 100–4; T. N. Huffman, 'Excavations at Leopard's Kopje main kraal: a preliminary report', *SAAB*, 26 (1971), 85–9; D. N. Beach, 'Ndebele raiders and Shona power', *Jnl. Af. History*, 15 (1974), 633–4; Phillipson, 'Chronology of the Iron Age', 329–30.
32. On this point Maggs has recently written, '. . . the cultural and even economic changes associated with the transition from Early to later Iron Age in the Transvaal and Natal are very marked. It therefore seems probable that modern linguistic patterns have their origins in the later Iron Age and reflect little or nothing from the Early Iron Age' (T. Maggs, 'Some recent radiocarbon dates', 183).
33. See for instance B. M. Fagan, 'The Iron Age Peoples of Zambia and Malawi', in W. W. Bishop and J. D. Clark, eds., *Background to Evolution in Africa* (Chicago and London, 1967), 661–3.
34. For a review of the archaeological evidence on these cultural contacts see S. F. Miller, 'Contacts between the later Stone Age and the Early Iron Age in southern central Africa', *Azania*, 4 (1969), 81–90.
35. See Wilson, 'The hunters and herders', *Oxford History of S.A.*, vol. 1, 63–73;

J. B. Wright, *Bushman Raiders of the Drakensberg 1840–1870*, Pietermaritzburg, 1971, chs. 6, 8; S. Marks, 'Khoisan resistance to the Dutch in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries', *Jnl. Af. History*, 13 (1972), 55–80; G. B. Silberbauer and A. J. Kuper, 'Kgalagari masters and Bushman serfs: some observations', *African Studies*, 25 (1966), 169–79.

36. There is a mass of literature on the rise and decline of the Zimbabwe complex. Among the more recent scientific publications are T. N. Huffman, 'The rise and fall of Zimbabwe', *Jnl. Af. History*, 13 (1972); P. S. Garlake, *Great Zimbabwe* (London, 1973); D. N. Beach, 'The historiography of the people of Zimbabwe in the 1960s', *Rhodesian History*, 4 (1973).
37. On the rise of the Pedi state of the eastern Transvaal see Legassick, 'The Sotho-Tswana peoples', in Thompson, ed., *African Societies*, ch. 5. On the rise of the Zulu kingdom see J. D. Omer-Cooper, *The Zulu Aftermath* (London, 1966), ch. 2; M. Gluckman, 'The rise of a Zulu empire', *Scientific American*, 202(4) (1960), 157–68; M. Gluckman, 'The individual in a social framework: the rise of King Shaka of Zululand', *Jnl. Af. Studies*, 1 (1974), 113–44. Environmental factors are discussed in J. B. M. Daniel, 'A geographical study of pre-Shakan Zululand', *S.A. Geog. Jnl.*, 55 (1973), 23–31; M. Hall, 'Dendroclimatology, rainfall and human adaption in the later Iron Age of Natal and Zululand', *Annals Natal Museum*, 22(3) (1976), 693–703.
38. Omer-Cooper, *Zulu Aftermath*, chs. 2, 3, 6–8; L. M. Thompson, 'Co-operation and conflict: the Zulu kingdom and Natal', and 'Co-operation and conflict: the high veld', in *Oxford History of S.A.*, vol. 1, 336–50, 391–405.
39. The implications of this point are discussed in R. J. Mason, 'The origin of South African society', *S.A. Jnl. Science*, 61 (1965), 255–67.

THE INEVITABLE IN 'THE MILL ON THE FLOSS'

by T. OLIVIER

> '. . . that the superb conclusion of *The Mill on the Floss* is not art, but mere morbid reproduction of terrible misery . . . [is] utterly inadmissible . . . What man . . . will deny the delight experienced in realising the pitiless, inveterate league of circumstances against a Cordelia, an Ophelia . . . or a Maggie Tulliver?'
> (H. Buxton Forman, *Samuel Richardson as Artist and Moralist,* Fortnightly Review, October 1869)

Even *Middlemarch* was not, for Henry James, an 'organised, moulded, balanced composition';[1] but perhaps the young James was already thinking in terms of his own meticulous modes of construction, so it is in the nature of a fitting irony that both he and the subject of his comment should have qualified for inclusion in the 'Great' tradition. Critical judgement has, one hopes, grown beyond the narrowness of exclusive definitions and requirements or perhaps the limits we impose on terms such as 'organization' and 'balance' are wider. In any event, we can now speak quite as comfortably of organization and balance in *Middlemarch* as we can in *The Portrait of a Lady.*

But the case of *The Mill on the Floss* is perhaps less satisfactorily resolved. James's *Atlantic Monthly* review of October 1866 seems to have defined a dissatisfaction that still besets modern readers, the view that the conclusion is defective in that it is inconsistent with the rest of the novel, 'out of key', to use Joan Bennett's phrase. James was quite specific in his complaint:

> What I object to is its relation to the preceding part of the story. The story is told as if it were destined to have, if not a strictly happy termination, at least one within ordinary probabilities. As it stands, the dénouement shocks the reader most painfully. Nothing has prepared him for it; the story does not move towards it; it casts no shadow before it.[2]

Yet, I would suggest, there is a complex of responses within the apparent precision of his objection. It is apparently a purely structural matter: the conclusion is not prepared for; George Eliot is defying Aristotle. And yet part of the reaction here is that 'the dénouement shocks the reader most *painfully*'. James is also asking why we must be disappointed, why the ending should be so unhappy when it seemed so otherwise destined; and the phrase 'within ordinary probabilities' which attempts to keep the point structural, is given the lie twice in the same paragraph by

James's insistence on the naturalness and legitimacy of the flood. The statement is largely negative, with characteristic Jamesian obliquity, but James is surely under the spell that Maggie has cast over many subsequent critics: 'Poor erratic Maggie is worth a hundred of her positive brother . . . I would in this particular case have infinitely preferred that Maggie should have been left to her own devices'. The inconsistency is more fundamental and complex, arising out of the apparent change in Maggie; and James clearly found the change interesting, sufficiently so to wish that the arbitrariness of the flood had not intervened in the development of the relationship between her and Stephen Guest; nor is this surprising in the writer who could marry Isabel Archer to Gilbert Osmond. Hence, perhaps, James's belief that the end is unprepared: he has just begun to find Maggie most interesting when the matter is cut off, and James grumbles:

> Did such a dénouement lie within the author's intentions from the first, or was it a tardy expedient for the solution of Maggie's difficulties?[3]

James's criticism is thus very short-sighted in its own way, yet a sophisticated one, rather different from what was at the time the stock view, a simplified dissatisfaction amounting to a straightforward disbelief that Maggie, so fine and good and discerning, should fall for a cad like Stephen Guest. Swinburne is perhaps the most blunt exponent of this view:

> . . . who can forget the horror at inward collapse, the sickness of spiritual reaction, the reluctant incredulous rage of disenchantment and disgust . . . [of] the thrice unhappy third part?[4]

For him it is the 'last word of realism', the 'last abyss of cynicism' that 'a woman of Maggie Tulliver's kind can be moved to any sense but that of bitter disgust and sickening disdain by a thing — I will not write, a man — of Stephen Guest's. This is really quite opposite to James's response, though it too points to a structural failing on George Eliot's part, a want of justification for this 'hideous transformation by which Maggie is debased'; this is 'the patent flaw' in George Eliot's work, 'no rent or splash on the raiment . . . but cancer in the very bosom, a gangrene in the very flesh'. The tone of this is unmistakably hysterical, a bitter personal reaction, and the emphasis is very different, but it is like James's response in that it expresses disappointment in Maggie Tulliver — or rather in the presentment of Maggie. Her creator is seen to have changed face, to have broken the faith of her undertaking by giving the reader one kind of heroine and then taking her away incomplete or debased.

Swinburne's view is, of course, quite unhealthy in its overstate-

ment, yet it reflects an attitude that must have been fairly common, since James found it necessary to say that he showed courage merely in asking whether it was so unlikely that Maggie might return to Stephen. Leslie Stephen felt that 'the unlucky affair . . . is simply indefensible', though it might be 'true to nature'.[5] The sublimation of the view into a sense of inadequacy in George Eliot to draw heroes adequate to the vision of her heroines, is little more than a side-stepping of the issue and a tacit acceptance of the wrongness of the apparent change in Maggie. For Leslie Stephen, she 'did not see what a poor creature she (had) really drawn'; for Virginia Woolf, this was ' the fumbling which shook her hand when she had to conceive a fit mate for a heroine';[6] and Dr Leavis sums up 'the position' of criticism on the novel:

> It is bad enough that the girl who is distinguished not only by beauty but by intelligence should be made to fall for a provincial dandy; the scandal or incredibility (runs the argument) becomes even worse when we add that she is addicted to Thomas à Kempis and has an exalted spiritual nature.[7]

As Leavis goes on to point out, 'the soulful side of Maggie, her hunger for ideal exaltations . . . is just what should make us say, on reflection, that her weakness for Stephen Guest is not so surprising after all'. This seems to pick up the thread of James's comment, 'was this after all so unlikely?' — the question he felt it brave to ask, and which implied what Leavis further states, that the 'soulful' side of Maggie is commonly accepted with 'a remarkable absence of criticism'.

Perhaps a hint of what the trouble is and always has been, is contained in Leslie Stephen's comment that any new lover for Maggie 'should have been endowed with some qualities likely to attract (her) higher nature', and that the engagement to Philip might at least have led to catastrophe 'which would not degrade poor Maggie to common clay'.[8] Herein, surely, lies a profound misreading of Maggie Tulliver? No matter how lovable she is, is it not patent in the text that Maggie is essentially — from beginning to end — 'common clay'? Have we not been too blinded by her 'higher nature' to see the constant fact of her all-too-human nature, fine and admirable, but unreal and full of dreams and — throughout — desperately in need of love of a tangible kind? *The Times* reviewer of 19th May 1860, Eneas Dallas, had his feet firmly on the ground of the text when he saw Maggie in a realistic perspective, as certainly to be more 'respected and loved' than her brother or the Dodsons, yet this in full awareness of her faults. These faults are seen as virtues by the contrast they form with 'the hard consistency' of Tom, and 'the Pharisaical rigidity' of the Dodsons; but in spite of Mr Dallas's warning against possible conclusions of

Bohemian grandness and his recognition that George Eliot did not go so far, the romantic strain in criticism has run wild and idealised Maggie, making her later actions seem imcomprehensible and out of character.

In spite of Leavis's suggestion of immaturity in the treatment of Maggie, the emotional engagement that precludes George Eliot's intelligent control of the novel, and although the moralistic element tends to get in the way of the humorous, we are, I think, presented from the beginning of the novel, in a fully conscious way, with a sense of inevitability about Maggie — indeed about all the Tullivers. The very setting of provincial narrowness has a conditioning grip on the novel that exercises a subtle and profound irony, working in close accord with the frequent vitalising touches of humour. Thus Mr Tulliver tells us a good deal about himself when he speaks to Maggie:

> The little un takes after my side, now; she's twice as 'cute as Tom. Too 'cute for a woman, I'm afraid . . . It's no mischief much while she's a little un, but an over 'cute woman's no better nor a long-tailed sheep — she'll fetch none the bigger price for that.[9]

But he is ironically far-sighted about Maggie too; she *is* her father's daughter, both in her independence of mind and action, and in the sad reality that she must come up against and which must eventually destroy her as it does Mr Tulliver. Provincialism conditions them, both in providing a context for rebellion and in limiting the range of their responses, and George Eliot is clear in her presentment of this. It is there in the father rebelling against restriction, desiring an 'eddication' for Tom 'as'll be a bread to him', but a desire also dictated by a need to get the better of 'these lawsuits, and arbitrations, and things'. And it is there in the mother, prised from the society she would far rather hang on to. Even her narrowness does not prevent there being a prophetic ring in her complaints about the unruly child:

> Where's the use o' my telling you to keep away from the water? You'll tumble in and be drownded some day, an' then you'll be sorry you didn't do as mother told you.[10]

It is partly through her eyes that George Eliot looks in describing Maggie as 'this small mistake of nature', with a humour that is at once aware of petty rigidities and of an ironic fitness to the awkwardness seen so often in Maggie.

This shaping grip is felt constantly: in the relentless way that Mr Tulliver pursues his fate, with the consequent sense of being weighed down which finds expression in his recurring phrase, 'this world's been too many for me'; in the way in which the feeling against Wakem is

pressed upon Tom, from simple antipathy for the son's physical deformity to a formally undertaken vow of revenge at the end of a chapter entitled — with clear ironic understatement — 'An Item added to the Family Register'; and most relevantly here, in the whole tendency of Maggie's affections which are constantly shaped — warped — by the pressingness of the circumstances that first surround, then crowd in on her.

Is it merely autobiographical that Maggie should be drawn from the start as a wilful child, rebellious, unruly? Or is it likely that a writer capable (albeit later) of dealing with the complexities of Dorothea Brooke, should present us with a Maggie so simple that any displeasing later development in her should be seen as a failure of vision on the writer's part? Is the failure not rather ours when we demand a consistency that is neither intended or realistic in the context of what is presented? The Maggie who thrusts her head into a basin of water to prevent her mother's attempts to curl her hair; who keeps a fetish doll as an outlet for vicarious vengeance; who grinds and beats the wooden head and finds (a consonant?) pleasure in the mill: 'the resolute din, the unresting motion of the great stones, giving her a dim delicious awe as at the presence of an uncontrollable force';[11] who impulsively hacks off her hair; who pushes Lucy into the mud, 'glad to spoil their happiness, glad to make everybody uncomfortable'; who runs away, significantly 'from her own shadow', to the Gypsies; the Maggie presented in these incidents is scarcely discordant with the girl who, under strong passionate urging, the uncontrollability of which is heavily stressed, is borne along by the 'stronger presence' of Stephen Guest.

To argue thus is, of course, to be very selective, yet the opposite view is surely held because of a selective view of Maggie the lovable, noble creature. Undoubtedly she is this; but she is also the other. George Eliot is quite specific, particularly in the early parts of the novel when we make our acquaintance with the heroine, an acquaintance which, no matter how modified, may not be undervalued or forgotten. One of the points that tends to be especially forgotten is George Eliot's plangently ironic comment on Maggie in the Gypsy camp:

> Maggie Tulliver, you perceive, was by no means that well-trained, well-informed young person that a small female of eight or nine necessarily is in these days . . . in travelling over her small mind you would have found the most unexpected ignorance as well as unexpected knowledge. She could have informed you that there was such a word as 'polygamy' . . . but she had no idea that Gypsies were not well supplied with

> groceries, and her thoughts generally were the oddest mixture of clear-eyed acumen and blind dreams.[12]

This is still only the child Maggie, before the catastrophe, before Philip Wakem; it is nevertheless the Maggie presented to us, and if we choose to base our judgement of her only on the noble, perceptive, idealising Maggie, that is our mistake and not George Eliot's limitation.

The point is surely clear that sympathetic, loving, and even clear-sighted as she is, Maggie's variance from her family and from St. Ogg's is *only* variance. She is as much conditioned by her background and the circumstances that impose upon her as are all the Tulliver. Stephen Guest is simply a part of these circumstances, and perhaps this is why he comes in almost casually near the end. Our attention is focused on Maggie, not on him. We know from the body of the novel how much she needs love, and the failure of Tom to respond to this need,[13] the extreme difficulty of dissociating Philip from a love based on sympathy, are surely the necessary — and adequate — causes for such an outside figure's being called on. He, like the Gypsies, is outside the suffocating world that Maggie has always known and tried to escape from; and yet, on closer knowledge, he too is unlike the dream. He is outside and yet, as Leavis points out, he is 'sufficiently "there" to give the drama a convincing force'. For Maggie he is 'there' as the Gypsies are 'there', but to turn to him as a refuge from her suffocating world is, finally, to come face to face with her own shadow, the inescapable limitations of her past involvements. Perhaps under such circumstances the flood is the only possible resolving force, and its symbolism does not need to be stressed.

Pinetown, Natal

NOTES

1. Galaxy 15 (March 1873), cited by G. S. Haight, *A Century of George Eliot Criticism*, 1965, University Paperbacks 1966, p 81.
2. Atlantic Monthly 18 (October 1866), Haight p 52.
3. Ibid.
4. 'A Note on Charlotte Brontë', Haight p 126.
5. Cornhill Magazine 43 (February 1881), Haight p 144.
6. T.L.S. 18 (20th November 1919), Haight p 188.
7. *The Great Tradition*. Chatto & Windus 1948, p 41
8. Op. cit. p 144.
9. *The Mill on the Floss*, ed. M. Berman, Signet Classics, New York 1965, p 17.
10. Ibid. p 18.
11. Ibid. p 35.
12. Ibid. p 123.

13. That this need's fulfilment in the closing lines is not the 'tardy expedient' referred to above, requires detailed demonstration; but I believe it is an ironic part of the pattern of inevitability I have tried to suggest in this essay, and therefore not inconsistent with what is presented in the novel. In any case, why should the line 'In their death they were not divided', be taken as inconsistent? Death has always been the great equaliser and resolver of differences. I think it is a remarkable instance of consistency — well 'within ordinary probablities' — that forces George Eliot to destroy the love that could not be sustained in life.

THE WAY OUT OF SOUTH AFRICA
NADINE GORDIMER'S 'THE LYING DAYS'

by KOLAWOLE OGUNGBESAN

Nadine Gordimer's first novel, *The Lying Days* (1953),[1] was a product of the resurgence of South African literature after the end of the Second World War. The resurgence began with Peter Abrahams' *Mine Boy* (1946) and Alan Paton's *Cry the Beloved Country* (1948) both of which have often been compared with *Uncle Tom's Cabin,* partly for stirring the conscience of the outside world over racialism but also for positing overtly sentimental answers, couched in terms of love and kindness, to social problems. But the development of South African literature has always been bedevilled by politics. In 1948 the Nationalist Party came to power and began to lay the cornerstones of what is now known as apartheid. The new mood among liberals in the country was signified in the very title of Alan Paton's second novel, *Too Late the Phalarope* (1952). *Cry the Beloved Country,* published barely four years earlier, had been subtitled, A Story of Comfort in Desolation.

The mood of *The Lying Days* is much akin to that of *Too Late.* Here, Nadine Gordimer deals at length with the problems which the change of government in 1948 posed for South African liberals; she examines through the life of her heroine, Helen Shaw, the direction in which South Africa began to move after the Nationalist victory. Helen is repeatedly confronted with the question, 'Where are you going?' Her search for an answer has ramifications for the whole of her society. A way out is proposed when Helen, in her continued rebellion against the claustral influence of racialism, opts for exile.

The Lying Days, according to Miss Gordimer, is essentially 'about the experience many young white South Africans have shared. They are born twice: the second time when, through experiences that differ with each individual, they emerge from the trappings of colour-consciousness that were as "natural" to them as the walls of home and school[2]. The growth of the realistic novel has shown an increasing tendency in fiction to move towards autobiography. To satisfy the increasing demands for social and pyschological details that are made upon him the novelist has had to delve into his own experience. The circumstances which make him an outsider focus his attention upon himself. He is his own hero, while other characters retire to the background. The background assumes a new significance for its influence on his own character. By using the background of her own development

Nadine Gordimer has written an autobiographical novel which is, indeed, more candid than other South African autobiographies. It is distinguished from them by its emphasis on the emotional and intellectual adventures of its protagonist. It is the story of a girl's self-discovery, mainly through love, her slow awakening to her own emotional needs and the increasing distaste she feels for her society.

The Lying Days is constructed around three crises of the heroine's youth. Part One, a brief account of Helen's childhood, traces her development up to her first unsuccessful attempt to break free from the rigid control of her parents. Part Two deals with her young womanhood away from the family and her first love, culminating in her break from her family when she succeeds in forcing them to agree that she should live in Johannesburg. This section is entitled The Sea. Part Three, entitled The City, is about Helen's life in Johannesburg, her emotional and intellectual maturity, and her attempts to fashion a way of life different from that offered by her parents. As her story unfolds Helen becomes less concerned with outside impressions, and concentrates more intensely on her own inner growth. Her friends figure mainly as doors through which she enters into new awakenings. Each epiphany — home, the sea, the city — leaves her lonlier than the last. Finally, she decides to go into exile.

At its profoundest level. *The Lying Days* deals with the basic human need to know oneself, the quest for identity. Twentieth-century literature has been pre-occupied with the theme of the self and the effort to know it. Although it has taken different forms, the quest for identity is the subject of such diverse novels as Butler's *The Way of All Flesh,* Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers,* and Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist As A Young Man.* In *The Lying Days,* Nadine Gordimer, like Lawrence and Joyce, and in spite of the wide difference in their social backgrounds, seeks to bring out the claustral sense of a young intelligence swaddled in convention, and the intensity of its first responses to aesthetic experience and life at large. The cloying role played by Catholicism in Joyce's Ireland is played by racism in South Africa. The pattern of the novel is a series of searches for emotional fulfilment, and subsequent disillusionment on Helen's part. The title of the book comes from Yeat's poem, 'The Coming of Wisdom with Time':

> Though leaves are many, the root is one;
> Through all the lying days of my youth
> I swayed my leaves and flowers in the sun;
> Now I may wither into the truth.

When the story opens, Helen, a child, is rebelling against her parents, who are going on a Saturday outing to play tennis with

friends. She refuses alternatives made to her by her mother, and will not even answer the latter's question: 'Where are you going?' (13). Among the familiarity of home she thinks of water; the family spends two weeks' holiday every year near the sea at Durban. But life on the Mine lacks that freedom: 'The sea could not be believed in for long, here. Could be smelled for a moment, a terrible whiff of longing evaporated with the deeper snatch of breath that tried to sieze it. Or remembered by the blood, which now and then felt itself stirred by a movement caused by something quite different, setting up reactions purely physically like those in response to the sea' (16). Refusing to answer a child who insistently asks, 'Where you go-ing?' Helen sets out, not knowing her destination. 'I liked the feeling of the space, empty about me, the unfamiliarity of being alone' (18).

So, from the beginning of the book Miss Gordimer strikes a note prevalent in modern fiction, about the dilemma of the modern man. In him the very sense of selfhood has been so far obscured that in setting out upon the quest for identity he can only have the vaguest intimation of what it is he is seeking. Like Charles Marlow in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness,* the mere fact that she finds herself searching is adequate assurance to Helen that her search has an object. And there is no way she can determine that she is looking in the right direction.

Helen, like most children, is obsessed with herself, and with her own emotions. Before setting out, she goes back into the house, to stare at herself in the mirror in the bedroom. 'After a long time, steady and unblinking, only the sound of my breath, the face was just a face like other people's faces met in the street. It looked at me a little longer' (15). She immediately slams the door and runs out of the house. But she cannot resist the temptation to contemplate herself further:

> I sat down on a stone that had a secret cold of its own and began to pull off the scab on my knee. I had been saving that scab for days, resisting the compelling urge just to put the edge of my nail beneath it, just to test it . . . Now it was a tough little seal of dried blood, holding but not deeply attached to the new skin beneath it. I did it very slowly, lifting it all round with my thumbnail and then pinching the skin between my forefinger and thumb so that the edge of the scab showed up free of the skin, a sharp ridge. There was the feeling of it, ready to slough off, unnecessary on my knee; almost an itch. Then I lifted it off quick and clean and there was no tweak of some spot not quite healed, but only the pleasure of the break with the thin tissue that had held it on. Holding the scab carefully, I looked at the healed place. The new pink shiny

> pale skin seemed stuck like a satiny petal on the old; I felt it tenderly. Then I looked at the scab, held on the ball of my thumb, felt its tough papery uselessness, and the final deadness that had come upon it the moment it was no longer on my leg. Putting it between my front teeth, I bit it in half and looked at the two pieces. Then I took them on the end of my tongue and bit them again and again until they disappeared in my mouth. (17).

To criticise Miss Gordimer for exhibiting here 'a sensibility which is narcissistic'[3] is to miss her artistic purpose. Incidents such as that above are subjugated to the overall pattern of Helen's emotional development. At this stage in her life Helen is too young to see her narcissism with true irony and objectivity. Indeed, she outgrows such perversity and self-consciousness, when she turns from contemplating herself to contemplate the world around her, when she relates herself to her background. There is, in this connection, an interesting piece of evidence about the way Nadine Gordimer saw her own childhood. Lional Abrahams, the well-known South African writer, has left this testimony:

> The other day Nadine and I chatted a good bit about the idea of being closed in, and about cocoons. Someone growing up in the country like this had a whole series of cocoons to break out of, she said: cultural, racial and so on. She herself had broken out of the cultural cocoon relatively early, forced to it by another sort of confinement: that due to her years of seclusion in childhood and early adolescence, during which her energies turned to "the "exploration of self". (Interestingly, she explained that by this phrase she did not mean "contemplating the navel" but reading, listening to music, and so on.)[4]

The environment in which Helen grows up, a middle class background in an ordinary small town, lacks cultural stimulus. There is a public library, from where Mrs Shaw borrows books for the whole family, but there is no serious reading going on in the family. Because the subjects of her reading are far from South Africa, a curious split becomes evident early in Helen's life, between the life she lives and the life she reads about; the life she lives in her books is totally different from the life she lives in reality. In his examination of the predicament of the South African writer and his relationship to his background, Dan Jacobson, a novelist who grew up in circumstances very similar to Nadine Gordimer's, has pointed out the whole dilemma of a youth who grows up in Johannesburg but whose literary hometown in London:

> . . . for anybody with a literary bent who grows up under the circumstances I have mentioned, the consciousness of a gap

> or gulf between his reading and the world around him comes very early; it comes with his first nursery rhymes or learning-to-read books. And what those books begin, almost every other book he reads continues. When I think of the kind of book I read as a boy — the comics out of England, the 'William' books, books of a more meritorious nature — I know that I was continually and consciously trying to fit them against what I could feel and see in the world immediately around me; and often it was a very difficult task. The difficulty (and the necessity) of the task produces in one's attitude towards the books and towards the world around one a curious doubleness; it produces even in children what I am tempted to call an almost metaphysical preoccupation with 'reality'. Which was 'real' — the world of the books, or the world around one?[5]

Understandably, Helen mutters to herself, 'This is life — this is the real thing!' as she flees from the slummy Concession Stores, which, in defiance of her parents' warnings, she is visiting for the first time in her afternoon of freedom. Removal from much of the rough-and-tumble of ordinary life has its dangers, especially the blunting and vulgarizing of perception. But the obvious tensions created between the world of her books and the life she lives results in Helen's increased self-awareness. The young girl's sensitivity, keenness and fastidiousness become a hallmark of the novelist's literary eye; for Miss Gordimer believes that the ways of seeing we acquire in our youth remain with us always. The style of *The Lying Days* is impressionistic, because through the use of vivid images, Nadine Gordimer wants to explore the background of South African society, in order to point out that her own background provides a vast, really untouched experience that has hardly been written about at all. This grew out of her realization in her childhood that her background was in many ways unique, and full of unanswered things, and full of things she had taken for granted.

Helen is driven back to her parents by 'a sudden press of knowledge, hot and unwanted', when she sees a black urinating in the open veld: 'A question that had waited inside me but had never risen into words or thoughts because there were no words for it — no words with myself, my mother, with Olwen even. I began to run very fast, along the tar, the smooth straight road' (24). With this knowledge stored for the future, Helen joins her parents in the safety of the Recreation Hall grounds. Her mother feels triumphant, 'pleased to be able to ignore the argument, the vague anxiousness that had ended up satisfactorily in a loneliness that had sent me tailing after her, after all' (25) Helen willingly accompanies

her parents on subsequent Saturday afternoons, 'accepted as one of them but with the distinction of being the only child in the party. It was easy to be one of them . . . I was quite one of them' (25). She spends her adolescence in this manner, with its 'indefinite, cocoon-like quality' under the aegis of her mother. 'During that time my life was so much my mother's that it seemed that the only difference between us was the significance of age' (39). She runs the danger of undergoing emotional atrophy.

> It all seemed simple, as if a puzzle had dissolved in my hands. The half-question would never be asked, dark fins of feeling that could not be verified in the face of my father, my mother, the Mine officials, would not show through the surface that every minute of every day polished. I rested, my feet dancing a little tune; the way the unborn rest between one stage of labour and the next, thinking, perhaps, that they had arrived (44).

Part Two, The Sea, begins Helen's break with home. She is now seventeen and has been out of school, working at a temporary job in her father's office, 'the Secretary's daughter in the Secretary's office of Atherton Mine' (47). Helen goes alone to visit her mother's friend, Mrs Alice Koch on the south coast of Natal, arriving 'faintly giddy with journey, smiling the mild happiness of having bridged space'. Mrs Koch is very different from Mrs Shaw, the former never disdaining to show her emotions. 'I was drawn to her because she gave access to herself in a way that I do not know anyone ever did. Tears were embarrassments swallowed back, stalked out of the room, love was private (my parents and I had stopped kissing each other except on birthdays); yet tears were bright in Mrs Koch's eyes and one could still look at her' (51). Mrs Koch and her son, Ludi, draw Helen into their intimacy, reducing her memory of the Mine to the fleeting and inconsequental, so that she finds it impossible even to write home. Explicitly, Ludi condemns as the 'narrowest, most mechanical, unrewarding existence you could think of in any nightmare' (56) life on the Mine. He himself has made up his mind not to go far: 'I don't want to "get on". I'm happy where I am. All I want is the war to end so that I can get back here' (56). By the laws of Helen's home, Ludi stands condemned as a drop-out, 'to be sighed over more than blamed'. Yet he draws her towards him by his feeling of freedom. When he gives her the first passionate kiss of her life, Helen imagines she has now entered into the whole adult world of relationships between men and women. 'Nobody told me love was warm. Such warmth — I seemed to remember it, it seemed like something forgotten by me since I was born' (73). For the first time she experiences deep feelings, a contrast to the surface of polite triviality on which she had been living, 'insensitive to the real flow of

life that was being experienced, underneath, all the time, by everybody' (76). With a recklessness born of inexperience, she wishes to give her emotions free reign; but Ludi holds himself in check, disciplined by the ten years between them, 'the ten years of life he had had while I dragged a toe in the dust of my childhood, disconsolate, waiting' (83).

After her return to the Mine, Helen suffers a loss of self, her tanned body acting as an emblem of her displacement, like 'a stranger bearing the distinguishing marks of another land' (89). Inwardly, she believes that the reality of life lies with Ludi, and contemptuously shuns everything connected with the Mine. She refuses to see her friends, and exasperates her parents by refusing to go to the University; she is determined to live by the laws of freedom laid down by Ludi, and is made happy in her imagined solidarity with him. But when at last the letter from Ludi arrives, Helen examines it for the direction to take in life, with little success: 'What looked like an island, a beckoning palm top, was an uncertain as a piece of floating vegetation, rootless in the tide' (94). Apparently acting on impulse, she decides to go to the University: 'I went out of doubt and boredom and a sense of wonder at life: the beginning of all seeking, the muddled start of the journey towards oneself' (99).

The University is a typical background in which Miss Gordimer has examined the relationship between the races in her society — the borderland or frontier where black and white meet virtually as equals, although she realizes that it is impossible to be equals in an unequal society. Indeed one of the novelist's points is that individuals cannot through personal ethics compensate for the inadequacies in their community, for the inequalities in their society will force upon the most well-meaning individuals other inequalities and consequently blight any attempt by them to develop a deep personal relationship. The first student in whom Helen recognizes a secret response to what is in herself is a black girl called Mary Seswayo whom she accosts in the cloakroom: 'I had the curious certainty, that one sometimes gets from the face of another, that what I saw on her face now was what was on my own. I recognized it; it was the sign I had been watching for, not knowing what it would be' (105). The failure of Helen's efforts to befriend Mary Seswayo illustrates Miss Gordimer's point that it is impossible to operate a decent personal relationship in a society that is opposed to a liberal way of life. An individual's attempts to choose the people she likes, without paying attention to their colour or creed, are doomed to fail in a society where people are judged by the colour of their skin, or their parents' creed. As she sits in the train travelling between home and the University, Helen experiences 'an almost physical sensation of being a stranger in what I had always taken unthinkingly as the

familiarity of home. I felt myself among strangers; I had grown up, all my life, among strangers: the Africans whose language in my ears had been like the barking of dogs or the cries of birds'.

Nadine Gordimer has commented on the significance of this stage in her own life: 'I think that people like myself have two births, and the second one comes when you break out of the colour bar. It's a real rebirth when you break out of your background, the taboos of your background, and you realize that the colour bar is not valid, and is meaningless to you.'[6] Like Miss Gordimer, Helen had grown up in a kind of patriachal atmosphere; in her home although blacks have always been treated well, they are never allowed to forget that they are servants, and could not be received in any social way. In spite of their kindness and decency to their black servants, the family have no black friends. As she begins to read in various fields she begins to question the whole idea of man, and to learn about the brotherhood of man, and to apply this to her own life. This leads her to question the bases of racial separation. Naturally, once she begins to doubt, her world begins to collapse; and she has to build a new one for herself. Helen's first attempt to see the blacks as individuals is 'as painful and confusing as the attempt to change what has grown up with the flesh always is' (162).

Helen befriends another student, Joel Aaron, out of rebellion to her family background: 'in defiance to my mother, in response to the stirring that opposed her in me, I wanted to say something real, a short arrangement of words that would open up instead of gloss over. It came to me like the need to push through a pane and let in the air' (108). But the fact that Joel is a Jew proves an insurmountable barrier to Helen's parents — and finally to Helen herself. It is her background which triumphs, for Helen's friendship with Joel never fully blossoms into love. In spite of the feelings of the two young people for each other, Joel is forced to play the role of a guide, introducing Helen to new ideas, new interests, and new friends. 'He almost literally stood at the door of interest, diversion, stimulation and watched me go in; quietly, inwardly ablaze with pleasure and curiosity' (152). Joel counsels Helen how to cope with her parents, how to be:

> Making them over would be getting rid of them as they are. Well, you can't do it. You can't do it by going to live somewhere else, either. You can't even do it by never seeing them again for the rest of your life. There is that in you that is them, and it's that unkillable fibre of you that will hurt you and pull you off balance wherever you run to — unless you accept it. Accept them in you, accept them as they are, even if you yourself choose to live differently, and you'll be all right. Funnily enough, that's the only way to be free of them' (126).

But because Helen sees her background in a different light from Joel's, she settles for a more drastic solution. The smugness and suffocating control of her home comes to stand in Helen's mind for the plight of South Africa, just as in *A Portrait of the Artist* 'the misrule and confusion of his father's house' stood in Stephen Dedalus' mind for the plight of Ireland. And as Stephen had to go through the motions of parricide, so Helen has to go through the motions of matricide, in order to make good her revolt. Mrs Shaw insists that her daughter should return home every day, and resolutely refuses to allow her to stay in Johannesburg. Even on the few occasions when Helen goes out in Johannesburg at night the usual arrangement is for her to sleep in the house of an old friend of her mother's. From open hostility, defiance and disapproval, Helen is soon living with her mother in the intimacy of estrangement that exists between married couples who have nothing left in common but their incompatibility.

As the family life goes on, touching at fewer and fewer points, Helen develops a desperate yearning to escape from home. 'The very comfort and safeness of home irked me. I felt I was muffled off from real life. I wanted the possibility of loneliness and the slight fear of the impersonality of living in a strange place and a city; the Mine opressed my restlessness like a hand pressed over a scream. Often I wanted to call out to my mother: Let me go and you will keep me!' (183)[4]. Matters come to a head over Helen's desire to bring Mary Seswayo home for a couple of days to enable the black girl to prepare for her examination under circumstances more comfortable than are possible in the slum. All the bottled-up anger in mother and daughter explodes and Mrs Shaw 'cried like a man; it had always been hard for her to cry' (194). At last she is forced to release Helen, but it is already too late, for she should have allowed her to go when she still had her.

Part Three, the City, begins with Helen's move to Johannesburg at the beginning of her third academic year. She enters the final phase of her break with home. Joel finds her accommodation with John and Jenny Marcus whose dishevelled flat suggests a way of life which captures Helen's imagination: 'at the mention of the Marcuses, something lifted in me; I felt that here I might be about to come out free at last; free of the staleness and hypocrisy of a narrow stiflingly conventional life. I would get out of it as palpably as an over-elaborate dress that had pampered me too long' (197). Helen goes to the Marcuses prepared to be pleased with everything she sees about them, 'like a traveller set down in a foreign square' (197). She is especially drawn to the intimacy between the couple in spite of the fact that one is a Jew and the other a Gentile.

Through the Marcuses Helen becomes a member of a bohemian

group, consisting mostly of young people attached to the arts and learning at one end, and to politics and social reform at the other. To this group belongs Paul Clark, the third young man who will attempt to guide Helen away from the vestiges of her smug background. Helen's love affair with Paul provides an exploration of the alteration, loss, exchange, and merging of identities in the love relationship. When Paul enters the Marcuses' apartment, holding a toy rabbit by the ears, and a bottle of wine by the neck, Helen is immediately fascinated not only by his good looks, but also by his version of the good life, and decides in spite of warnings from Paul's former lover, 'to stake my whole life, gather up from myself everything I had stored against such a moment, and expend it all on Paul. Everything on the bonfire' (231). After making love for the first time in Paul's flat on a Sunday afternoon, Helen feels 'secure against the void of infinity,' and dedicates her life to love. 'And I think I started then that strangest of journeys which is never completed, the desire to understand another in his deepest being. And I knew already, even then, that love is only the little boat that beaches you over the jagged rocks; for the interior something more will be needed' (234).

Helen's progress in that 'strangest of journeys' is soon complicated by a peculiar question of moral responsibility, the individual's capacity to be what she can make herself in a society that severely limits her freedom of action. With the coming to power of the Nationalist Party, Helen's most definitive experience becomes the one in which she is caught up in a pattern of practically inexplicable forces, operating from outside the sphere of calculable and controllable time, and with no final insight into the outcome, as product of her own or anyone else's particular act of will, either reasoned or capricious. As an evidence of her confusion, she strikes out blindly in all directions, in a bid to escape her cloying environment: 'The Mine was unreal, a world which substituted rules for the pull and stress of human conflict which are the true conditions of life; and in another way, the University was unreal too: it gave one the respect for doubt, the capacity for logical analysis, and the choice of ideas on which this equipment could be used to decide one's own values — but all this remained in one's hand, like a shining new instrument that has not been put to the purpose' (240). Even marriage and the idea of domestic life now appear as 'a suction towards the life of the Mine, a horror of cosy atrophy beckoning' (242). However, after quitting the University, 'with less emotion than I had sometimes felt over giving up a dress that I no longer wore' (245), and living with Paul in his flat without marrying him, Helen continues to write to her parents from the Marcuses' address, a deceit which makes her feel ashamed and disgusted for being less than an adult

woman, answerable to her own integrity. 'I had the horrible feeling that the Mine had laid a hand on me again; Atherton had gleefully claimed me as one of its own, lacking the moral courage to be anything else' (254).

Helen's pervasive feeling of personal guilt is part of the liberal feeling as the Nationalist Party's rule continues. The continued ascendancy of the Nationalists makes every liberal feel the moral climate of guilt and fear and oppression chilling through to the bone, 'almost as if the real climate of the elements had changed, the sun had turned away from South Africa, bringing about actual personality change that affected even the most intimate conduct of their lives' (256). As Welfare Officer to the non-whites, Paul is more directly affected than most whites, and becomes practically overwhelmed by a feeling of guilt towards the blacks amongst whom he does his everyday work. Although in her idealism Helen identifies with Paul's radicalism, matters come to a head when she reveals to her parents that she has been living with him. Mrs Shaw expresses her disgust for Helen's generation, and forsakes her daughter: 'I don't want you in this house again. You understand that?' (274). But when she flees back to Paul, Helen finds not sympathy, but contempt for Atherton. For Helen, however, to forget so much of her past is to lose herself: 'I had the instinct to clutch searching at my life, like a woman suddenly conscious of some infinitestimal lack of weight about her person that warns her that something has gone, dropped' (282). She wants both Paul and herself to give up their jobs in the welfare office, not only because it is accomplishing practically nothing but also because it is destroying the love between them.

Ultimately, Helen is not concerned with the realm of politics, where opposition to the Nationalists goes on all the time, but the interior world, 'the non-political, the individual consciousness of ourselves in possession of our personal destiny' (291). But Paul goes on in his own way, working within the system in the daytime, and with African nationalists after closing hours, but all the time becoming difficult to live with. Here, Miss Gordimer examines the theme of love denied where love is most difficult but desperately needed. Helen earns our pity and compassion because of the injury inflicted on her through not being truly loved enough; her love for Paul is undeserved, it is given from a simple heart but it falls upon ground of pseudo-radicalism, barren and unresponsive. Isa Welsh, once Paul's lover, pinpoints the cause of the failure of love betwen Paul and Helen:

> I think you're one of those women who have great talent for loving a man, but he's not whole enough to have that love expended upon him. It's too weighty for him. He likes to be all

> chopped up, a mass of contradictions, and he wants to believe they're all right. He isn't enough of a *central* personality to be able to accept the whole weight of a complete love: it's integration, love is, and that's the antithesis of paul (134).

So Helen withdraws into herself, obeying the instinct to go quiet; 'shut off the terrible expenditure of my main responses; take trancelike, into the daily performance of commonplace the bewilderment, the failure' (296). As evidence of the failure of their love, Paul and Helen make love too often, but merely for release; they begin to see a great deal of their friends again; and they quarrel often, mostly in public. Finally Helen leaves the welfare office. But without a job, she is reduced to performing the daily chores of a housewife, and feels, like the Atherton women, her personality lost in Paul's: 'I thought how odd it was; by pulling so hard the other way, one always seems to find oneself, at some point or other, arrived at precisely that condition of life from which one shied so violently' (314). She dreads she may become pregnant: 'the dread of an attachment to a man that can never be broken, by a women who wants to be free of him' (331). Finally she tells Paul flatly, 'We'll never be married'. However when, the same day, she returns to the Mine she realizes how far she has journeyed from home; sitting at a party with the Mine women she observes, with the critical eyes of an outsider, 'all the sweet things of my childhood that people like myself had lost a taste for' (307), and listens again to 'all the warm buzz of talk that had surrounded my childhood. It was as comfortable as the sound of bees; no clash of convictions, no passion, no asperity' (308). She rejects her parental home for good because for her it is to return to a secluded childhood.

Having turned her back on the two homes she has known, Helen's life truly enters an interim period, 'as the traveller might decide for the station waiting-room, after all' (331). She spends a whole month in Paul's flat, doing nothing, during which period she knows the terror of loneliness.

> The old sense of unreality would come down upon me again. A calm, listless loneliness, not the deep longing loneliness of night, but the loneliness of daylight and sunshine; in the midst of people; the loneliness that is a failure to connect. I would pick up, in my mind, Atherton, Paul, Johannesburg, my mother and father; Paul. Like objects taken out of a box, put back. But in the end there was only myself, watching everything, the street, the workmen, life below; a spectator (332).

Helen's loneliness here is not just a matter of being or feeling companionless in the world. It is the peculiarly and incomparably modern terror, the loneliness of self-estrangement. In attempting

directly to contemplate herself, Helen is undergoing the experience of facing the stranger, the mask, or the simple nothingness — what E. M. Forster called 'panic and emptiness' in *Howard's End.*

Her ordeal is suddenly resolved when one morning she notices that the building across the road whose foundations were just being laid when she first moved in with Paul is now finished. As the last lorry carrying the equipment and workers leave the scene, Helen discovers in what direction she should go. 'It came to me quite simply, as if it had been there, all the time. I'll go to Europe. That's what I want. I'll go away. Like a sail filling with the wind, I felt a sense of aliveness, sweeping relief' (333). But Helen is not truly free to go until she rids herself of the magic of Paul. When she visits the Marcuses to bid them goodbye she sees the toy rabbit which Paul had been holding in one hand, and a bottle of wine in the other, when they first met. Now the little old toy hangs from the hand of the Marcuses' older boy. Paul too is a toy which Helen has outgrown. 'I think it was there and then that I parted from Paul; not later, when he kissed me with those hard long kisses and pretended that this was a holiday on which I ws going, a holiday from which I would come back' (337).

Helen, on her way out, arrives in Durban by air from Johannesburg, and is once again in sight of the sea; as on her visit to Mrs Koch several years back, she feels its liberating effect. 'I began to breathe slowly and deeply, as if for months I had been wearing something tight that had now dropped away' (337). Three days before her departure, she is reunited with Joel who is also leaving South Africa by boat, for Israel, or 'home' as he calls it, thus making Helen realize all the more her own lack of roots anywhere. She tells him on board his boat:

> I envy you. A new country. Oh, I know it's poor, hard, but a *beginning.* Here there's only the chaos of disintegration. And where do people like us belong? Not with the whites screaming to hang on to white supremacy. Not with the blacks — they don't want us. So where? To land up like Paul with a leg and an arm nailed on each side? Oh I envy you, Joel. And I envy you your Jewishness . . . Because now I'm homeless and you're not. The wandering Jew role's reversed. South Africa's a battleground; you can't belong on a battleground. So the accident of your Jewish birth gives you the excuse of belonging somewhere else (351).

Miss Gordimer in this story had projected into Joel Aaron the ambiguities which she herself must have felt as a Jew in South Africa, preferring to give her heroine a Scottish background. Helen despises both the comfortable smugness of her middle-class background on the Mine and the hypocrisy of her bohemian

friends in the city who consider that something had been done to right wrongs merely because they themselves act as if the wrongs have been righted. 'That was the choice I'd made for myself. The life of honesty and imagination and courage' (352). Her society stands condemned by this credo.

> In a way, it seems right that one shouldn't be happy in South Africa, the way things are here. It seems to me to be that as well; a kind of guilt that although you may come to a compromise with your own personal life, you can't compromise about the larger things ringed outside it. It's like — like having a picnic in a beautiful graveyard where people are buried just under your feet. I always think locations are like that: dreary, smoking hells out of Dante, peopled with live men and women. — I can't stand any more of it. If I can't be in it, I want to be free of it. Let it be enough for me to contend with myself (358).

Helen's attempt to maintain within herself a fierce, narrow, personal integrity points out that in contemporary South Africa the opportunities (indeed, the compulsions) for transgressing against the personal liberal ethic are legion. Against a rising tide of racial intolerance Helen is at last forced to acknowledge that her efforts at tolerance are doomed to failure. As the areas for private living grow smaller every liberal becomes intolerably confined. Helen has to face living in a shrunken world. Rather than go on making meaningless gestures, she opts for exile, a resolution that has confronted Miss Gordimer herself. The liberal attitude has become meaningless in South Africa, as Miss Gordimer has said on one occasion: 'We have to accept that we cannot live decently in a rotten society'.[7] *The Lying Days* is dedicated to her daughter Oriane Gavron. If Mis Gordimer decides to leave South Africa it will be mainly because of considerations of the effect upon her children of being brought up in a society dominated by racialistic ideas.

Helen's choice of exile shows that in South Africa there are legimate and necessary discriminations to be made, with implications for the view of man's moral nature. Her revolt against the tyrannical philosophies of racialism posits humane alternatives. She is not interested in self-appeasement but self-knowledge. In her quest for self-knowledge, her attempt to recover her effective self which her racialistic society has denied her, Helen welcomes the nightmare of exile. 'I have learned since,' she says at the end of her story, 'that sometimes the things we want most are impossible for us. You may long to come home, yet wander for ever' (366). Exile is the only way, although it may lead even to the certain

knowledge that we have, indeed, lost something — which may be ourselves.

Helen, unlike Joel who is going to Israel, has not yet found a purpose in life. The tension between what might have been and what had been produced in her sadness and regret. But she does not despair. Indeed she ends her story in South Africa with hope. As she prepares to leave she views her mistakes of the past as a blessing, and sees her present disillusionment as the beginning of a new life:

> My mind was working with great practicalness, and I thought to myself: Now it's all right. I'm not practising any sort of self-deception any longer. And I'm not running away. Whatever it was I was running away from — the risk of love? The guilt of being white? The danger of putting ideals into practice? — I'm not running away from now because I know I'm coming back here.
>
> I was twenty-four and my hands were trembling with the strong satisfaction of having accepted disillusion as a beginning rather than an end: the last and most enduring illusion; the phoenix illusion that makes life always possible (367).

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MITIESE AGTERGRONDE VAN 'DIE MUGU'

by H. P. VAN COLLER

'. . . omdat mites 'n warboel is wat alleen die ingewydes kan verstaan, en omdat 'n onmiddellike waarheid 'n weerklank vind in mites, en in drome — as mites hul betekenis verloor . . .'

Die knolskrywer, *Isis Isis Isis*

'n Perfek sluitende definisie van die begrip *mite* is moeilik te abstraheer uit die talryke geskrifte oor hierdie onderwerp. Selfs die ontstaansgeskiedenis het verskeie interpretasies ontlok, veral wat rite en mite betref. Francis Ferguson konkludeer in *'Oedipus Rex:* the tragic rhythm of action': 'It is enough to know that myth and ritual are close together in their genesis, two direct imitations of the perennial experience of the race'[1]. Dit is 'two ancient ways of understanding and representing human experience, which are prior to the arts and sciences and philosophies of modern times'[2]. Hoewel dit nie 'n erg wetenskaplike definisie is nie, bied dit tog 'n handige uitgangspunt. Mites en rites is oorspronklik spontane produkte van die primitiewe mens om sy omgewing te verklaar én soms te besweer. Deur die mite het die primitiewe mens 'n verband probeer lê tussen mens en kosmos en daarom het die mite 'n waarheid vir hom bevat. So is die sonsopkoms en ondergang vergestalt in die mite van die sterwe en heropstanding van 'n goddelike figuur.

Die mite was dus 'n metafisiese verklaring van die verband mens:kosmos, maar nie primêr as 'n rasionele konstruksie nie; inteendeel, eerder as 'n spontane belewing van hierdie verband. Juis deur die rite as oorgeërfde 'gebruik', word die mite lewend gehou vir 'n gemeenskap. By die tot niet gaan van die mite desintegreer die primitiewe gemeenskap. So vertel C. G. Jung in *Herinneringen dromen gedachten*[3] van die Pueblo Indiane wat vas geglo het aan hul rol as kinders van die songod en aan die belangrike rol wat hulle gehad het om te vervul, naamlik om elke dag die son te laat herleef. Deur kontak met die blanke het hierdie mite 'n knou gekry, met rampspoedige gevolge vir dié gemeenskap. Vir die primitiewe gemeenskap verklaar die mite nie net die bestaan nie, maar gee ook sin daaraan: 'Myths are original revelations of the preconscious pysche, involuntary statements about unconscious psychic happenings, and anything but allegories of physical processes. Such allegories would be an idle amusement for an unscientific intellect. Myths, on the contrary, have a vital meaning. Not merely do they represent, they *are* the psychic life of the primitive tribe . . .'[4]

Omdat dit bekend is dat Etienne Leroux veelvoudige gebruik maak van Jung se diepte-sielkundige begrippe én mite-opvattings is dit gerade om dit nader te beskou. Jung se mite-begrip stoel op sy opvatting van die Kollektiewe onbewuste. 'n Mite bestaan uit simbole wat spontaan na vore kom uit die dieptes van die Kollektiewe onbewuste. Daarom kan 'n universele patroon of grondplan in alle mites aangetoon word. Die argetipes uit die Kollektiewe onbewuste word kenbaar in die vorm van simbole wat wesenlik verskil van 'n allegorie of 'n teken: 'Insofar as a symbol is a living thing', writes Jung, 'it is an expression for something that cannot be characterised in any other or better way. The symbol is alive only so long as it is pregnant with meaning'[5].

Jung sê: 'When man loses his capacity for mythmaking, he loses touch with the creative forces of his being'[6]. Hierdie vind van die (lewende) mite is tewens integrasie van die mens se bewuste en onbewuste. Jung noem dit die *individuasieproses.* Dit is 'n tipiese probleem van die Westerse mens dat hy hierdie eienskap tot miteskepping verloor het, omdat hy sy bewuste ten koste van die onbewuste oorbeklemtoon het. Ook die primitiewe mens het 'n religieuse 'individuasieproses' deurloop met tradisionele voorskrifte en simbole. Die sogenaamde psigiese individuasieproses van Jung, vorm eintlik 'n parallel daarmee, met dié verskil: '(it) tries to achieve its goal by a natural production of symbols, that is, a spontaneous movement of the psyche'[7].

Volgens Jung (en dit impliseer dat dit hier gaan oor sy teorieë en hoe dit gestalte kry in die werk van Leroux, en nie oor die geldigheid daarvan nie) is daar vir die moderne mens tog 'n uitweg, 'n moontlike terugkeer na die oorspronklike gevoel van eenheid met die lewe. Dit lê in die vind van die geïntegreerde persoonlikheid, die Self — die sogenaamde kosmiese mens. Dit is in wese 'n terugkeer na die verlore paradys. Deur die vind van die Self bereik die mens Psigiese totaliteit, samewerking of integrasie van bewuste en onbewuste, maar belangriker nog, sodoende vind die mens 'God' binne homself — 'Geen wetenschap zal ooit de mythe kunnen vervangen en uit geen wetenschap is ooit een mythe te maken. Immers, niet "God" is een mythe, maar mythe is de openbaring van een goddelijk leven in de mens'.[8]

Hoewel die mite in feite altyd verbeelding was van 'n innerlike toestand, het die moderne mite die klem heeltemal laat verskuif na binne. Hieruit blyk tewens die omvang van die betekenis en 'waarheid' wat vir die moderne mens in die mite opgesluit lê. In die sogenaamde individuasieproses is daar ook 'n eienaardige dubbelkantigheid: die individuasieproses het veel mitiese parallelle, maar dit is terselfdertyd juis 'n soektog, na wat Juliana Doepels sal noem, 'n onveranderlike mite.

In die bespreking van *Die Mugu* wat later volg, word gekyk na 'n paar 'flardes mites' wat as stramien dien vir hierdie eietydse soektog na 'n lewende mite — die soektog van Gysbrecht Edelhart wat slegs gewapen met sy ridderlike naam uittrek op soek, nie na 'n heilige graal nie, maar na die loterykaartjie wat simbolies is van die nuwe bestaan wat daar op hom wag. Sodoende word dit terselfdertyd 'n peiling van die magte binne die Suid-Afrikaanse samelewing en uiteindelik 'n soektog na elemente in sy eie psige. Dit word dan ook 'n soektog na die Self, wat deur Jolande Jacobi in die volgende terme beskryf word: '[it is] "the central fire", our individual share in God . . . It is the early Christian ideal of the Kingdom of God that is "within you". It is the ultimate in psychic experience and in man's knowledge of the psyche'[9]. Vir die gelowige sal die vind van die Selfs juis sy geloof versterk in die goddelike skepping, terwyl die ongelowige iets van die eksterne basis van sy bestaan sal ervaar. Maar ook die Self kan feitlik net *ervaar* word, soos dit by die Alchemiste die geval was. Hulle hele soektog na die misterieuse metaal was in feite 'n 'ervaring', 'n soektog na die Self, hoewel verwoord in intellektuele terme, aldus Jung self.

* * *

Wanneer 'n mens 'n onvolledige, maar redelik verteenwoordigende resepsiegeskiedenis saamstel van *Die Mugu* oor 'n tydperk van tien jaar, val sekere dinge op. W. E. G. Louw resenseer *Die Mugu* kort na die verskyning daarvan (*Die Burger,* 20.11.1959) en gee 'n oorwegend positiewe resensie wat konsentreer op die verhaal en aanbiedingswyse. Louw gee geen blyke dat hy die sielkundige en mitologiese stramien van *Die Mugu* raaksien nie.

Rob Antonissen noem *Die Mugu* die eerste waardevolle Afrikaanse prosawerk wat 'n treffende beeld gee van die ontmenslike, mitelose Westerse én Suid-Afrikaanse maatskappy.[10] Ook Du Plessis sê heelwat later[11] dat die mite plek-plek deurslaan in *Die Mugu,* maar gee geen kontroleerbare voorbeelde nie. Konkreter voorbeelde vind 'n mens by André P. Brink. Hy kenskets *Die Mugu* as 'n roman waarin die mite as struktuurmiddel 'n belangrike rol speel. Dit word beeld van 'n maatskappy waarin die mite tot niet gegaan het, 'daarom is hier geen volgehoue mitiese struktuur soos in *Hilaria* nie, maar flardes (mites)'[12]. Brink siteer as voorbeeld Dapné wat draer is van die jeug, en Juliana Doepels en Julius Johnson wat as eerder voorkomende romanfigure *(Hilaria)* daardie betreffende werk self as mite in *Die Mugu* indra. Juis as die mite verdwyn, sê Brink, verdwyn die samebindende krag in die gemeenskap en ontstaan die buitestaander, die mugu.

In die hieropvolgende sal nog enkele flardes van mites ter sprake gebring word wat dikwels in verkapte vorm voorkom in *Die Mugu.*

In sy artikel 'Ancient Myths and Modern Man'[13] gaan Joseph L. Henderson uitgebreid in op die inisiasieproses, veral soos dit terug te vinde is in die helde-mite. Volgens hom word elke nuwe fase van ontwikkeling in die kind se lewe 'n herhaling van die konflik tussen die aanspraak van *die self* en *die ego*. Tydens hierdie kritiese periodes word die argetipes van inisiasie geaktiveer om 'n betekenisvolle oorgang te bewerkstellig. In die mite en primitiewe rites word juis die rite van die inisiasie gebruik as die middel waarmee die kind byvoorbeeld sy bande verbreek met sy ouers en ingelyf word by die groep. Dit is as't ware die belewing van 'n simboliese dood. Sy identiteit word opgehef en opgelos in die kollektiewe (onbewuste). Die seremoniële rite van die hergeboorte red hom uit hierdie toestand.

Die gewone mens se inisiasie verskil van die helde-mite. By hom is daar geen vaste besef van sukses wat sal volg nie: 'he is called upon to give up wilful ambition and all desire and to submit to the ordeal. He must be willing to experience this trial without hope of success. In fact, he must be prepared to die'[14]. Hoewel hierdie beproewing soms slegs 'n periode van vas is, 'n ligte verwonding of byvoorbeeld besnydenis, is die doel altyd dieselfde: om die simboliese doodsinstelling te skep waaruit die gesteldheid tot hergeboorte mag spruit.

Die hergeboorte hoef egter nie altyd gevolg te word deur die inlywing by 'n groep nie. Die persoon word bevry van 'n bestaande beperkende manier van bestaan en hy beweeg na 'n meer volwasse stadium van ontwikkeling. Jung sê trouens self dat identifikasie met die groep slegs 'n oppervlakte belewenis is: 'It does work a change in you, but the change does not last'[15].

Die motief van inisiasie kom na vore in die belangrike strandscéne waar Gysbrecht op hardhandige wyse ingelyf word as synde deel van die groep. Teen sy sin word hy oorweldig en uit sy koers meegevoer na die strand, waar hy eers die noodsaaklike ritueel moet deurgaan voordat hy in veranderde gedaante deel word van die groep. Hy verloor alles wat sy ou bestaan simboliseer — sy baadjie word die eiendom van die Terrible Kid en Gysbrecht kry 'n nuwe geel trui as tasbare bewys van sy nuwe identiteit; hy word selfs van sy ete gereinig! Maar ook sy uitkyk verander en hy oordeel nou anders oor hierdie 'onskadelike jongmense'. In uitsprake soos, 'Hier is iets wat hy aanvoel, maar nie begryp nie, asof 'n onbekende lewe op 'n ander vlak plaasvind, sigbaar maar verborge in sy eksklusiwiteit, dinamies en uitbundig maar grotesk in die wyse waarop dit teenoor die buitewêreld openbare word' (p. 54), is die ou kritiese Gysbrecht glad nie meer te herken nie.

Waar Gysbrecht vroeër oorwegend beskryf is in terme van die kleur *blou*, kry hy nou 'n nuwe kleur by, naamlik *geel*. In Jungiaanse

terme: deur aanraking met magte uit die onbewuste (die eendsterte) verander Gysbrecht; naas die denke (wat deur die blou gesimboliseer word), word ook die intuïsie (geel) nou aktief. Sodoende word die verwagting gewek dat Gysbrecht naby 'n transformasie is. Dit blyk egter dat die eendsterte nie die lewende mite besit nie en dat Gysbrecht se 'inisiasie' hom nie die finale antwoord sal verskaf nie. Die verteller stel die eendsterte gelyk met die polisie in sy beskrywing en lewer sodoende verdoemende kommentaar op hierdie 'vitale' jongmense. Beide die polisie en die eendsterte is ordes met hul eie uniform, maar die polisie is 'n 'orde-ideaal', terwyl die eendsterte as onbewuste inhoud juis teenbeeld is van die gemeenskapslewe en -beeld. Gysbrecht sal sy heil eers vind as hy besef dat 'n eensame soektog werklike transformasie voorafgaan en dat die verlore paradys slegs binne die eie psige te vinde is. Reeds op hierdie stadium is dit dus duidelik dat Gysbrecht nie as die tradisionele held gebeeld word nie.

Die motief van die heldhaftige bevryding word ook ter sprake gebring in *Die Mugu.* In die mite is die bevryding van die vrou (anima) psigologies te verklaar as losmaak van die moederbinding. Gysbrecht ontmoet ten tye van sy tweede dag se reistog vir Lolita, die anima-figuur (p. 84) en hy storm nader om haar te 'red' waar sy op die sypaadjie neerval. Sy pogings word egter verkeerd geïnterpreteer en hy word as sondebok bloeiend op die sypaadjie gelaat. So word 'n verband gelê met 'n vroeëre scéne toe die anima-figuur (die sheila) hom óók bloeiend op die sypaadjie laat beland het. Gysbrecht blyk hier nog nie in staat te wees om die anima te 'red' en homself te bevry van die moederbinding nie.

In die parkscéne op p. 90 word Gysbrecht weer eens gekonfronteer met 'n anima-figuur wat pleit om bevryding: sy gryns van erotiese *pyn;* haar kaal dye stuur S.O.S.-seine uit! Gysbrecht word as 't ware oorspoel deur die stortvloed uit die onbewuste en beur tot by haar in sy 'reddingspoging'. Hy gaan saam met haar, slaap by haar en ken so die anima. Deur die 'besitname' word die mistiek wat haar omgeef opgehef en sy word getoon in haar menslike onvolkomenheid; selfs banaliteit. Sodoende gee Gysbrecht 'n belangrike stap vorentoe op sy psigologiese reis want 'Anyone, however, who has learnt to know something of the anima or animus will have gained both knowledge of him or herself, and of the forces which activate other human beings; he or she will have plumbed something of the depths of the collective unconscious, but will be far from having exhausted this great ocean, which is, so far as we know limitless'[16]. Dit is interessant dat Leroux ook deurgaans van seebeelde[17] gebruik maak om Gysbrecht se psigologiese reis te beskryf. Dit is in hierdie scéne ook die geval, vergelyk byvoorbeeld: 'haar blou satynrok beweeg met *golwings* en 'die banksitters is die

bevolking, en alreeds is daar die verwantskap soortgelyk aan dié wat jy voel as jy saam iemand op 'n *skip* of trein reis'.

Jung het die held se lewe gelykgestel met die reis van die son (opkoms, styging ensovoorts totdat dit wegsak in die see en oplaas herrys). Die held wil terugkeer na die moeder (die see/ onbewuste) om herbore te word. Dit is treffend dat in hierdie parkscéne seebeelde oorheers én dat die hoer tewens as moeder optree jeens Gysbrecht: 'Little mother, that's me. Little mother. Shhh Baby. There, there. Mmmmmmmm' (p. 94). Deur die 'besitname' van die anima, en die skynbare verbreking van die moederbinding word weer eens verwagting gewek dat Gysbrecht nou soos 'n held van ouds die moeilik bekombare iets (in hierdie geval die kaartjie) sal vind en sal triomfeer. Ook aan hierdie gegewe gee die skrywer 'n vernuftige wending. Die moderne mens, verpersoonlik deur Gysbrecht Edelhart, is nie meer 'n held nie en kan nie soos 'n held van ouds wondere verrig nie, trouens die hele helde-mite is hier feitlik 'n persiflage van die oorspronklike gegewe, want soos later sal blyk word die 'held' self eintlik hier 'gered'!

Die gebruik wat Leroux maak van 'mitiese' gegewens is miskien een van die boeiendste aspekte van *Die Mugu:* nooit word die parallelle voltooi nie — Gysbrecht is nie 'n moderne held nie, nie 'n moderne Christusfiguur nie — sy vind van die kaartjie bring ook nie die triomfantlike einde soos dit in die mite tradisioneel die geval is nie. Daardeur blyk dit dat die mite in die moderne tyd as 't ware nie meer te realiseer is nie; dat die moderne mens immer soekend juis na hierdie 'lewende mite' moet bly.

Dieselfde procédé word deur die skrywer gebruik ten aansien van 'n ander mitiese gegewe wat as stramien dien in *Die Mugu,* te wete die Christelike 'mite'. Naas die blote parallelle wat daar te trek is tussen die Self, en die vind van Christus, is daar ook die ideaal van die kosmiese mens waarna gestrewe word. In die Westerse wêreld word hierdie kosmiese mens beliggaam in die tweede Adam: Christus.[18] Só geïnterpreteer word die Individuasie-proses 'n strewe om die toestand van 'participation mistique' te bereik; kosmiese mens te word, in laaste instansie Christus te benader.

Die godsdienstige motief word reeds vroeg in *Die Mugu* ingevoer met Gysbrecht se ontmoeting van Vader de Metz. Dit is egter veral in die Panoramakafee opmerklik dat godsdienstige beelde dikwels voorkom: ' 'n Moordenaar het in die tronk sy Heer gevind'; 'My God! My God! skryf die moordenaar in elke sin'; 'versoeningsvol'; 'en sy is weer die priesteres', 'en soos 'n helspreeu' om enkele voorbeelde aan te haal. Die hoë frekwensie van godsdienstige beelde in hierdie scéne kan verklaar word deur die teenwoordigheid van Lolita, die anima-figuur, wat tradisioneel omgeef is deur

numinose kwaliteite en uitgebeeld word as heks én priesteres.

Die godsdienstige motief kom egter veel sterker na vore in die eerste parkscéne. Dit is 'n paradyslike park met êrens 'die donker, onbekende boom', wat baie lyk op die boom van die kennis van goed en kwaad. Die tweede parkscéne, wat hierbo aangesny is, bied eintlik die logiese vervolg op die eerste: Gysbrecht pluk die verbode vrug (Gen. 2 : 16 - 17) wat deur die eerste scéne in die vooruitsig gestel is. Sodoende interpreteer hy die 'boodskap' van die eerste park-scéne, naamlik: skep jou eie paradys, verkeerd. Gysbrecht se seksuele paradys is 'n kortstondige.

Ons het reeds gesê dat die motief van redding oorheers in die tweede scéne. Die hoer word gered, maar word ook letterlik 'n vuurtoring wat al brandende, die wrak (Gysbrecht), 'n tydelike vasmeerplek bied; vergelyk byvoorbeeld: 'slaan sy aan die brand'; 'Hy beur teen die stroom'; 'You look like a wreck'. Selfs haar seuntjie simboliseer vir haar die uiteindelike redding uit haar bestaan: "Jimmy'll take care of me one day' en 'And when his ship comes in I'll be on the docks'. Terugskouend is redding ook sentraal in die eerste park-scéne, want 'n mens se redding lê in die skep van jou eie paradys. Op p. 123 word gesê: 'Om 'n kremetart in die Kaap te laat groei, om met kerkfondse jou eie paradys te bou, om met jou besimpelde brein jou eie verwronge orde te skep — daarin lê die kiem van wordende simbole'. En dit is die enigste manier waarop die mugu vernietig kan word, blykens Juliana Doepels se uitspraak in die 'proloog'. Die twee parkscénes speel dus in op mekaar en dien nie alleen as steunpunte in die interpretatiewe proses nie, maar 'verbind' feitlike twee mitiese agtergronde met mekaar.

Die paradyslike park en die mens se ewige hunkering na die toestand voor die sondeval kan 'verklaar' word deur die ooreenkomste wat dit vertoon met die mite-skeppende begeerte van die moderne mens. Maar wanneer ons gekonfronteer word opeenvolgend met 'n 'kruisigings-scéne' waarna sy klere verdeel word (p. 51); die bepeinsings oor die liefde vir die naaste en die verskyning van die Barmhartige Samaritaan (p. 63 e.v.); die Bybelse 'waters' (p. 78); 'Die naaste waaraan hy sal kom, is GOD en dan sal almal lag en sê hy is kens' (p. 80) en 'terwyl die lam lustig alleen op die sypaadjie bloei' (p. 84), dan word die parallelle tussen Gysbrecht en die Christusfiguur te duidelik om misgekyk te word. Voeg daarby as verdere bewysgrond dat Gysbrecht, die allegoriese Christusfiguur, begelei word deur Juliana wat na haarself verwys as Johannes die Doper (p. 86),[19] en wat op vele maniere die pad vir Gysbrecht voorberei. Gesien in die lig van die bogenoemde voorbeelde kan dit ook nie toevallig wees dat Gysbrecht op 'n Vrydag 'gekruisig' word en teen Sondagmôre letterlik 'opstaan' nie.

Nooit egter word Gysbrecht bloot 'n moderne Christus nie, ook omdat Gysbrecht eers oplaas tot die staat van enkeling verhef word. Op talryke plekke wys Juliana op die banalisering van die Christusgeskiedenis en op die feit dat sy lyding in die moderne tyd niemand meer aanspraak nie. Nie bloot toevallig het W. E. G. Louw al in die voorgenoemde resensie die ooreenkomste tussen *Die Mugu* en *Der Prozes* van Kafka aangedui nie. Josef K. het eweneens iets van die Christusfiguur in sy enkelingskap en veral in sy sterwe 'alleen' buite die stad. Hy aanvaar sy lot met waardigheid. Maar in *Die Mugu* bied selfs die sterwe nie meer die antwoord nie — die mite is tot niet en die her-opstanding word nie gewaarborg nie. Daarom juis moet die mens 'roemloos' voort lewe totdat die nuwe Self gevind word en dit is 'n lyding van 'n ander orde wat slegs 'n Juliana Doepels ken.

Die Christelike motief skakel nou met ander verhaalmotiewe, byvoorbeeld met die motief van liggaamlike verval. Die Christelike lyding is beeld van die oppermagtigheid van die gees. Die liggaam is tydsgebonde en aan verval blootgestel; juis daarom was Gysbrecht se seksuele paradys so kortstondig. Ook die motief van die ingeperkte vryheid onderstreep as 't ware die dualisme gees/liggaam.

Jung het by herhaling gesê dat die Westerse mens nooit sy redding kan soek in ander godsdienste soos byvoorbeeld die Bhoeddisme nie. Omdat dit vreemd is aan die hele kulturele tradisie kon dit slegs op die oppervlakte roer. Daarom is die betrek van die Christelike lydingsgeskiedenis vir Jung van die uiterste belang, óók vir die moderne Westerse mens (sy dit dan as 'verwysingsveld'); by *Die Mugu* 'n sinvolle verruiming van die mitiese agtergrond.

* * *

Een van die enkel belangrikste motiewe in *Die Mugu* is die reismotief. Dit is 'n reis op twee vlakke: deur die stad en omgewing as beeld van die moderne maatskappy en deur die eie psige. Maar die parallelle is nog veel ingewikkelder: hoe nader Gysbrecht kom aan Mamma se kroegie, met ander woorde hoe verder sy reis verloop, hoe nader kom die moontlikheid om met sy verwagte seereis te begin.

Die sin van 'n mitiese agtergrond of stramien lê vir Brink in die volgende twee funksies: 'daardeur kan sin gevind of geskep word in die sinlose van vandag, kan nuwe inhoude, 'n nuwe wonder in die hart van die skynbare futiele of absurde geopenbaar word; en daardeur kan aangedui word dat sekere handelings en patrone van die mens deur die eeue eenders gebly het — maar ook dat wat eers sinryk was, nou blote gebarespel sónder inhoud geword het: eers was daar 'n religie, nou 'n dogma'[20]. Die 'byhaal' van 'n mitiese

stramien sorg natuurlik ook vir verdigting: 'n komplekser wisselwerking. Dit is moontlik die belangrikste rede waarom die 'mite van die reisiger' betrek word.

By die realisasie van 'n literêre teks is daar sprake van 'n sekere verwagting. En dan praat ons nie in die eerste plek oor die begrip soos dit verwoord is deur Jauss nie, hoewel sy bewering dat wanneer die estetiese afstand te groot is die werk nie waardeer kan word nie, óók van toepassing op die resepsie van feitlik al Leroux se werke is.[21] Reeds die titel van 'n werk kan verwagting by die leser skep (om 'm vanselfsprekende voorbeeld te noem); ook die geleding van 'n boek kan verwagting skep deur byvoorbeeld hoofstukindeling: retrospeksies en prospeksies is juis die invul van 'n 'wit' plek volgens die verwagting. Dit is voorts duidelik dat die verwagting tewens die motivering is vir die leser om verder te lees.

Die mugu, Gysbrecht Edelhart, wen die lotery onder die naam Gargantua. Oppervlakkig is daar slegs 'n ironiese verband tussen Gysbrecht en Gargantua: die reus van ouds getransponeer as die niksbeduidende klein middelklasmens van die moderne era. Belangriker egter is die hele reismotief wat so opgedring word aan die leser, 'n opdringing wat tewens betrekking het op die hele reisverhaaltradisie.

Daar is meer as net toevallige ooreenkomste tussen Gysbrecht en Gargantua. Nes in *Die Mugu* word Gargantua se jeug in besonderhede verhaal en hoe hy onderrig is 'by which he became as wise as any man baked in an oven'.[22] Hy groei dus op as tipiese verteenwoordiger van sy samelewing, maar verskil van sy medemense vanweë sy reuse gestalte. So word hy letterlik 'n buitestaander. Net soos die moderne Gysbrecht, onderneem Gargantua 'n reis na 'n stad, in dié geval Parys, waar hy 'n hele nuwe opvoeding 'ondergaan'. Dit bied Rebelais voldoende geleentheid om tradisies, instellings en tipe persone ongenadiglik te kritiseer en te satiriseer. Gargantua se oggendritueel is feitlik in moderne gekuiste vorm terug te vind in Gysbrecht se oggend-toilet:

> So Gargantua arranged his time in such a way that he generally woke between eight and nine, whether it was light or not; for these had been the words of David: Varum est vobis ante lucem sugere (It is vain for you to rise early, Psalm 127, Vulgate 126). Then he turned and stretched and wallowed in his bed for some time, and dressed according to the season. What he liked to wear was a great long gown of coarse frieze furred with foxskins. After this he combed his hair in the handsome fashion, that is to say with four fingers and a thumb. For his tutors said that to comb or wash oneself in any other way was to lose time in the world.
>
> Then he shat, pissed, spewed, belched, farted, yawned,

> spat, coughed, hiccuped, sneezed, blew his nose like an archdeacon, and breakfasted, to protect himself from the dew and the bad air, on fine tripes, good rashers grilled on the coal, delicate hams, tasty goat stews, and plenty of morning soup.[23]

Hiernaas kan nie meer subtiele en minder direkte weergawe geplaas word:

> . . .Gysbrecht Edelhart word weer vaak en slaap spoedig. Die dag breek. Dis 'n lieflike lentemôre. 'n Vars lentemôre waarin hy om nege-uur wakker word.
>
> Op hierdie sonnige môre spandeer Gysbrecht Edelhart heelwat aandag aan sy toilet. Eers gooi hy dennegeurige badolie in die water, smeer homself van kop tot tone met seep, was sy hare met sjampoe en lê 'n volle tien minute in die stoom. In teenstelling met sy gewoonte van die verlede, skeer hy hom twee maal presies twee uur nadat hy wakker geword het — gedagtig aan die teorie dat mens se vel gedurende daardie tydperk nog opgehewe is van die slaap. Hy dink daaran dat dit tekenend van sy nuwe lewe is — dat hy dit nou kan bekostig om twee uur te wag. Daarna vryf hy liggies van 'n ongebruikte na-skeerpreparaat op sy gesig. Hy kies sy hemp noukeurig en heg 'n paar flambojante mansjetknope aan wat hy 'n tyd gelede as geskenk ontvang het. Sy das is 'n handegemaakte Cravateur, sy pak houtskool-swart, sy sokkies nuut en die skoene suede. Die Seaforth laat hom toe om sy hare anders te kam as gewoonlik: sywaarts, waar hy dit in die verlede agteroor gekam het. 'n Roosknop in sy knoopsgat gee daardie tikkie ekstra wat kortkom.[24]

Beide Gysbrecht en Gargantua word gesatiriseer in hul haas absurde rituele en in beide gevalle kring die satire verder uit. As twee tipiese verteenwoordigers van hul onderskeie samelewings luister hulle getrou na raad en let daarop om altyd op te tree volgens wat as passend beskou word. Sodoende kan die maatskaplike gebreke maklik betrek word deur die outeur.

Die ooreenkomste Rabelais: Leroux eindig egter nie hier nie. In die Inleiding tot *The History of Gargantua and Pantagruel*[25] wys die vertaler J. M. Cohen op die bewondering wat James Joyce gekoester het vir Rabelais en hoe hy dikwels ook Rabelais in 'n moderne idioom 'vertaal'. So staan Joyce ook as skakelfiguur tussen Rabelais en Leroux. Leroux se verwantskap met en beïnvloeding deur Joyce eindig nie by die gebruik van 'n mitiese grondplan nie. Ook Leroux se werk het 'n sterk satiriese inslag en daar is al by herhaling gewys op die parodie in sy romans. Wat Leroux direk skakel met Rabelais, naas die tematiese ooreen-

komste, is die beeld van 'n hele samelewing en era wat in sy werk gestalte kry en sy stilistiese gedurfdheid. Veel van wat by Leroux as opvallende stilistiese eienskappe aangemaak is, kom reeds by Rabelais voor: detailinventarisse, entimologiserings; 'eufemismes' ensovoorts.

Deur die byhaal van Gargantua, betrek Leroux ook die reisverhaaltradisie, veral omdat Rabelais een van die beste eksponente van die satiriese reisverhaal was. Voorts dien die motief van die reisiger ook as 'n verdere verbindingslyn: Rabelais, Joyce, Leroux, want veral Joyce gee met sy moderne Odusseus, Leopold Bloom, weer nuwe impetus aan die ou mite van die reisiger.

Gysbrecht onderneem 'n reis deur die moderne samelewing wat in die proses gekommentarieer en gekritiseer word. As ons die hipotese aanvaar dat satire gekenmerk word deur 'n bepaalde aanval, deur hantering van 'n norm en indirektheid van presentasie, — en dit is 'n vry algemeen aanvaarde definisie — dan pas *Die Mugu* perfek in die tradisie van die satiriese reisverhaal. So sou 'n mens *Die Mugu* kon vergelyk met Swift se *Gulliver's Travels* wat 'n hoogtepunt is in die agtiende eeuse satire. Gulliver is eweneens 'n dwaas én buitestaander, 'n mugu wat 'n reis of verskeie reise onderneem wat uiteindelik 'n reistog deur sy eie beskawing én psige is. So is die vierde boek, wat in die verlede geïnterpreteer is as konkrete bewys van Swift se kranksinnigheid, in die jongste tyd gelees as sinvolle afsluiting van dié boek. Die mens (en ook Gulliver) moet die balans probeer vind tussen Yahoo's en Houyhnhnms; driflewe en die rasionele bestaan, orde en chaos.

Leroux se werk toon veel ooreenkomste hiermee. Die ideaal lê tussenin, integrasie van onbewuste en bewuste, orde en chaos. In Julius Johnson se ordelike welfaremaatskappy is veel te erken van die Houyhnhnms; die 'belang' van kuns, die vaste patroon; die totale afwesigheid van 'compassion'. Leroux se werk is ook feitlik 'n interpretasie van Swift se *Gulliver's Travels,* 'n moderne inkleding van dieselfde boodskap. *Die Mugu* verwoord ook die norm wat oplaas in die satiriese reisverhaal *Candide* verwoord word: ' "Dat hebt u voortreffelijk gezegd', antwoordde Candide, "maar laten wij onze tuin bewerken".'[26] Die skep van die eie paradys bied vir Candide en 'geheel het troepje' van vriende ná al hul smartlike ervarings die enigste uitweg. Natuurlik word Leroux se boodskap of norm anders ingeklee, want dit is immers in 'n heel ander kode geskryf en maak boonop van esoteriese verwysings gebruik. Maar in die grond is dit 'n satiriese reisverhaal, nie net van toepassing op die Suid-Afrikaanse gemeenskap en sy polêre teenstellings nie, maar slaan ook op die moderne mens en maatskappy. Deur die betrek van die hele tradisie van die satiriese reisverhaal, wen *Die Mugu* aan kompleksiteit en word die boodskap 'n tydlose waarheid.

Weisgerber sê: 'Both satire and irony are roundabout ways to the truth'[27]. Die leser wat die teks van *Die Mugu* realiseer neem terselfdertyd sy eie gesig in die spieël waar.

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17. Volgens Jung in *Man and his Symbols* fungeer die see dikwels as beeld van die onbewuste. Daarom onderneem Gysbrecht as 't ware 'n seereis en word hy telkens in dié terme beskryf.
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CORRESPONDENCE

The Editors,
Theoria.

Dear Sirs,

I have read Mr Stephen Gray's 'The Myth of Adamastor in South African Literature.' Some parts of this refer to my decision not to continue with the Roy Campbell biography, and they are written in that sneering manner of which Mr Gray is an undoubted master.

I am not given to 'speculative scandal-mongering'. I came to the conclusion that Mrs Campbell's affair with Vita Sackville-West was one of the cardinal events of Campbell's life, and was in part caused by his heavy drinking, and was in part responsible for its continuance. I found the Campbell family, not unnaturally, reluctant to discuss either matter, and I had neither the wish nor the temperament to probe further into their private affairs. Yet I considered them essential parts of the biography. Therefore I gave it up.

Mr Gray writes: 'The propagation of literary criticism is not significantly advanced by the knowledge that Paton doesn't approve of heavy drinking in his right-wing poets or homosexuality on the left.' Mr Gray has no personal knowledge of me. I have never in my seventy-four years passed judgements on heavy drinking or homosexuality. But I would not hesitate to pass the judgement that heavy drinking brought Campbell to physical ruin, and that Plomer's evasive treatment of homosexuality ruined his works of fiction, excluding his first and his last.

Nor would I hesitate to pass judgement on the kind of snide criticism that Mr Gray affects. He is in fact clever to a fault. To use his words, I do not think that the propagation of literary criticism is significantly advanced by his cleverness.

I have no doubt that if he does not rid himself of the snide element in his criticism his stature as a critic will not increase.

Yours faithfully,
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Journal of Natal and Zulu History

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