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EDITORIAL

It has fallen to the lot of the more garrulous of the two Editors to write this Editorial. Can he achieve the *tour de force* of being for once more laconic than his colleague? He can.

SOME ASPECTS OF EUROPE'S DOLLAR GAP

by D. SLOAN

PERHAPS the most striking differences between to-day's discussions of international economics and those of fifty and more years ago is that to-day's investigation is mainly a study of illness whereas that of the late nineteenth century was predominantly a study of health. Although there were times of panic and periods of restrictions on gold payments, international trade and international finance for a long time before World War I were carried on without much in the way of governmental restraints. The international system worked comparatively smoothly and efficiently under British leadership. 'Where some countries tended to expand too rapidly with the resultant rise of imports and decline of exports, gold flowed out with corrective effects on prices and incomes: reduced prices and incomes for the country losing gold and the reverse for those gaining gold'. In fact the international gold standard worked for two very good reasons, namely, (*a*) because of the general acceptance of the doctrines of economic liberalism, governments were very chary about interfering with the international flow of commodities and of money however adverse their effects on home residents and (*b*) monetary authorities and governments really knew very little about either managed currencies or the various possible relationships that could be induced between international and national economic activity. The real technique of foreign exchange control was developed only after the monetary collapse of 1931.

Thus in the nineteenth century, under the leadership of British banking and investment policies in a relatively peaceful world with only one money centre of importance (London), governments and monetary authorities in general worshipped at the golden shrine and paternostered the golden rule; 'Thou shalt maintain the external value of thy currency no matter what it cost thee in domestic suffering'. It was a happy accident—and nothing more—that the greedier was the British capitalist for dividends the more he helped his own country and the world at large by exporting his capital to exploit the resources of underdeveloped countries, including the United States of America. British military and naval predominance added a security to overseas investment a later generation was to envy. Thus Britain built up a huge manufacturing economy dependent on export markets for its profitability, and its exports were paid for partly by foreign food and raw materials and partly by Britain's loans (in the form of private investment overseas, i.e. import of securities). London was also the outstanding short-term credit market. Businessmen anywhere in the world could use the London

money market for placing bills of exchange drawn in sterling, and the universal respect for the London acceptance houses meant that the world's surplus short-term lending funds came in. When full allowance is made for the then more even international distribution of gold holdings and for the willingness of governments to maintain the gold standard, helped by the docility of the common man before his 'betters', there is still no room for doubt that had Britain failed to maintain either its liberal import policy or its export of capital there would have been a 'sterling gap' before World War I similar to the current dollar gap.

What of the inter-war period? There is very good reason for treating the post World War I years as a single period, even though the concept of a dollar gap stems from the 1940's. The apparently specific inter-war currency ailments, the reparations problem, the flights of capital from the weaker currencies, the dominant fact of the depression of the 'thirties', and the manipulations of new currency implements, particularly by Germany and South American countries, all helped at the time to hide the fundamental changes in international monetary conditions because each problem seemed so specific. Home troubles were so pressing and so seemingly peculiar to the individual countries that their place in the general scheme of things was not clear. Nor for most of the time were the economists of much avail; trained in the traditional interests of equilibrium, they struggled throughout the inter-war period first to fit outmoded theories to new conditions and then to devise an analysis and therapy for an altered world. The 'practical' men were even more helpless: brought up in the realm of the gold standard, fixed exchange rates, a relatively small internal national debt, freedom from government interference and so on, they had the vices of the ultra-conservative in a world of phenomenal change.

The fundamental changes were several. Firstly London's monetary predominance was challenged by New York-Washington (and for a time by Paris). Britain had become an international debtor instead of creditor. Despite the sterling balances held by the newly formed central banks after War I and despite the formation of the sterling area after Britain's 1931 devaluation, the rise of the other centres, particularly New York, seriously affected London's leadership and involved a division of international monetary authority. Both France and the U.S.A. had a relative preference for hoarding gold rather than investing overseas, and this interfered with the equilibrating multi-lateral flows of gold and had deflationary effects on other economies. This difficulty was worsened with the growth of American importance because American tariff policy was designed to and did keep out imports which could have helped settle balance of payments imbalances.

Secondly, the British and French economies proved very slow in adapting themselves to the post-War I conditions. Hankering after past glory, Britain introduced a quite unrealistic overvaluation

of the pound which meant that the external supply and demand of sterling could be kept in balance only by a monetary and economic policy that kept the economic life of the country in a state of continual depression—from which it did not recover till the second world war. Protectionism replaced free trade and sectionalism replaced internationalism in trade. Then in the thirties came the central European and South American beggar-my-neighbour exchange manipulation controls. The whole pre-War I economic philosophy of free trade, free immigration, and free exchanges based on an automatic gold standard had gone by the board, and governments, even in self-styled free enterprise countries like South Africa and the U.S.A., were playing a decisive rôle in home and international economic life.

When War II ended, Europe was populated by folk who had never known a lasting period of prosperity or of financial security. There was a widespread demand not only for immediate help to refurnish after the war but for the introduction and implementation of national policies that would ensure employment and an acceptable standard of living for everyone. These schemes received official blessing from the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. The 'welfare' programmes in involving a greater attention to home affairs put a strain on the balance of payments adjusting mechanisms. Resources had to be directed toward home investment and consumption and away from exports, while rising prices tended to encourage imports. Thus by the time we reach the late 1940's, European economies were suffering from the effects of the two world wars and of the cold war with the Russian half and from all the associated political upheavals. Labour was speaking in aggressive tones throughout Europe and had a hitherto unknown political weight; overseas investments had been sold to finance the war and were no longer available to provide income for European countries; Holland, France, Britain were faced with expensive colonial wars in Asia (and France also in Africa) where the growing tide of nationalism was sweeping away European concessions; and fear of the American productive machine was everywhere.

When we remember that the post-1939 happenings came on top of a generation of economic near-chaos it is little wonder that the automatic balancing mechanism of the balance of payments should have proved to be inadequate. In fact the real wonder is that things were not very much worse.

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The dollar gap is simply the difference between (*a*) the value of the non-dollar world's imports of dollar goods and services and (*b*) the value of its exports to the dollar world plus the value of its net loans from the dollar world which can be regarded as normal loans. It is a chronic imbalance in the balance of payments between the dollar and non-dollar worlds. Its actual form and extent have varied

but the basis has remained. Although this article deals with Europe's dollar gap, the imbalance is not merely between Europe and the U.S.A. but between the U.S. dollar area and the non-dollar area. And it is neither a temporary thing nor something that is solved once for all in any particular year. The current account of western Europe with the dollar area was probably in equilibrium during the first half of 1956 but the mere closing of the gap in one year will not solve the problem. The gardener's hand will close the rose secateurs but as soon as he removes his hand the spring forces a gap between the cutters. The ultimate solution of the dollar gap requires treatment to remove or neutralize the spring. The old-fashioned gold standard did not merely close the gap by the flow of gold; because the outflow of gold from the deficit country reduced prices and incomes therein via its effects on the internal credit structure and because conversely the inflow of gold to the surplus country raised prices and incomes therein; the 'hand' that closed the cutters also removed the spring. But the golden gardener is dead.

The *Economist* of December 4, 1943, wrote that one country 'needs so little from the rest of the world, while the rest of the world requires so much from it, that an equilibrium of accounts can be brought about by no means available to a free, or even tolerably free, market'. That wartime remark had more than temporary significance. The post-War II attack on the dollar gap has had to be two-fold in nature. Firstly, something has had to be done to close the current gap sufficiently (each year) to enable trade to go on, and secondly, something has had to be done to remove the causes of the imbalance. Often, but not always, the one action catered for both needs.

The immediate end of the war need in Europe was to get trade going again and this was done under hundreds of bilateral monetary agreements. With the growth of government economic dominance, international financial and economic co-operation could no longer be sought in the free, unorganized way of olden days but only as something consciously organized by international agreement. Efforts to remove the sectionalization of European trade after the war were made on both world-wide and regional scales. In July 1944 the International Monetary Fund and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development agreements were signed, aiming at a multi-lateral international trade and payments system which would be non-discriminatory and yet avoid undue inflation or deflation in particular countries. Owing partly to its constitutional inadequacy and its lack of flexibility, further stiffened by its American-inspired management, the International Monetary Fund has yet to win its spurs, and both it and the International Bank were slow in getting into their stride.

The Havana Conferences of 1947 and 1948 produced in March, 1948, the Havana Charter, which was signed by the representatives of fifty-two governments as a modern code of rules for international

trade, which, however, was ratified by only the Liberian government. However, eighteen of the signatory states (a number later doubled) agreed to apply the most important of the Charter's rules mutually and these were incorporated in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). In principle GATT prohibits quantitative import restrictions but there are numerous exceptions to the general principle and also balance of payments imbalance (generously interpreted) is accepted as a reason for discriminatory import restrictions. Nevertheless GATT, despite its but semi-official status, has, by hard work at various periodic conferences, reduced tariff rates on thousands of imports and has helped to bring a high degree of stability in the application of rates among its members.

Other institutions with a more particularly European interest were also being formed. Indeed, although some of these regional institutions are good in themselves others can be regarded as almost desperation attempts to compensate for the failure of world-wide organizations or world-wide attempts to solve the post-war trade and finance problems.

The negotiations leading to the formation of Benelux began about the same time as those leading to the establishment of the International Monetary Fund. This Customs Union Treaty finally went into effect at the beginning of 1948. By the middle of 1950 monetary restrictions between the members were practically eliminated for current transactions. Although national sovereignities have been maintained and although exceptions anent agricultural goods and fiscal differences remain, there has been a remarkable unification of the economic life of the three countries and the establishment of a common market of nearly 20 million consumers. Trade within this market surged ahead, while trade between it and the outside world had more than doubled by 1956.

In 1947, largely owing to American pressure, Britain made sterling freely convertible, but so heavy was the drain on Britains' reserves that convertibility was abandoned a month later (and has not since been essayed). This badly-timed experiment had unfortunate repercussions in Europe, where, under the auspices of the Committee of European Economic Co-operation, the Benelux governments in particular were trying to introduce a regional multi-lateralism in payments. Towards the end of the year Benelux, France and Italy did sign the Multi-lateral Monetary Compensation Agreement—a type of limited debt off-setting arrangement. Although the American and British zones of western Germany joined in and although eight other countries (Austria, Britain, Denmark, the French zone of Germany, Greece, Norway and Sweden) joined as non-committed, voluntary members, the agreement was a failure. It had been signed before the future of Marshall Aid was known and it was not possible to link the offsetting agreement with American dollar grants to European debtors as originally suggested. It lasted from December 1947 to September 1948 and had a negligible effect on the intra-

European balances of payments and also on the European dollar gap, because trade between the committed members was so small a part of total European trade and the non-committed members unco-operative.

However, General Marshall's Harvard speech in mid-1947, in which he promised generous aid from the American budget in vigorous support of a common European effort at rehabilitation, led to the setting up of the seventeen-member Organization for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC) in April, 1948. The OEEC had to devise a mutually acceptable method for sharing Marshall Aid which would also lead to the countries' receiving the maximum benefit from that aid. The need for multi-lateralism in trade and payments in Europe was so obvious and the proffered American aid so desired, that European countries showed an unusual degree of co-operation, which led, after the failure of two more one-yearly payments schemes (the Intra-European Payments Schemes of 1948 and 1949), to the setting up of the European Payments Union in 1950 and the establishment of a code of freedom of exchange. In the past ten years 'the OEEC regime has reduced to limited proportions the evils of the quota system, has done away with restrictions on current payments between the partner countries and has established practical mechanisms among the seventeen members for a common search for solutions of various economic problems and of co-ordination of basic economic policy'—without infringing national sovereignities. It has attacked payments controls and quantitative restrictions, but not customs protectionism.

The Schuman Plan of May, 1950, led to the foundation of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in April, 1951, (for fifty years), a supra-national system which assures a unitary economic policy for coal and steel in 'Little Europe' (Belgium, Luxembourg, Holland, Italy, France, West Germany) and the suppression of customs duties and quantitative import and export restrictions on coal and steel and the establishment of a co-ordinated trade policy in relation to outside countries. Britain refused to join because 'it was unthinkable to Englishmen that a body composed largely of foreigners would make binding decisions for them'—and probably also because Britian's continental balance of power policy is opposed to such a European coalition.

Under the leadership of the Benelux countries the search for customs tariff reduction in Europe went on almost continuously—as an offshoot of the investigations anent the formation of the European Defence Community (Treaty signed in May 1952 but brought to nothing through its rejection by the French National Assembly in August, 1954) and then as a study by the ECSC Council of Foreign Ministers in June, 1955, and by their committee of experts from July, 1955 to April, 1956. After much discussion at high levels, including that of heads of government at Paris in February, 1957, the Rome Treaty was signed in March, 1957, setting up the

European Atomic Community and the Common Market, a customs tariff destroyer of the first order.

Now let us look at these different institutions in relationship to their actual or intended effects on the European balance of payments position and the dollar gap.

Marshall Aid was typical of a new item in the balance of payments account—huge gifts of American money by the U.S. Government to foreign countries. The gift was not distributed haphazardly but in ways which it was hoped would help solve not only the current imbalance but help lead to the ultimate removal of the tendency towards imbalance. It is quite obvious that the bigger are the grants made by the U.S.A. the less is the need for other action to solve the current year's problem. American loans would have the same effect, although in the future those loans would have to be financed (i.e. interest on them paid). If the private American investor could be induced to invest abroad substantially and continuously, there would be no need for U.S. government gifts, etc., and if at the same time the United States import restrictions were removed there would be no dollar gap. Yet there is very little reason to expect private funds in huge amounts. During the years 1947-53 total net exports of private overseas capital by Americans have been estimated at about $860 million yearly, which is about one-sixth of the estimated dollar gap still remaining after full allowance has been made for total American loans, gifts, military purchases, imports, etc. This is a very small proportion of American national income (about one-third of one percent) but in view of American memories of past debt defaults and fears of future defaults, the profitability of investment at home and in Canada, the dangers of confiscation via nationalization with inadequate compensation, the worry about exchange controls and multiple currency rates which can damage the foreign investor, and the generally unknown nature of European securities to private American investors, there is little reason to expect the amounts of private U.S. overseas investment to increase substantially. The dubiety with which many European governments view private American investment and put hindrances in its way because of memories of the recalled loans of the 1930's is a further handicap. Such private investment is more likely to be forthcoming when less needed, that is after a period in which non-Americans have shown their credit-worthiness by maintaining payments balance without recourse to 'abnormal' shifts.

It is also to be noted that two-thirds of the private post-War II foreign investment (up to 1953) by Americans took place in Canada and Latin America, and only one-tenth in the OEEC countries. Forty-eight percent of the direct investment was in the petroleum industry. In fact so little went to west European countries that income earned from the accumulated American private investment there and transferred back to the U.S.A. exceeded the net outflow to western Europe of new capital by $46 million a year (1947-53)

—despite the very substantial reinvestment of dividends in Europe. However, the investment has helped Europe to produce commodities that sell for dollars and/or replace imports from America.

For relief of Europe's dollar gap it is not necessary that the investment be in European countries. American private investment that leads to the development of backward countries might assist Europe by the re-opening of the old three-way trade in which (roughly) Europe gained a claim on America by net exports to Asia, which had claims on America. We must not overlook the fact that western Europe has been making private capital available to overseas dependencies and that the support of U.S. government loans and grants for rehabilitation purposes has enabled it to do so. However, such beneficial results in the immediate future are likely to be limited in scope and to follow more from U.S. government loans or grants than from private American investment. Unfortunately, U.S. Congress generosity is likely to be tempered by the state of American home economy and to be least when most needed, i.e., during an American slump. In assessing the significance of any absolute amount of foreign investment compared with similar investment in the 1920's or 1930's we are faced with the two difficulties that the value of money has fallen so much and populations have grown so greatly that the real value per head for the same absolute amount is much smaller. And of course, also, the dollar closing utility of a loan or grant depends on its quality (terms, utilization) as well as on its quantity.

Returning to the post-War II institutions, we must note that the purpose of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development is to provide foreign capital for long-term projects. This it has done to the tune of millions of pounds by inducing private investors on the world's capital markets to buy the Bank's bonds or to invest in loans guaranteed by the Bank. In its early years in particular it was almost wholly dependent on the U.S. capital market. Its major contribution toward closing the world dollar gap is not the short-term one of providing loans but the long-term one of improving productive capacity in other parts of the world—which should mean more goods to sell to Americans or the need to buy fewer from them.

The International Monetary Fund has a more short-term effect in that it can provide funds to cover a temporary balance of payments deficit. It is perhaps better considered in connection with exchange rates and convertibility.

The other institutions—Benelux, ECSC, the Common Market, and even GATT—have this in common that they all seek an extension of the market by the removal of artificial restrictions in the form of customs barriers and (when taken in conjunction with the International Monetary Fund and the European Payments Union) in the form of foreign exchange restrictions. At different regional levels and at the international level they are striving towards multi-

lateralism in trade, improvement in productive capacity, and economic balance. The ultimate effect here should be to help close the dollar gap partly by reducing imports from the U.S.A., partly by capturing other markets currently held by Americans and so re-opening three-way trade, and partly by increasing exports to America itself. Unity of the European market is not itself enough. Europe is never again likely to be the world's workshop as it was before the first world war, but we can expect that by planned specialization, particularly in quality goods (such as electrical equipment, aircraft, chemicals) along with modernization and improved large-scale techniques, western Europe can regain relative independence of the American economy. Important though an increase in exports to the U.S.A. would be, the degree of increase needed to close the dollar gap is too great for that to be sufficient, and Europe must earn dollars in a third market.

The European Payments Union in practice amounts to a large degree of freedom of mutual convertibility of the member countries' currencies. This is one of the aims of the International Monetary Fund on a world scale. In general free convertibility can be expected to come about after the dollar gap has been closed at least temporarily. In practice it will be a result rather than a cause of the gap's closing. Theoretically the dollar gap can be closed and kept closed by allowing exchange rates of currencies to find their own levels in the market, that is by allowing free convertibility at the rate determined by demand and supply of the currency in the foreign exchange market. Devaluations, such as those of 1949, are attempts to find an approximately balancing rate which can be made actually balancing by further (limited) action such as import control, home price-level changes, interest rate manipulation and so on. There is no single exchange rate for a currency which can be deduced from the foreign exchange market demand and supply of the currency, but a range of rates at which supply and demand will balance. Whether they will balance at a particular rate without that range depends on the monetary and fiscal policy of the government concerned. But in recent years no politically and socially feasible degree of devaluation would have brought equilibrium in the European balance of payments accounts. Immediately after the war the necessary degree of devaluation would, in the absence of all other measures, have meant death by starvation for many Europeans. Even with the actual 1949 devaluations—and remember that before the 1949 devaluations European currencies were already devalued relatively to the dollar compared with their pre-war values—the dollar gap remains, and further governmental devaluations do not seem to be feasible practice on the grounds of their psychological effects alone, without considering their economic significance. Many writers consider it unfortunate that the IMF should be so committed to the maintenance of fixed exchange rates with only infrequent changes of their levels possible. Rates free to fluctuate within limits would seem to offer more hope for over-

coming balance of payments difficulties in to-day's circumstances because they require less in the way of monetary reserves, but complete freedom to find their market level is not feasible for the weaker currencies.

One other form of attack has to be considered, and that is one dear to many South African hearts, namely a rise in the American price of gold which has been at $35 per standard ounce since 1934. A rise in its dollar price would increase the dollar value of other countries' gold holdings and increase the income of gold-producing countries. While the first would probably have a temporary significance (until the reserves were used) the latter would be of longer-lasting importance. But it is a rise in the nature of one hundred per cent or more that must be contemplated. The probable inflationary effect on the American economy is the main economic reason for expecting America not to raise the price of gold, while one of the main political reasons is American fear of thereby subsidizing Russia.

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What sort of prospects does our sketchy examination suggest? One of the most hopeful facets is to be found on the intellectual side in that post-War II thinkers—unlike post-War I thinkers—do not regard any past time as exemplifying 'normal conditions' to which a return must be made. Many countries clearly recognize that the solution of their balance of payments problem and the simultaneous maintenance of their welfare and employment policies require structural adjustments in their economies because of changes in world economic structure and the flow of international trade and capital. Secondly, our knowledge of actual economic quantities is tremendously in advance of what it used to be. There are still difficulties of assessment and interpretation and we cannot assume that expert factual and statistical knowledge is enough to protect us from erroneous policies or from policies where the political is given undue and the economic inadequate weight. Yesterdays' crisis may not in fact show us the solution to to-morrow's, but the immense increase in empirical information (and the consequent development of theory) does give ground for hope. Thirdly, international co-operation, despite cold wars, exists to a far higher degree than ever before. This is apparent in the number of monetary or economic regional agreements as well as in the more universal institutions such as the International Monetary Fund. The dollar gap takes different forms for different countries and therefore much of the attack on it has to be made individually by non-dollar countries. And so we get disinflationary policies such as raised discount rates, quantitative and qualitative controls reducing banks' liquidation and limiting their advances, and, what is a new weapon of monetary control for most European countries, special restrictions on consumer credit operations. There are, of course, also the individual

budgetary and fiscal disinflationary measures. Nevertheless only a co-operative approach will end the problem—co-operation not only among non-dollar countries but also of the U.S.A. with its debtors. Fortunately, the great creditor America is well aware of this.

Despite temporary worsenings of the situation, particularly when national income falters in the U.S.A., most economists expect by use of the sort of means mentioned in this article a solution to the problem without the need to forego home full employment policies and welfare programmes. High rates of productivity growth are expected in Europe in the next few years. However, we can well end in admonitory fashion with a quotation from J. W. Beyen, one of Holland's best-known practical monetary men. 'Judging the events of the day is an extremely difficult job. The mistakes made by experts of earlier days should not make us condemn those experts but only make us sceptical of the judgment of the experts of our own days even if we are counted among them. I always cherish a story told me by a student of the Far East. He informed me that the foremost financial and economic expert in Siam is called Prince Dam Rong. I try never to forget it'.

THE UNIVERSITY IN A TECHNOLOGICAL SOCIETY

by G. H. DURRANT

BEFORE I begin to speak* about the immediate problems of the University, I want to clear the ground a little by considering what a University actually is. And one of the first things that must be stated is that the University is, and always has been, a training centre for the professions. I hope that nothing I may say later will be interpreted as meaning that I see anything wrong with that. Engineers, architects, medical men and teachers must be trained today as in the past; and it is in the university that most of them must seek their training. In this the modern university differs only in the content of the training offered from the university of the Middle Ages or of the Renaissance. The student of 'pure' science or of the Arts is usually training for a particular profession, and if this were not so the universities would be almost empty.

But having noted this, we must consider what difference there is between a university and a technical college, or between a university and a teachers' training college. The difference perhaps ought to lie in the spirit in which the training is given. In practice, however, we cannot be confident that this is so; there are Technical Colleges and Training Colleges which approach their task in a more liberal and enlightened spirit than do many university faculties. The universities have certainly no reason to be complacent on this score. But the difference in principle is, or ought to be, that in a university, whatever the individual purposes of the students may be in seeking instruction there, the institution itself has as its chief aim, and as its essential principle of being, a purpose that transcends all the individual reasons that students and staff may have for being there. That principle is commonly acknowledged to be the pursuit of truth.

It may at first not be easy to understand how an institution can embody ideals which may be dominant in the minds of few, or none, of its members. But the analogy of an army may help us to understand this. The members of an army, even the volunteers who join in time of war, have usually done so for diverse reasons. Some enlist out of conformity with public opinion, others to escape their debtors, or to seek adventure, or to travel, or to get away from their wives. The higher officers have usually taken up soldiering to earn their living. It would be hard indeed to find any individual soldier of whom one could say with confidence that his sole purpose in joining the army was to defend his country. Yet that is the reason for the army's existence; and that remains the purpose of the army as an institution no matter what motives lead individual men to join it.

*This lecture was delivered at the Education Conference called by the National Council of Women in Pietermaritzburg in 1958.

And so it is with the university. The members of a university are there to earn a living by lecturing or to be trained in a professional skill; but the university as an institution exists to further the pursuit of truth, and not for these incidental purposes.

In the past, universities have succeeded in imbuing most of their students and teachers with a strong sense of the institutional aim, so that even those who came merely to get a particular training have felt the pressure of the institution's essential principle. and have learned a respect for scholarship and for disinterested thought. It is this which ought to distinguish the university graduate from the product of a technical college, and I think it can fairly be said that in the past it was possible to claim that this was quite often achieved. The university graduate might in the past be expected to have fallen during his University career under the influence of one or two persons who, within the shelter of the institution, had learned to devote themselves fully to the university's ultimate purpose. The contact with minds bent on following the truth wherever it might lead would not be more than intermittent, but there was at least a good chance that most undergraduates would be exposed to it from time to time. The product of the technical college or of other specialized institutions might be as well trained in his particular job as a university graduate. (It may well be that specialised institutions, by their very nature, are better equipped to provide a thorough specialist training.) But what they could not provide to anything like the same degree as the universities was the liberalising, indeed liberating influence of teachers who had been chosen first of all for their love of truth, and only secondarily for their mastery of techniques. In the university, teachers who originally took up a line of thought as a means of getting a job, ought sooner or later to grow into a love of their 'subject' and pursue it for its own sake; just as a good army makes heroes out of common clay, so a true university makes scholars and scientists of men and women in search of mere employment.

The value of the 'university product' ought, in short, to lie in his distinctive power of subordinating immediate interests to the broader view, and of seeing himself and others in terms of general truth. He ought not to be swayed by momentary opinions, by the immediate love of gain, or by the passions of the hour. Above all, he should have learned not to love power, or to respect other men merely because they possess power. The man who values knowledge will proportionately tend to despise the search for power, including the power that money confers.

These are the qualities that the university man ought to possess; it is probable that very few university men have actually embodied them very thoroughly; but that there is some such value in a university education seems to be recognised by society. Most professions in which men are required to act responsibly towards their fellow men either demand a university training for their members, or aspire to one. There is a good deal of mere snobbery in this; but there is also a recognition of the genuine value of a university education.

I do not doubt that all universities have always in practice fallen well below the ideals they have set themselves. This is unfortunately true of all human institutions. But I am concerned today to discuss the special difficulties which confront the modern university. There are indeed very grave difficulties in the way of the universities today. Some of them are of their own making; but others are the inevitable result of the way in which our society is organised.

The most marked feature of modern society is perhaps the specialisation of skills. We have achieved our great technical advances largely by giving the individual a smaller area of responsibility, and seeing that he performs his tasks with complete sureness. This in itself imposes a strain on the university, for if it is to train students in a large number of specialized activities, it must take what experts are available in each field. They are usually few in number, and hard to attract, so that the university will be lucky if it actually finds even a small minority who are capable of developing the disinterested love of truth which the university exists to foster. The result is that the steady expansion of university faculties into the fields of specialised training brings with it a dilution of the essential life-blood of the university.

The growing technical faculties of universities are financed by industry and by governments. Both are interested essentially in results, and if possible in immediate results. In Europe, where the tradition of fundamental research is well established, and respect for the old academic still lingers on, there is fuller recognition of the need for fundamental thought by individuals, and for inquiry into problems which may appear to have no immediate practical importance. But under the pressure of Governments and industry, the universities of America, and to some extent our own, are increasingly developing the idea of the 'project'—a type of research carried out by a team under some sort of director. Such 'projects' are expensive, and they must, in the jargon of the modern university, be 'motivated'. This usually means in practice that they must have some fairly obvious usefulness to the State or to industry. It is not generally realised how much of the research currently performed in our universities is financed by the Councils for Scientific and for Social Research. The university teacher who wishes to pursue a completely original idea of his own, and to find the leisure or the money for it, is likely to have less encouragement. The disinterested pursuit of the truth wherever it may lead is giving place today to the purposeful pursuit of knowledge in the interests of the State or of industry. Even the humanities are affected, for money for research into literature or history is usually available only to those who have a pretty clear notion of what they are looking for. The spirit of the 'project', with a five-page 'motivation', is taking the place of the old spirit of disinterested inquiry. The poet Wordsworth was impressed by the bust of Newton—

> 'The marble index of a mind for ever
> Voyaging in strange seas of thought, alone.'

Newton today would not be admired for his lone voyage; he would find a place in a team of workers on a 'project', or as a director of a 'project'.

The point of this is not that there is anything wrong with 'directed' research, but that its predominance must weaken the power of the university to exercise its essential function. The moderating and educational influence of the rare scholarly individual tends to be undervalued, whilst the ideal of disinterestedness must obviously be badly tarnished by the insistent demand for practical results.

The tendency to exalt the group at the expense of the autonomy of the individual mind is by no means restricted to the field of research. Those who have ever learned anything that is important to them know that, whatever stimulus they have received from individual teachers, the act of learning was an individual solitary act. There must be privacy, and respect for other's privacy, in a university. Samuel Butler declared that all he got from Cambridge of value was good food and privacy; and certainly it is true that in ancient universities in England and on the Continent, a man's privacy is respected. In Cambridge, if an undergraduate 'sports his oak', he will be left uninterrupted. South African universities, in common with the provincial English universities, have a thoroughly bad tradition in this matter. From their first appearance in the university, newcomers are systematically subjected to organised moral suasion by the student body as a whole. The aim of this is partly, no doubt, to give the senior students a feeling of superiority, of which they may be in desperate need. But the effect is to teach all but the most independent minds that they must conform with the majority attitude. In this of course the universities continue the traditions of the schools, which by their over-emphasis on team loyalty, and on institutional loyalty, impose a uniformity of mediocrity on their products. Training in 'leadership', as it is called, is in fact merely a training in executive authority. The true leader, like Winston Churchill, is usually a rebel against organised sport and against the inadequate morality which it inculcates. The result of this training in the schools, and of its continuation by the student body in universities is to make of the South African student a thoroughly conformist person. With all his many virtues, he suffers from a tendency to accept what he is told, and to think what others think. Worse still, he often believes it to be his duty to prevent the minority from saying what they think. The interference with intellectual liberty in South African universities has most often, in fact, been prompted or organised by the students themselves. This is a fact that must be recognised frankly by all who wish to improve the education our students are getting. One of the very first tasks is to teach students to respect each others' intellectual liberty and need of privacy. Leaders are not created by societies, clubs and sport, but by adventurous thinking and solitary contemplation.

The predominance of childish ideas of leadership and of primitive rites of initiation is of course directly related to the habit of regarding

universities as above all training grounds for the professions. In the university, as in the school, students are trained in executive authority. But a true conception of the university would never permit this relationship to arise. Since a university is, or should be, the home of truth, authority over others should be exercised only as far as is necessary to ensure good order, privacy, and freedom of thought within the institution. It is surely wrong that inexperienced undergraduate students should be permitted to establish their own authority within the university, no matter what glib justifications may be found for it in the name of democracy. In this matter public opinion might well make itself heard.

Student activity in societies and discussion groups is of course valuable. But much of it is trivial and merely time-wasting. It is easy for such activities to grow to a point where students, who will have no other chance in their lives for sustained and concentrated thought and study, are unable to achieve concentrated work for even a few hours a week. The writing of a short essay appears to be a task of very grave difficulty for many students, partly, I am sure, because they are seldom left alone. The gregarious habit is overdeveloped, and ought, I think, to be lessened if at all possible. The poet Yeats has finely expressed the dependence of all creative thought on a lonely act of mind:

> 'That civilisation may not sink,
> Its great battle lost,
> Quiet the dog, tether the pony
> To a distant post;
> Our master Caesar is in the tent
> Where the maps are spread,
> His eyes fixed upon nothing,
> A hand under his head.
> Like a long-legged fly upon the stream
> His mind moves upon silence.'

But the great virtue of the modern world is to be publicly busy with something, so that everybody knows you are busy. The silent goings-on of the mind cannot be observed, and have no publicity value. As the universities increasingly take on the moral and intellectual tone of an acquisitive society, they value less and less the contemplative life. A student who reads, goes for solitary walks, does not play organized games, is regarded as distinctly odd. It is quite likely that some anxious person will call for a psychological report on him. It is in this insidious way that the moral attitudes of a technological society impose themselves on the university.

But this is only one part of the trouble. Two very influential philosophical doctrines today dominate the Anglo-Saxon universities, and strongly influence us here, not so much as consciously formulated doctrine, but as vague assumptions in the minds of many university

teachers and students. American pragmatism and English logical positivism have a strong appeal to the practical American and the empirical Englishman. In the minds of many university men they encourage the notion that knowledge must be practically 'useful', or that the only knowledge that can be called knowledge is that which can be experimentally verified. To such minds, the arts of literature and painting, for example, appear as purely aesthetic activities, and the notion that they can offer anything more than immediate delight strikes the modern social scientist as an outdated challenge to his own field of inquiry. The traditional wisdom recorded in the arts, and re-discoverable by all who will give their minds patiently to the task, is therefore neglected. I have not here the space to argue the case for the Arts as modes of perception, or as modes of thought; the significant change that has come about in the last fifty years or so lies precisely in the need to argue in a hostile intellectual climate what was traditionally taken, perhaps too lightly, for granted—the notion that the contemplative activity reflected in the arts, in religion, and in philosophy, had something of irreplaceable value to contribute to the minds of men. The fact is that the attitude of many university teachers to these activities is often one of condescension, indifference, or barely disguised contempt. And here I would not be thought to blame the scientists and the technologists. The blame, if there be any, lies with the Faculties of Arts, which have too often failed to present the subjects they are responsible for in such a way as to compel the respectful attention of students and colleagues.

Before I go on to this aspect of my theme, I must briefly sum up the present situation in the universities as I see it. It is one in which the central purpose of the university as an institution—the disinterested pursuit of truth—is increasingly mixed with and adulterated by other preoccupations. These other preoccupations—the desire to 'serve the community', to be helpful to the State, to practise leadership, to improve men's health, or to breed better cattle, or even to help business men to make money—are not in themselves undesirable in a university. Indeed they show a healthy desire to make the University a part of the community. But the university ought to do more than merely reflect the preoccupations of society. It should offer a contribution of its own. And my claim is that the peculiar contribution which the university (and the university alone) can make is increasingly lost sight of in the desire to be generally helpful. Many institutions exist to help man in his pursuit of health, money, and power. The university, and the university alone, exists with the chief purpose of cultivating intellectual clarity and detachment. Universities are, I think, becoming too big, too complicated, and too diverse in their interests to serve this end as they ought. Above all, they are too anxious to please the business man, the Government, and the other 'authorities' which make up what is mistakenly called 'the community'. The true 'community' is a community of human beings, whose human needs are just as much for an adequate system

of values as for bread and cheese. 'Man does not live by bread alone'; but the universities increasingly behave as though he did.

If this is indeed the situation, as I believe it is, we should ask ourselves not why so much time and money are given to technical subjects, but why the Arts, or the humanities if we prefer so to call them, have lost so much ground. It is no longer thought necessary for an engineer or a doctor to be an 'educated man' in the old sense of the term. To know your job and know it well is thought to be education enough. And it is no doubt the best education a man can have, for if he cannot do one thing well he will never respect himself or be respected by others. But have we not gone too far in permitting our professional men to be trained only in their profession, leaving them ignorant of history, religion, philosophy, literature, and even their own language? I do not here underestimate, I hope, the value of the education given by any scientific discipline. But the capacity for detached contemplation of human beings, and for a critical view of moral values, ought surely to be a requirement of a profession, as opposed to a mere technical activity. That there is a desperately felt need for such training is shown by the courses in making friends and influencing people, in public speaking, and in the other flashy substitutes for a genuinely humanistic education. 'The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed'. It is left for the most part to the cinema and the public relations expert, the politician and the journalist to provide our university graduates with their education in humanity.

I am not concerned to fix the blame for this state of affairs. But some of the trouble lies in the failure of our Faculties of Arts. This is a subject on which there must be many differences of opinion, and I say what follows with a due sense of the inadequacy of any individual view. But those who know the situation would no doubt agree that the Faculties of Arts in most universities need to wake up themselves before they can claim the right to undertake the education of more students. In particular, the need is for teachers who can combine a capacity for disinterested thought with a strong sense of the relevance of the humanities to the felt needs of the young people of today. Let me take my own subject as an illustration, and within that subject the study of Shakespeare. Of what value is that study to a young South African of today? It is no use saying that Shakespeare is a great poet, part of the English heritage, and so on. Nor will it do to say that students ought to be glad to acquire any knowledge offered to them. Young people cannot be expected, as a class, to value knowledge for its own sake. They will do so only if it seems to be relevant to their own lives. It is only later that they learn that this knowledge, at first valued for personal reasons, enables them to transcend their original narrow purposes. A young man in love may be attracted to *Romeo and Juliet* because he sees himself in Romeo; but he ought to learn from the play new subtleties and riches of experience, and thereby a more adequate and more detached attitude to himself and to others. And similarly a young man with

political interests will seek to follow them in *Julius Caesar* or *Henry IV*. If he is led to do so in a spirit of critical inquiry, he will find more than he was looking for. He will find, not the confirmation of his emotions and opinions, but their correction and refinement.

This, as I see it, is the essence of education in the humanities. It must spring from a natural need, and be guided to goals beyond that need. But our teaching of literature, to take one example only, is too often at second or third hand—notes from books about books, copied by students who will write examination answers about books about books. I hold myself that there can be no substitute for the direct exploration, by teacher and pupil together, of the great works of literature. This is or should be an adventure from which teacher and taught benefit alike. Yet how often we fail every teacher must be sadly aware. (I remember ruefully how one student, having graduated in literature, wrote to ask me if I would help him to find a purchaser for his now unwanted copies of Dickens and Shakespeare.)

I do not wish to suggest any particular method of teaching, for I believe that every good teacher of the humanities makes his own methods. But there is a great need for a new approach. I do not advocate 'pupil-centred' education—that eccentricity of the 'progressive' era in educational theory. But any education, even at University level, must spring out of a felt need, and must, if it is to be a serious education, lead on to a transcending of personal attitudes. The teacher must know what he is doing, and must speak with authority: but he should do so always with a full sense of the individual persons before him, and with an imaginative feeling for their central interests. The formal lecture has its value, but it is a deadly danger if it means pumping ready-made information and ideas into receptive minds. And I am sure that if there is to be real value in the teaching of the humanities there must be much more teaching in small groups than is usually practised. The urgent need in short, is for lively minds, and for resourceful teaching, within the Faculties of Arts. When we have put our own house in order, we may begin to urge the admission of humanistic studies into the curricula of students of the technologies.

One unfortunate result of the dominance of the specialised sciences and the technologies is that many teachers of the Arts have lost confidence in the essential value of what they are doing. Teachers of literature for example feel that they are not being 'thorough' unless they teach social history as a 'background' or attempt incursions into amateur psychology in an attempt to reveal the 'inner man' behind the book they are studying. Teachers of literature, too, are affected by the fear of being 'subjective'—as if one could ever be anything else!—and even attempt to achieve an appearance of 'objectivity' by the use of barbarous technicalities, wholly foreign to the spirit of poetry and of literature. 'Objective correlative', 'emotive', 'referential', 'dissociation of sensibility'—these are but a few of the barbarous phrases in common use amongst teachers of literature.

Of course students of the Arts write these words faithfully into their note-books, for they see with pleasure that they too can be technical, and have an esoteric jargon of their own. Nor are they without encouragement from their elders. The pages of the academic literary reviews are full of obscure jargon and ill-written sentences. There is a great need for a restoration of the common tongue as the medium of academic studies; for what is the use of a critical article which is more obscure than the poem or novel it comments on? None, of course, except to earn for its author a cheap reputation for profundity.

There has for some time been discussion inside the universities and elsewhere of the danger of narrow specialisation, and the need to give university graduates at least some appearance of being generally educated persons. The difficulty encountered is always essentially the same. The demands of modern technology are thought to be so great that the teachers of science and of technical subjects believe that they dare not give up a few hours of their students' time weekly for studies which are not directly connected with their professional training. The science student, and the student of the applied sciences, is usually fully engaged with lectures in the mornings and laboratory work in the afternoons. There simply isn't time, we are told, for the study of a language, or for the acquiring of an understanding of logic, or for literature. Some Faculties, in the University of Natal, and in other universities, do require of students a minimum study of the humanities, or at least permit students to include one 'Arts' course in the curriculum. The Faculty of Medicine in the University of Natal has added a whole year to the curriculum in order to give students some knowledge of the humanities and of social problems during their training. But on the whole the tendency is to require less and less. Lawyers were once required to know Latin, but there has been a fairly rapid abandonment of the standards required, and in some universities the requirement has been entirely removed. Elsewhere, although the need for general education is recognized, the demand is not for the essential discipline provided by an 'Arts' course, but for some special course adapted to the particular needs of the students. To some extent this demand is the result of the weaknesses of the present methods of teaching and study in the Arts; but it also reflects the utilitarian attitude of technical and professional faculties. They want their graduates to speak well, and to write correct English, but they cannot believe that the study of great literature has very much to do with these skills. They want in short to have their students made into educated men and women without the effort of serious reading or of sustained attention to the great works of the past. (A great industry now exists, to judge by the circulars I receive from publishers, to provide ready-made university courses in what is called, no longer 'English' but 'communication'. The purveyors of this new 'science' understand at least the art of salesmanship: they know well enough that teachers and students will be flattered to be told that they are engaged not in

learning to read and write, but in 'communication', which has a comforting association with engineering and the useful activities of the Post Office.) Fortunately, in spite of the pressure, most South African universities have resisted the temptation to invent new subjects with attractively practical names. But there remains the difficulty that students simply haven't the time, or so we are told, to give to non-professional subjects.

Of course they haven't the time, because they are for the most part not competent students. Since few of them can read a book right through on their own, they have to be taught by the mediaeval methods of the lecture theatre, where as often as not the lecturer gives notes from a book which he has read to the students, who write their own version of the notes into a note-book. These notes are then more or less accurately reproduced in the examinations. This process cannot be radically changed because students don't know how to study on their own, and can't read and understand books for themselves. Small wonder there is no time for 'extras' like English or History.

Some means ought to be found, as most university teachers would agree, of remedying the situation. But as all teachers are engaged in getting more or less illiterate students through their examinations, few are really prepared to make more time available to teach students to read. Various suggestions have been discussed, but have for the most part come to nothing.

One of these is the idea of a pre-University year, either at school, as a post-Matriculation course, or at the University. The idea is an attractive one, and I believe that it must sooner or later be adopted in one form or another. But the difficulty of adding a year to the normal school programme is obvious enough. Where are the highly-trained teachers to come from? And how is the money to be found for the additional year at school? A similar difficulty is met with in contemplating the addition of a preliminary year at the University. Universities are already overwhelmed by the numbers of students in first-year classes. What possible use could there be in inviting the students a year earlier to sit in large lecture-rooms and write out notes? And where are the teachers to be found?

The opinion seems to be gaining ground that the most immediate need is for better educated teachers, and especially for Honours graduates who have specialised for at least a year in a particular discipline. When the universities have produced such teachers in sufficient numbers, it will be possible to think seriously of a pre-university year. But by that time it may not be necessary, for if the majority of students proceed to a fourth year of study in the university, the present first year might be converted into a preliminary course designed to teach students how to study. This could then be taken either at school, where the school can provide the sixth-form tuition needed, or at the University, according to the student's choice. This I see as a practicable means of attaining the additional year of study without any sudden and expensive innovation. But the

programme depends upon the encouragement of study at the Honours level by graduates in the Arts and Sciences. With Honours graduates in Mathematics, History, and English teaching in the schools, we might hope to find that students could actually read books for themselves, and so cut down the fantastic lecture-programme which makes serious education so difficult. Once we have adequately literate students, we shall be free to make badly needed changes in the curricula of all students. But as long as students remain largely illiterate, we shall have to cram them daylong with 'notes'.

My suggestions for the improvement of the universities would be as follows. First: make them smaller, or at least stop their growth. A big university, unless it is organized on a college system, is scarcely a true community; and a university must be a community of minds if it is to achieve its proper end. Secondly: encourage as many good students as possible to go on to a fourth (or Honours) year in the Faculties of Arts and Science, so that we may have more thoroughly trained teachers for the schools. Thirdly: staff the Faculty of Arts with lively minds rather than with dry-as-dust pedants who shrink from contemporary reality. Fourthly: have smaller classes and less note-taking. Lastly, fight by every possible means the narrow-minded concentration on examinations and results; for this destroys the disinterested delight in learning which is the very soul of a true university education.

When these aims have been in some degree realised, we shall be better placed to urge a radical revision of the university curriculum. And this should aim at nothing less than the inclusion in every academic course of at least one humanistic discipline, to be carried through the whole of the student's career. When the Arts are understood to teach essentially, not a body of knowledge, but an activity of mind, there will be less resistance to such a proposal. And of course if the teaching of Science could be similarly reformed, there would be great virtue in the inclusion of a similar course in science in every B.A. curriculum.

I have included these suggestions in deference to the contemporary cant which requires criticism to be 'constructive'. But at this stage it is more important to see the present situation clearly than to advance particular suggestions for its improvement. The pressure on the universities is to offer more and more specialised and technical courses. I believe that the process has gone far enough, and perhaps too far, and that the universities are in danger of losing sight of their own proper end—the disinterested pursuit of knowledge. And I cannot conclude without a warning that the greatest danger at present is from the omnivorous State, which claims the right to order all things to its own purposes. The cry is now for 'co-ordination' —which to me brings back memories of German 'Gleichschaltung'. The universities—and the schools for that matter—can never per-

form their true function if they are subject to the political demands of the modern State, for the State represents Power, and the University represents Truth. The modern politican demands that Truth should bow its neck to Power; if this demand is admitted, there will be no true universities left.

FIRST MEETING WITH ROY CAMPELL

by UYS KRIGE

IT IS NOT of Roy Campbell's work that I wish to write here. I want, rather, to draw a portrait, however sketchy, of the man whom I liked so much and to whom I owe so great a debt, from the first of the hundreds of meetings I had with him during the past quarter of a century.

I would not devote so much attention to this meeting were I not convinced that it reveals something of Campbell's character and personality, and also throws a light on some aspects of his poetry: its freshness, directness, zest and spontaneity; the poet's essential gaiety, love of life, the fire and verve in his make-up, his tremendous vitality; in short, what I might call his sunny, *al fresco* qualities.

Our meeting gives us a glimpse, too, of the country or region which was the inspiration of some of the best poems of Campbell's middle period, namely that of his Provençal, wholly classic verse, the majority of which are contained in his, to my mind, very underrated collection, *Flowering Reeds*.

On a perfect autumn day in October, 1932, I got off the Marseille Bus in the picturesque Provençal fishing village of Martigues. A few minutes later I almost came to blows in the local post office with the Postmaster, who, invoking the majestic dignity of the law, flatly refused to tell me where *Monsieur* Campbell lived. So I walked clean out of the 'Provençal Venice', due west in the direction of Spain. (A direction, incidentally, that was 'prophetic', since about a year later Roy and I went together to Spain to live there for several years.)

So there I was strolling, at half past eleven in the morning, through a long stately avenue of gigantic plane trees some of whose large leaves had already a red-gold flush to them. And in those high leafy branches a dozen nightingales were singing joyously as if with the express purpose of fluting me along on that last stage of my fifty-mile journey to the poet on whom as yet I had never set eyes, but whom, it seemed, I had already known for years—and soon I was feeling a lot better.

It was as if I was walking straight into a glowing Cézanne landscape. Behind me lay l'Estaque that Cézanne had painted so often with so much love; on my right, almost at my feet, the still blue lake, l' Etang de Berre, where he frequently came; and there, way back, towering over the lake and the North-Western horizon, Mont Victoire, which he had immortalised in painting after painting, soared massively into a deep-blue sky.

Yes, said the first peasant I met as I came out of the deep, church-like shadow of the plane avenue into the bright sunlight of the open country, *l'Anglais* was living in a *mas*, *là*, yonder, a couple of kilos

away, not far from the main road, on the right against a hill overlooking the *étang*.

I was the only person on that long white road winding in and out among the vineyards, fruit and olive trees; and I felt so gay and carefree, I would have liked to compete with the jubilant nightingales, to sing exuberantly of my joy if only I could, 'tongueless nightingale' that I was.

About half-an-hour later I branched off the road, following a stony path with my objective the typical Provençal farmhouse with high, light-brown walls, two storeys and an attractive roof of large red *ardoises*, standing alone amongst some olive trees against a rise. They could hardly be the same bunch, I thought, but in the olive trees around me the nightingales were still singing.

I knocked on the open door. A sturdy young woman with black hair that jerked in loose thick strands about her broad shoulders, wild black eyes and a sallow skin, seemed to surge up in front of me out of the room's darkness. I backed down two steps.

Non, non, Monsieur, she shouted at me in an accent as Provençal as the Mistral, she was not *Madame* Campbell but Mireille—O shade of the great Procençal poet, Mistral, with his masterpiece, *Mireille?*—the *bonne, si, si, la bonne* . . . .

Monsieur was still asleep but she would go and wake him, on the spot, *tout de suite*, it was high time he got up, she wanted to get on with her work, do the room, just look how high the sun was!

Pardonnez-moi. . . . and she was off, bounding up those stairs two at a time. I stood on the doorstep listening to the nightingales. The sunlight lay like a golden patina on that classic Mediterranean scene; and now for the first time I became aware of the cicadas; how everywhere, against the trees, amongst the bushes and shrubs, countless cicadas were singing, as if in a vibrant accompaniment, shrill and feverish, to the nightingales' cool effortless song.

My thoughts had drifted away on a far journey to a scorching summer's day on a Swellendam farm, many many years before. Through the open window above me there floated, however, the expostulating, raucous voice of Mireille. And I could hear a man grumbling sleepily. Then a door slammed.

A tall figure came stumbling down the dark rickety staircase. He wore a rough pair of sailor's trousers and a dark blue jersey. It was obvious that he had slept in his clothes. The next moment he was standing on the doorstep, blinking his large greenish-blue eyes in the sudden sharp sunlight and shaking, vigorously, my hand.

Something big and generous seemed to flow out of the man in that firm clasp, that forthright look and Roy's whole intensely alive, eager bearing. Touched by this warm reception from a famous poet who had never heard of me and to whom my coming was a complete surprise, I took a closer look at him.

It was a striking head, almost bald in front and in the middle, carried high on broad shoulders. The face—long, pointed and with fine almost delicate traits—was unusual; but the most arresting

feature of this young man of thirty-one was undoubtedly his eyes. They were both clear and mysterious, looked innocent as well as sophisticated; there was something elusive, almost detached and inscrutable, yet at the same time friendly and intimate about them.

But it was when he opened his mouth that I got a shock. He had been on the binge with some Martigues fishermen, he said, he had a hell of a thirst, would I mind walking fifty yards to the well with him? There had been a Krige with him at Oxford, Jack Krige of Johannesburg, the best student of his year, a first-rate fellow, must be one of my cousins. . . .

It wasn't his direct, brusque and half grunted opening statement that had astonished me, but his accent. It was as bad as (or even worse than) my own in English, so broadly South African that you could cut it with a Knysna notch-saw. It made me, as I stood there beside him, in the calm sundrenched Virgilian landscape, feel quite nostalgic; conjuring up for me, in an instant, rugged flinty old Table Mountain, the long rolling combers at Umkomaas and the Valley of a Thousand Hills.

The large dented bucket rattled to the bottom of the well, shattering our two calm images on its still, greenish surface into a thousand splinters of dancing light. Back wheezed the bucket. Grabbing it in his two hands, Roy emptied it over his head in a single abrupt gesture. Straightening up, he shook his head ponderously a couple of times, his face set in a surly expression throughout, as if along with the glittering drops that were splashing off his pate, he wanted also to scatter the last grey cobwebs from his brain.

'That's better!' he boomed at me. 'Much better. Come on, man, let's get going! It's getting late!'

I must have looked puzzled, for: 'I've got a bike,' he continued. 'And it's strong enough for the two of us. You just hop on to the cross bar and we'll slip into Martiques. There's a nice cafe there under the plane trees by the canal. The *vin du pays* isn't bad and those fishermen are bloody good company. You'll like 'em. Come on, man!'

Forty seconds later I was perched high and dry but rather uncomfortably on the bike's crossbar with a large winejar in my arms, Roy vaulted into the saddle, jamming me up against the handlebars as he bent forward to get up speed—and suddenly that peaceful landscape was no longer static, it came rushing at me and there was a roaring as of the Mistral in my ears, we were whizzing down that two mile-long hill with me clinging to that winejar for dear life and Roy shouting a 'running commentary' into my left ear on my cousin, the surrounding landscape, the Martigues fishermen, their peculiar customs and habits, Roy's particular passion for Pope and Byron, the special virtues of Provençal aromatic herbs such as *rosemarin* and *marjolaine* and heaven only knows what other topics besides.

Sure, the French played a fine, spectacular rugby, that voice continued to reverberate triumphantly into my ear. They gave the ball plenty of air, flung it about as gaily as if it were a great golden

orange. And Rimbaud had said Baudelaire was a god. What a poet, Baudelaire, marble and music at one and the same time. Marble as to his form, pure music as to his rich, singing line. How on earth was one going to translate that fantastically simple but quite magical last line from *Receuillement: Entends, ma chère, entends, la douce Nuit qui marche?* Or: . . . . *Surgir du fond des eaux le Regret souriant* from the same splendid sonnet?

And Rimbaud was a god, too. The most miraculous of all miracle children.

Et, dès lors, je me suis baigné dans le poème
De la mer infusé d'astres et latescent. . . .

Roy's voice had acquired a slow, rocking, submarine cadence.

Million d'oiseaux d'or, o future Vigueur . . .
Oh, que ma quille éclate! Oh, que j'aille à la mer! . . .

There was no doubt about it, all modern poetry derived from Baudelaire and Rimbaud. And how the French backs, and even their forwards, handled a wet ball. Long swinging passes and they never missed it either. What dash, what verve, what brio! Perhaps their forwards weren't as good as ours. Not scientific, not methodic enough. Yes, yes, what enthusiasm for Rugby on the part of these *mordus* of the South. . . .

Did I know Valery's *Cimitière Marin?* A magnificent conceptual poem, with the poet's thought taking wing and singing while it soared, that effortless lovely flight sustained, man, from first to last line. *L'argile rouge a bu la blanche espèce*—and Roy's megaphone voice had dropped to a reverent, elegiac whisper—*tout va sous terre et rentre dans le jeu. . . .* What an incredible line that: *l'argile rouge a bu la blanche espèce.*

Gosh, the voice was roaring in my ear again, but Carnecerito (the Little Butcher) de Méjico was an incorrigible romanticist, he violated, no, he raped every canon of the classical concepts of bull-fighting. But what courage, *que valiente!* Domingo Ortega was the finest *torero* he'd seen to date. What grace, elegance, accomplishment. To watch him on top of his form was like reading a description by Homer of Hector in action. He'd take me to the first *corrida* at the 2,000 year-old Roman arena at Arles this summer.

Apollinaire was an exquisite poet.

L'amour s'en va comme cette eau courante. . . .
L'amour s'en va. . . .
Comme la vie est lente
Et comme l'Espérance est violente. . . .

What music, it just flowed on and on in your memory.

La joie venait toujours après la peine.
Sous le pont Mirabeau coule la Seine. . . .

Sure, *Le Pont Mirabeau* was the lyric to end all lyrics on the Seine or

any river for that matter. But then you never knew with the true poet. He could surprise you at any moment. No, his hangover wasn't so bad now, he was feeling much better.

And Apollinaire wasn't only modern, he was classical at the same time, in the great singing tradition of French poets from de Ronsard onwards. Did I know *La Chanson du Mal Aimé?* A remarkable poem, quite remarkable. And then there was Corbiére, rough, astringent, bold, *rébarbatif.* His hangover, man, was gone, clean gone. *Il s'est volatilisé.* He was doing fine, splendid. *Le vierge, le vivace et le bel aujourd'hui.* . . . That was Mallarmé that, a fabulous line. And Verlaine, what a pure lyrical gift he had, *le pauvre Lélian.* . . . The Martingoles had taught him what to do with the common or garden mussel. Mistral, surely, was the greatest epic poet of his century. He'd prepare me a dish of mussels tonight that would linger on my palate like a Verlaine lyric on the ear. Now Marcel Lalanda, there was another bullfighter for you. Verlaine . . .

We were still flashing down that endless hill at a breathtaking speed, so it was a relief to glide, a few minutes later, along that last cool level under the tall planes and to hear again the invisible nightingales scatter, like a silver rain, their tremulous song, high, thin and ecstatic, over our bowed heads.

At half-past-eight that evening we returned with two full demi-johns—the winejar had somehow got broken—to the *mas*, Roy's wife, Mary, and their two little daughters, Teresa and Anna.

Until that moment our conversation had been like a Marathon race—with Roy miles out in front, followed by half a dozen fishermen, a French aristocrat and sculptor, a Spanish taxi-driver, a carpenter, a basketmaker, an ex-circus clown, a punch-drunk boxer, a broken-down bullfighter, the local gravedigger, and myself lost somewhere in the middle of that motley straggling field.

Deprived of so stimulating an audience, Roy's conversation showed no signs of flagging but continued to 'glance from heaven to earth with a fine frenzy rolling'.

The next morning—when the sun rose out of the Mediterranean making the grey-green canals of Martigues run with crimson—Roy and I, in that order, were still talking.

THE POETRY OF ROBERT FROST

by JOHN R. DOYLE, Jnr

NO READER lingers over a Frost poem without observing the complete accuracy with which he presents the concrete details that constitute the scenes and actions from which his poems spring. Foolish it would be, of course, to contend that accuracy in the handling of concrete details makes a poem good, or even that such accuracy makes a poem at all. The critic who claims that any one characteristic must be present to create a poem is eventually made to look foolish by a poet who finds it possible to do without that one particular thing. If the recorded poetry of the world proves anything, it proves that a poem is never one fixed element, or a fixed combination of elements but a combination of elements the boundaries of which are constantly being shifted. Thus, though a reader or critic of Robert Frost's poems notices immediately the accurately observed physical facts, there is no need to assume there is no other way to write a poem. What can be said is that this is Robert Frost's way. Also it can be said that this way of beginning is one of the possible good ways; for if the poet has been faithful to his scene and to what takes place within that scene, nothing can cut his foundation from beneath him. He has reached the point upon which firm structures can be built. From that position he can move upward and outward; he can expand as far as his creative abilities permit.

It was *North of Boston* that brought Robert Frost fame as the poet of New England. In this volume were found the homely incidents and the anecdotes and character sketches so intensely redolent of the land of the pointed firs, of birches, ferns, maples, haying, blueberries, rocky soil, and scant speech. From the first much has been said and written about this use of New England materials. The emphasis, however, should be placed upon the word use, for when raw materials are mistaken for artistic creation, possibility of criticism has already been precluded.

The author says in the beginning of *North of Boston* that it is a book of people, and critics often have added, of New England people. Though the critics' claim is completely true, some critics have at times focused attention on the New England element to the exclusion of more important considerations. A human character is a human character whether he resides in Maine or Texas, whether he lives by farming in Kansas or running a general store in Georgia. New England has given Robert Frost his raw material, but the poems are about universal human nature, not about sectional human nature. The significance of the sectional characteristics in the poems lies in the fact that Frost has not betrayed his readers by falsifying either his people in relation to their environment or their environ-

ment in relation to the poeple. Because of this fidelity, Frost's individuals assume universal significance.

Amy Lowell was one of the well known critics who started the thinking in the wrong direction. Of *North of Boston* she wrote,

> . . . Heavy thunderstorms drench the lonely roads and spatter on the walls of farm-houses rotting in abandonment; and the modern New England town, with narrow frame houses, visited by drummers alone, is painted in all its ugliness. For Mr Frost's is . . . a latter-day New England, where a civilisation is decaying to give place to another and very different one.
>
> . . . His people are left-overs of the old stock, morbid, pursued by phantoms, slowing sinking to insanity. In 'The Black Cottage' we have the pathos of the abandoned house, after the death of the stern, narrow woman who had lived in it. In 'A Servant to Servants' we have a woman already insane once and drifting there again, with the consciousness that her drab, monotonous life is bringing it upon her. 'Home Burial' gives the morbidness of death in these remote places; a woman unable to take up her life again when her only child had died. . . . 'The Generation of Men' shows that foolish pride in a useless race which is so strange a characteristic of these people. It is all here—the book is the epitome of a decaying New England.

Amy Lowell read *North of Boston*, saw that it presented a present day New England, and saw that it was not the usual local color mush. With no further thought, she abandoned the book and said what she wanted to say about this 'latter-day New England'.

Another estimate of Frost's work is found in a statement by Waldo Frank in the preface to *The Collected Poems of Hart Crane.*

> . . . the great tradition had borne fruit in two general forms. The first was the ideological art of what Lewis Mumford calls the Golden Day: a prophetic art of poets so diverse as Emerson, Thoreau, Poe, whose vision was one of Possibility and whose doom, since its premise was a disappearing world, was to remain suspended in the thin air of aspiration. The second was within the lives of the common people. Acceptance of the ideal of the great tradition had its effect upon their character; and their humbler achievement is recorded, perhaps finally, in the poems of Robert Frost. Frost's art, unlike Whitman's or Melville's, is one of Probability. It gives us not a vision, but *persons*. They are frustrate, poor, often mad. They face grimly their resurgent hills, knowing the failure of their lives to enact the beauty of their great tradition. Yet their dwelling within it for many generations, their acceptance of its will for their own, has given them even in defeat a fibre of strength, a smoldering spark of victory; and it is

> this in the verse of Frost that makes it poetry of a high order.

Amy Lowell is wrong in her appraisal when she sees only 'abandonment', 'ugliness', 'morbidness', 'insanity', the 'narrow', 'foolish pride in a useless race', and 'the epitome of a decaying New England' with no redeeming qualities; Waldo Frank is right, at least on the surface when he says that the '*persons*' of Frost's poems show, even in defeat, 'a smoldering spark of victory'. Yet it seems that Waldo Frank is more interested in ideas than in poetry.

In this discussion it may help to recall the charge that John Crowe Ransom brings against modern poets (and he might have included critics):

> They seem to want to do without wit and playfulness, dramatic sense, detachment, and it has cut them off from the practice of an art.

Certainly one of the first things a poet needs (or a critic needs) is a dramatic sense, detachment. This does not mean that the materials out of which he builds may not be in part or even completely out of his own experience. Chaucer in *The Canterbury Tales* is perhaps often writing out of his personal experiences. Most readers, however, are not concerned with the tales as a display of Chaucer's experience or as a picture of 14th century England. They are interested in the persons and what happens to them. As it is with *The Canterbury Tales* so it is with *North of Boston*. Most readers will have slight concern for the social decay of a specific geographical area at a given period of American history, even if it existed (I am sure it was news to Frost that he was trying to present this decay). Rather, most readers will be interested in the first faint stirrings, the growth, and recognition of young love in 'The Generations of Men'; in the gleeful annoyers of the poker-faced Lorens who live on the berries of the community, in 'Blueberries'; in the brook that is said to start on the top of a mountain, the water of which is cold in summer and hot in winter, in 'The Mountain'; and in whether or not the woman has been found out and is being followed, in 'The Fear'. So it goes throughout the volume—it is the intensely human situation that captivates the reader.

In profound contrast to the long-faced philosophizings of the Lowells and the Franks is the simple and hearty love of the country and its people by Lafe, in 'A Hundred Collars'. Lafe is neither wallowing in the last throes of misery in a modern New England town, 'painted in all of its ugliness' (which is where Amy Lowell would place him) or one of those who 'face grimly their resurgent hills, knowing the failure of their lives to enact the beauty of their great tradition' (as Waldo Frank would have him). Lafe's natural surroundings have become a part of his own being. Everything about him suggests frankness. He has an easy flow of language, he likes people and people like him. For the reader, what happens is that soon he has come to know a character that he will never forget. And Lafe is only one of many characters in this 'book of people'.

Other accomplishments, especially the success with the dramatic narratives of *North of Boston*, for years tended to monopolize the attention given Frost and thus left little noticed a group of lyrics which should finally find their place among the poet's most enduring work. 'Flower-gathering', 'Going for Water', 'To the Thawing Wind', and 'October', which appeared in the author's first book, are the earliest of these lyrics which continued until the publication of 'Happiness Makes Up in Height for What It Lacks in Length' and 'Come In' of Frost's seventh volume, when the author was sixty-seven. I wish to discuss three of these short lyrics from the author's early, middle, and late work. I shall start with the early poem, 'To the Thawing Wind'.

Come with rain, O loud Southwester!
Bring the singer, bring the nester;
Give the buried flower a dream;
Make the settled snowbank steam;
Find the brown beneath the white;
But whate'er you do tonight,
Bathe my window, make it flow,
Melt it as the ice will go;
Melt the glass and leave the sticks
Like a hermit's crucifix;
Burst into my narrow stall;
Swing the picture on the wall;
Run the rattling pages o'er;
Scatter poems on the floor;
Turn the poet out of door.

There is great technical rightness in the poet's choice of method: couplets for a poem that must ride on the blasts of a 'loud Southwester'—and a triple rhyme as a concluding last; strongly accented initial syllables and also strongly accented final syllables; words which suggest noise, rush, flurry. All of this is excellent in providing tone, but cannot be dissociated from the images (more than a dozen in so brief a poem) which drench the reader as the spring rain drenches the landscape. Some of the images create an object for observation but do not invite a prolonged examination. The images of the first couplets are first level, immediately complete as the mind closes its tentacles around the sensuous details. For the image of the second couplet extended contemplation is not invited, but the mind holds on a little longer because the images are progressive, from the unthawed snowbank to the settling, steaming white now beginning to give way to brown. As the poem proceeds, other images inspire a more lingering inspection:

Give the buried flower a dream;

This is in the tradition of Chaucer's

And bathed every veyne in switch licour
Of which vertu engendered is the flour;

As all good poets must do, Frost here in this serious-joyous poem

gives new context to an old idea. The exquisite compression he has attained suggests the source of much of his poetic strength.

Back to the poem, for the most original and arresting images are yet to come:

> But whate'er you do tonight,
> Bathe my window, make it flow,
> Melt it as the ice will go;
> Melt the glass and leave the sticks
> Like a hermit's crucifix;

The 'fun' starts with the third line and grows to a climax in the fifth, with surprise and delight over the turn the poem has taken. The disappearance of the glass of the window ends the poet's period of looking at but not coming in contact with the natural world; just so, the melting of the ice that encases the earth brings the poet back into contact with the earth, the source of strength. Though the poet requests that the thaw melt the glass, he asks that it leave 'the sticks/ Like a hermit's crucifix; . . .' The elimination of the glass gives the poet his desire and the retention of the sticks keeps for him the symbol of his love for the things he worships. The 'crucifix idea' becomes even stronger because of the reinforcement from the next three lines, which lines it in turn colors:

> Burst into my narrow stall;
> Swing the picture on the wall;
> Run the rattling pages o'er;

Clearly 'the picture' and 'the . . . pages' are the expected equipment in the hermit's 'narrow stall'. His devotions are being upset by violence. The passive life of contemplation now gives way to the active life of the physical world.

The two concluding lines offer the final insight that fuses all that has preceded:

> Scatter poems on the floor;
> Turn the poet out of door.

The hermit is now poet, though that does not invalidate his role as hermit—living apart from men in certain or many ways. On the wall there is perhaps no picture of the Master of Galilee, but there is probably one of another master, Dan Chaucer, who could write in spring, 'Farewell my book and my devotion.' And though the 'rattling pages' are probably not Augustine or Aquinas, they are perhaps Virgil or Shakespeare. The poems on the floor need not be lamented, for there is proof that they were not lost.

The second lyric which I wish to consider is from the middle of Frost's writing life. It is a poem of only forty words, called 'Nothing Gold Can Stay'.

> Nature's first green is gold,
> Her hardest hue to hold.
> Her early leaf's a flower;
> But only so an hour.

Then leaf subsides to leaf.
So Eden sank to grief,
So dawn goes down to day.
Nothing gold can stay.

Biblical precept and plenty of examples demonstrate that gold cannot stay; so a reader feels strangely at home as he reads the title of this, one of Frost's shortest poems. In fact, everything in the poem seems familiar, everything except the whole of it.

The poem opens with images offering the freshness of spring; but, as in a dream, when one reaches for the object it is gone.

Nature's first green is gold,

but this first green is of a delicate and transitory quality that is already disappearing even as it is being born. Truly the golden green is

Her hardest hue to hold.

When nature begins to stir,

Her early leaf's a flower;
But only so an hour.

By line four the pattern is set. These desirable things are given, but not to keep. The process goes on as

. . . leaf subsides to leaf.

Coming at its very heart, 'subsides' is the word on which the poem balances. Before it appears, 'subsides' has been prepared for; afterwards, it is echoed.

So Eden sank to grief,
So dawn goes down to day.
Nothing gold can stay.

The impact of the poem comes from the inversion of the expected order which 'subsides' imposes upon the reader. He must re-examine the situation and see why 'subsides' has been used instead of expands, or grows, or enlarges, or advances. These words apply to the normal growing process, the increasing size, moving towards maturity; 'subsides' applies to another aspect of the situation, the one being prepared for in the first four lines. As the leaf grows, it loses its green delicateness, its youthful qualities. It is the youthful characteristics that are the hardest to hold.

So Eden sank to grief,

The archetype of golden youthfulness and innocence was soon lost before the onslaught of the properties of the tree of knowledge.

So dawn goes down to day.

As Wordsworth observed, the 'vision splendid'

fades into the light of common day.

No, nothing gold can stay. While the mother, oblivious of time, fondles a golden headed bundle, the bundle has decided to crawl away, and stand, and walk, and . . . As the landscape painter relishes the peculiarly golden glory of the sunset, it has faded.

So cleanly and directly is 'Nothing Gold can Stay' written that one hesitates to do more than present it and linger briefly to allow

the implications to begin to radiate; but the poem, despite its slightness, represents so important a part of Frost's thinking that it demands comment. For two hundred and fifty years, it has been a commonplace of English literature to bewail the fleeting moment, the shortness of youth, of love, of life. The thinking which created this trend in literature is a basic part of the modern world, and is parallel to the widespread use of clocks and watches, and the concern of the modern world for the passage of time. It is, of course, possible to be aware of the passing moment without lamenting it. Because Frost believes this, his poem ends where it began, in a repetition of the initial claim; and the center of the poem presents samples of that which did not stay. The significant thing is to accept the moment before it passes. It is the way to master the flux of life. Perfection, or the realm of pure being, for which poets like Keats and Shelley and Poe sought, does not exist in Frost's poetry. Since the transitoriness of life is a fact, he says life will have to be that way. In one poem of this period, a poem called 'Acceptance' he says, 'Let what will be, be'. This attitude of acceptance is one reason for the lyric strength of his poems: his attitude allows him to love many aspects of external nature and of human nature because he is not taken up with lamenting what he cannot change. The poem 'Nothing Gold Can Stay' becomes, thus, a compliment to the gold things of the world, even if they cannot stay.

The third and last lyric I shall undertake to analyze appeared at the beginning of Frost's last great period. For the moment, I wish to withhold the title.

If a person wished to write a poem about overspecialization in a technological civilization, what would he say? The subject is very serious, and material is abundant. Naturally there will be many possible ways of treating the subject. It is quite likely that he might decide that the use of the ancient and trusted method of the fable will help give esthetic distance for a subject which is so much a part of the thinking of the moment, and that the activities of the ant will serve as a good symbol of a planned, unfeelingly regulated life. Perhaps (for the moment not putting the material into meter and rhyme, though this is a method Frost would never use) he creates a fable which runs something like this:

> An ant on the table cloth ran into a dormant moth that was many times the size of the ant. The ant did not show the least surprise. His business was not with moths. He gave the moth scarcely a touch and was off to attend to his duties. Yet, if he encountered a member of the ant hive's enquiry squad, he would inform him of what he had seen. Crossing hurriedly the body of one of his own race, even then an ant does not pause—nor is he impressed. But no doubt he reports to any he meets, and word travels on to the proper source, for soon a proclamation is issued: Jerry McCormic is dead; the special group detailed for

such work will go and bury him. Presently a mortician appears and carries the dead body away. No one stands round to watch because it is not their affair.

This is a good example of the departmental life.

The above is the fable that Robert Frost created when he wished to discuss the departmental, specialized, and fragmentary nature of twentieth century western civilization; but the fable above as writing lacks everything which might make it memorable, though a large percentage of Frost's original vocabulary has been retained. As written above, the fable has little to offer except the 'point'. The classical 'To teach or instruct' without the equally classical 'To amuse or delight' can offer many an example of flatness and dullness. The fable that Robert Frost actually wrote goes thus:

DEPARTMENTAL *or*, THE END OF MY ANT JERRY

An ant on the tablecloth
Ran into a dormant moth
Of many times his size.
He showed not the least surprise.
His business wasn't with such.
He gave it scarcely a touch,
And was off on his duty run.
Yet if he encountered one
Of the hives' enquiry squad
Whose work is to find out God
And the nature of time and space,
He would put him onto the case.
Ants are a curious race;
One crossing with hurried tread
The body of one of their dead
Isn't given a moment's arrest—
Seems not even impressed.
But he no doubt reports to any
With whom he crosses antennae,
And they no doubt report
To the higher up at Court.
Then word goes forth in Formic:
'Death's come to Jerry McCormic,
Our selfless forager Jerry.
Will the special Janizary
Whose office it is to bury
The dead of the commissary
Go bring him home to his people.
Lay him in state on a sepal.
Wrap him for shroud in a petal.
Embalm him with ichor of nettle.
This is the word of your Queen.'
And presently on the scene

Appears a solemn mortician;
And taking formal position
With feelers calmly atwiddle,
Seizes the dead by the middle,
And heaving him high in air,
Carries him out of there.
No one stands round to stare.
It is nobody else's affair.

It couldn't be called ungentle.
But how thoroughly departmental.

There are many differences between the first and the second of the above versions of 'Departmental', but certainly one of the major differences is that the first lacks entirely the humor of the second. To begin with, the first version omits two passages which make important contributions to the humor of the poem. Except for upsetting the rhyme, the progress of the poem is unbroken by the omission of these passages, since their work is clearly other than that of furthering the narrative. The first of these passages is the description of the duties 'Of the hives' enquiry squad'

Whose work is to find out God
And the nature of time and space,

The second is the direct rendering of the Queen's proclamation. Also, the first version omits such unusual words as capital F Formic, Janizary, and ichor of nettle—all of which contribute to the humor of the poem. And then all important, the first version does not have the rhymes of the second. In fact, this poem can be quite successfully studied through an examination of its rhymes and a study of the remarkable internal juxtapositions which they set up. These juxtapositions, together with the rhymes, the average of one anapaestic foot per line (in a tri-metric line), the fourteen run-on lines, and the eighteen feminine endings, form the poem's sound pattern and in large part create its tone. All of these except the anapaestic feet would have to be discussed in a thorough consideration of rhyme in the poem. The poem, then, is a rather complete answer to those who try to separate form and what they call 'content'. What 'Departmental' has to say is said through its form, especially its rhymes.

The rhymes of the poem bring a series of delightful surprises. The reader is amazed and amused by the poem's two quadruple rhymes: The first brings together a very common English Christian name, a noun which goes back to the 14th century and refers to a body of Turkish infantry, an infinitive so common that all will some day be concerned with it, and a noun of rather limited usage and denotation. In the second passage, who but a master craftsman could secure such a natural flow of language while rhyming a common concrete noun, an adverb of place, an infinitive designating action, and an abstract noun? Who will not be surprised to find a rhyme empha-

sizing a relationship between 'God' and 'enquiry squad' and between 'people' and 'sepal'? Who will not be astonished and delighted when 'to any' finds its rhyme in 'antennae' and when the mortician 'with feelers calmly atwiddle,/ Seizes the dead by the middle.'

The poem is filled with basic fun. But there is more in the poem than fun, or perhaps it is more correct to say that the fun does not stop at being merely the producer of a laugh or at creating in the reader an advantageous psychological state. For purposes of analysis, examine these rather simple-appearing lines:

Go bring him home to his people.
Lay him in state in a sepal.
Wrap him for shroud in a petal.
Embalm him with ichor of nettle.

Rhyme proper joins 'people-sepal' and 'petal-nettle', and all four words are joined in sharp contrast; but the really significant contrasts go beyond the rhyme words. The first line is built of words and/or phrases to which most people have powerful stock responses. Even without context, 'home' and 'people' evoke considerable feeling, but the verbal setting here is reminiscent of many emotionally charged situations. 'Go bring him home' recalls Housman's familiar line 'Shoulder-high we bring you home' (first in victory and then in death), the 'Going home, going home' (where home means Heaven) which has sounded through many a church, and the Biblical 'Go' and 'Bring' passages. The phrase 'to his people' has been a basic phrase in literature since Naomi returned to her people and Ruth gave expression to her famous 'Thy people shall be my people'. Thus it is clear that the line projects a situation evocative of deep emotions and serious dignity—the returned beloved or the honored. The next line establishes the home coming as death, 'Lay him in state'. To lie in state indicates a person of importance. Having built up the scene to one of seriousness, dignity, and importance, the author is able to get a very special effect by introducing words which suddenly reduce the world to ant size. Thrice over the method is used. The reduction is, of course, in size, not in quality or appropriateness.

Naturally reader reaction to this passage will be in terms of the total context. A reader will know that the dead body did not impress the fellow ant, did not even slow him up. Lack of concern is mentioned again at the conclusion of the poem.

No one stands round to stare.
It is nobody else's affair.

Instead of coming as a result of private or popular feeling, the honor accorded the dead is by official proclamation. The reader will know this, and will reach the proclamation by way of,

Then word goes forth in Formic:

The line quite literally means, 'Then word goes forth in Ant (language): . . . .' What seemed perhaps a shift in the grammar of a common adjective to secure a comic sound turns out to be a word which can say 'Ant (language)' and also suggest, by saying 'in Formic', that 'word has gone forth in *form*', an official proclamation.

From the first line laid down, the poem is very sure of where it is heading. The 'tablecloth' is a good setting for an ant who is a 'forager'. The ant gives the 'dormant moth' scarcely a touch not so much because investigation would be uninteresting but because he is on his 'duty run'. In the 'departmental' life, he has no time for such. But he will see that a report gets to the proper department if he does not have to go out of his way to perform the act. Everything in due order. When an ant crosses the body of a dead ant, the encounter gives no more pause than the encounter with the moth. But, as before, he reports, and the well ordered hive moves to perform the proper duties; a mortician appears, the body is disposed of. All of the action of the poem is so correct, so smooth, so desirable. Yet the diction, and the rhymes continually evoke laughter. Is there a reader who can keep a straight face in the presence of the mortician who is so properly performing his assigned duty? The dignity of the scene, the solemnity, formality, and calmness of the mortician suddenly explode in the word 'atwiddle' and all that follows. Of course the reader will know that an ant is dead, bnt enough of the comment is in human terms to leave the reader in open-mouthed astonishment when the body, a moment before lying 'in state', is seized by the middle and heaved high in the air.

Establishing a poem as humorous, especially as definitely humorous as this one, raises another problem. Those who refuse to accept the presence of humor in a serious poem also refuse to accept the presence of seriousness in a humorous poem. They will enjoy the fun but then refuse to allow it a place among significant poems. These people (as Robert Penn Warren has suggested in his excellent essay 'Pure and Impure Poetry') want their poetry pure, not with life's impurities. They believe that the comic is all right—in its place, of course. Fortunately, many of the great poets of the world did not agree with these people, though there are many poets who have. Both points of view have existed in literature from the beginning—literature by inclusion and literature by exclusion. A broad useful division can be made between those writers who accept the incongruous along with the congruous, and those writers who take themselves and their world too seriously and insist on the presence of only what should be, or what the writer and his age say should be.

The work of Robert Frost the poet is now so nearly complete that it is possible to make a few general statements about the nature of his achievement.

The dramatic method dominates the early work, but a lyric strength develops as the dramatic becomes less noticeable. The dramatic approach created the so called dramatic narratives. Seventeen of these poems are of such a quality that alone they would secure for Frost a place among America's significant poets. Beginning, however, in 1923, there came a rapidly accumulating collection

of lyrics which, also considered alone, would secure for their author a place among America's significant poets. There were, of course, lyrics before 1923 which cannot be ignored in any collection of Frost's lyrics. There would be some thirty-odd poems in the group of lyrics. Still a third grouping of poems, which can be placed neither with the dramatic narratives and the poems very definitely dramatic in nature nor with the more purely lyric poems, would place Frost among the significant poets of the twentieth century. Here there would be something like a dozen poems.

A critic may pause and wonder what should be done with the poems of this third group, which certainly do not form a homogenous collection—for that matter neither do the first two groups. Are several other classifications to be made to secure unity? No. Classification if taken too far and too seriously is worse than useless. Yet, as one of Frost's poems says, 'there are roughly zones'. Accepted in this way, classification can be useful.

Roughly, then, it can be said that the strongly dramatic phase of Frost's work came early; the stronger lyric phase during the middle years. In his early years, Frost used the dramatic method even in very short poems which are lyric in tone though dramatic in structure. During this period he made dramatic much material not usually considered useful for that purpose, and frequently he employed the method to give intensity to contrasts.

Perhaps most important of all, and one of the reasons why too exact classification becomes absurd, is the conclusion that what has been called the dramatic method is not a rigid approach or a fixed form but a way of viewing material. The lesson of this conclusion seems significant: when the more purely dramatic poems ceased, the lyrics which replaced them were effective because the author had learned well the dramatic view. While the intensity of the lyric quality has in part consumed the dramatic structure, the breath and blood and motion of drama remain.

SHAKESPEARE'S *JULIUS CAESAR*

by R. T. JONES

> It might be plausibly maintained that in almost every one of the leading controversies, past or present, in social philosophy, both sides were in the right in what they affirmed, though wrong in what they denied; and that if either could have been made to take the other's views in addition to its own, little more would have been needed to make its doctrine correct. . . .
>
> J. S. Mill, *Coleridge*.

IF, UNTIL FAIRLY RECENTLY, most critics were inclined to see Brutus as a wholly admirable hero, whose fall was the more to be pitied because it was entirely unmerited and whose very errors of judgment constituted criticisms not of him but of the rest of humanity who failed to live up to his exalted conception of them, the current distortion (as it seems to me) of the play tends rather towards an interpretation of Brutus as a pompous, vain and opinionated simpleton whose lack of warmth is shown up by the contrasting humanity of Cassius.

The play is, I hope to demonstrate, more complex than either of these interpretations would suggest; a more complete account of it would be given by a synthesis of the two apparently opposite views. Of the major characters, Brutus alone commands respect from first to last; and it is the very fact that we are compelled to admire him that makes the play's criticisms of him important and disturbing. I cannot believe that this is not the actual effect of the play on most readers and spectators; the denial of homage to Brutus is commonly not a failure to feel but a refusal to admit.

C. Ligarius: Vouchsafe good morrow from a feeble tongue.
Brutus: O, what a time have you chose out, brave Caius,
To wear a kerchief! Would you were not sick!
C. Ligarius: I am not sick if Brutus have in hand
Any exploit worthy the name of honour.
Brutus: Such an exploit have I in hand, Ligarius,
Had you a healthful ear to hear of it.
C. Ligarius: By all the gods that Romans bow before,
I here discard my sickness. Soul of Rome! . . .
(II i 313-321)

The effect of Brutus' greatness is here seen, not merely described; a valid interpretation of the play must evidently account sufficiently for his power over men. Even Cassius, after the assasination, says

Brutus shall lead . . . (III i 120)

and always submits to his opinion; the 'blunt fellow' Casca says of him:

O, he sits high in all the people's hearts:
And that which would appear offence in us,
His countenance, like richest alchemy,
Will change to virtue and to worthiness.
(I iii 157-160)

But such explicit descriptions are perhaps less impressive than the implications of Cassius' persuasive speech to Brutus:

O, you and I have heard our fathers say,
There was a Brutus once that would have brook'd
Th' eternal devil to keep his state in Rome
As easily as a king.
(I ii 156-159)

That is the appeal to which Brutus responds: an appeal to the honour of his family and to his principles.

It is the ideal of the Honourable Man—the Noble Roman *par excellence*—that is given flesh and blood in the play in the person of Brutus. He is the man who rigorously suppresses his personal inclinations in the interests of the common good, to the extent of killing his best friend and (far more willingly) sacrificing his own life.

This ideal is, of course, far from obsolete; it is the implicit standard by which public men are commonly criticized, and the exposure of a flagrant deviation from it can still (at any rate in Britain) oblige a Cabinet Minister to resign. Admittedly we recognize intellectually that certain dangers are associated with the ideal; the persistent subjection of impulse to principle is commonly believed (perhaps too naïvely) to be invariably damaging to the psyche, and in public life a man whose view of moral integrity permits him to use his influence in favour only of people whom he positively dislikes is no longer regarded as greatly superior, in terms of absolute justice, to the man who regularly helps his friends. But this recognition has only modified our mental concept of the ideal; in practice the Honourable Man still commands respect and loyalty.

It is not, then, merely a historical phenomenon that we recognize when tributes are paid to Brutus, like Antony's at the end of the play:

This was the noblest Roman of them all.
All the conspirators save only he
Did that they did in envy of great Caesar;
He only, in a general honest thought
And common good to all, made one of them.
His life was gentle, and the elements
So mix'd in him, that Nature might stand up
And say to all the world, 'This was a man!'
(V v 68-75)

When in the course of the play we find Brutus, and in him the ideal itself, subjected to criticism, we shall not think of the ideal as being set up merely to be knocked down again if we bear in mind the force of this final assessment of Brutus; the tendency of the whole

play is evidently not to damn Brutus and what he represents. It is, rather, a part of the function of the play to test in practice an ideal that is commonly honoured, and the outcome of the test is nothing so simple as a pass or fail. Perhaps the reader's and the spectator's most rewarding task is to observe how scrupulously and delicately the test is carried out.

'To test in practice. . . .' This phrase may be felt to make excessive claims for the power of a work of fiction to determine truth. But a dramatist's imagination is not free: his enjoyment of absolute power over the people he creates is modified, in so far as he is a good dramatist, by his awareness of the need to be continually on his guard against the temptation to make his characters do what he would like them to do. That, once the *données* of the play are defined, his characters should behave as they would in reality—or more precisely that their actions should be consistently related to reality through a sufficiently defined convention—constitutes not merely the added charm of 'versimilitude' but the primary condition for the play's being taken seriously. For a play is, unless it degenerates into self-indulgent make-believe, a statement of 'the way things are' (the vagueness of this phrase reflects nothing in the nature of dramatic communication but only my own reluctance to give misleading precision to a hasty generalization); it is a process of applying to the particular case one man's whole experience of reality. When the dramatist's imagination operates with the intensity and rigorous honesty of Shakespeare's, an experiment on the stage becomes equivalent to a test in practice.

Revolutions, whether violent or not, are often held to be useless because their leaders, if successful, generally turn out to be little better than their predecessors. But how different it would be if only one had a leader whom one could trust completely . . . *Julius Caesar* presents experimentally a revolution led by such a man: a wholly honest man, the very heart of honour—the Noble Roman, Brutus. Our processes of logical deduction could never, I think, have shown us why it had to fail: the complexity of the argument would approach infinity. The act of creative imagination that is Shakespeare's play demonstrates before our eyes its necessary failure.

In order that this should be possible, Brutus must represent the ideal without being merely an abstract personification of it, and without being one who just happens to fit it. In the play he is in fact a man who tries, with the greatest degree of success conceivable, to live up to the ideal. It is to this dominant motive in Brutus that Cassius appeals when he says, 'There was a Brutus once. . . .' We must not assume too readily that Brutus' references to his own merits constitute a condemnation of him; they are almost entirely accounted for by several reasons that do not cast a slur on him, and one of those reasons is that he is (by definition, as it were) a man of principle; a man who consciously regulates his life in accordance with his chosen philosophy.

When Brutus says,

> If it be ought toward the general good,
> Set honour in one eye, and death i' th' other,
> And I will look on both indifferently;
> For let the gods so speed me as I love
> The name of honour more than I fear death,
> (I ii 84-88)

I do not find in these lines, in their immediate context, any distasteful self-praise on Brutus' part. Shakespeare's convention allows a character to describe himself truthfully ('I am determined to prove a villain'), almost as if it is the actor who is describing the character he portrays; in this case it is rather Brutus who is describing the standard he has set for himself. Some of his later comments on himself, on the other hand, *do* seem to me to suggest too great a conscious preoccupation with his own reputation; and we may then in retrospect see something of a similar implication in the lines I have quoted. Consider, for example,

> There is no terror, Cassius, in your threats;
> For I am arm'd so strong in honesty
> That they pass by me as the idle wind,
> Which I respect not.
> (IV iii 66-69)

Here we cannot help reflecting on the entirely different effect that would have been created if somebody else had said

> For he is arm'd so strong in honesty
> That they pass by him as the idle wind,
> Which he respects not.

Yet the incipient criticism is disarmed by the disconcerting realization that what Brutus says is absolutely true. We remember the storm in I iii, in which the phlegmatic Casca is frankly terrified and Cassius is intoxicated into an orgy of bravado, and that Brutus' only comment on the same storm is severely rational:

> The exhalations whizzing in the air
> Give so much light that I may read by them.
> (*Opens the letter, and reads*)
> (II i 44-45)

Besides, Cassius' threats can hardly be expected to make a deep impression on the man who so effectively put Caesar's ghost out of countenance at Sardis:

> Brutus: . . . Art thou any thing?
> Art thou some god, some angel, or some devil,
> That mak'st my blood run cold, and my hair to stare?
> Speak to me what thou art.
> Ghost: Thy evil spirit, Brutus.
> Brutus: Why com'st thou?
> Ghost: To tell thee thou shalt see me again at Philippi.
> Brutus: Well; then I shall see thee again?
> Ghost: Ay, at Philippi.

Brutus: Why, I will see thee at Philippi then. (*Exit Ghost*
Now I have taken heart thou vanishest.
Ill spirit, I would hold more talk with thee.
(IV iii 277-287)

The modern reader who declares that he finds it easier to sympathize with Cassius than with Brutus, is probably only reacting violently against the earlier fashion of wholehearted admiration for Brutus. That such a preference is in fact perverse is evident from Cassius' own words:

Well, Brutus, thou art noble; yet I see
Thy honourable mettle may be wrought
From that it is dispos'd: therefore 'tis meet
That noble minds keep ever with their likes;
For who so firm that cannot be seduc'd?
Caesar doth bear me hard; but he loves Brutus.
If I were Brutus now, and he were Cassius,
He should not humour me.
(I ii 305-312)

Brutus' dependence on Cassius—who is *not* an honourable man—is, it seems to me, the first criticism of Brutus; and it is for this reason that the character of Cassius is so carefully defined early in the play. If at times certain weaknesses in Brutus are shown up by contrast with Cassius, we must not jump to the absurd conclusion that Cassius is being presented as an alternative ideal; the lines I have just quoted will, if we approach the play without prejudice, be decisive in forming our estimate of him.

The demonstration, by dramatic means, of the final unsatisfactoriness of the ideal represented by Brutus requires that he should be fully human, not merely a morality-play personification of an abstract virtue. This is not easy when an essential part of the ideal to be examined is the suppression of human feelings, but Shakespeare succeeds in showing that such a suppression can be neither complete nor comfortable:

I would it were my fault to sleep so soundly.
(II i 4)

Since Cassius first did whet me against Caesar,
I have not slept.
Between the acting of a dreadful thing
And the first motion, all the interim is
Like a phantasma, or a hideous dream:
The genius and the mortal instruments
Are then in council; and the state of man,
Like to a little kingdom, suffers then
The nature of an insurrection.
(II i 61-69)

The close of this speech reminds of 'Poor Brutus, with himself at war' (I ii 45), and gives the line more meaning than it had when it was spoken. But the most significant note in the speech is sleepless-

ness, which is again associated with the killing of the king in *Macbeth* (which play we may imagine to have grown out of this short speech, so precisely does this strike the keynote of the later play). Brutus' inability to sleep is not again, I think, mentioned explicitly; but it is present throughout the play. Later in the scene we find Brutus addressing the sleeping Lucius:

> Boy! Lucius! Fast asleep? It is no matter;
> Enjoy the honey-heavy dew of slumber:

(the line is full of yearning for the untroubled sleep that Brutus can no longer hope to enjoy)

> Thou has no figures nor no fantasies
> Which busy care draws in the brains of men;
> Therefore thou sleep'st so sound.
>
> (II i 229-233)

Both in this scene and in IV iii Brutus is awake while others sleep.

It will have been noticed that Brutus' sleeplessness starts when Cassius stirs him; the image of Cassius striking fire from Brutus as from a flint occurs twice in the play. At the end of the quarrel between the two, Brutus once more shows strong feelings—again, of course, roused by Cassius:

> Cassius: Do you confess so much? Give me your hand.
> Brutus: And my heart too.
>
> (IV iii 116-117)

What I see here—and I am prepared to erase the image from my mind if it is not agreed that the words themselves suggest it—is Brutus, deeply moved, brushing aside Cassius' hesitantly proffered hand and embracing him; they remain in each other's arms during the subsequent exchange:

> Cassius: O Brutus!
> Brutus: What's the matter?
> Cassius: Have you not love enough to bear with me. . . .

Only Cassius, we understand, could strike "thus much show of fire from Brutus'—could make him behave, one might say, in such an un-English way.

The idea of a revolution led by Brutus, the honourable man, has to be modified at the very outset by the fact that such a man would not voluntarily enter politics without being led, and to some extent misled, by a Cassius.—'A Cassius': is Cassius too, then, in some sense representative as well as individual?

> Caesar: Let me have men about me that are fat,
> Sleek-headed men, and such as sleep a-nights.
> Yond Cassius has a lean and hungry look;
> He thinks too much: such men are dangerous.
> Antony: Fear him not, Caesar, he's not dangerous.
> He is a noble Roman, and well given.
> Caesar: Would he were fatter! But I fear him not:
> Yet if my name were liable to fear ,
> I do not know the man I should avoid

So soon as that spare Cassius. He reads much,
He is a great observer, and he looks
Quite through the deeds of men. He loves no plays,
As thou dost, Antony; he hears no music.
Seldom he smiles, and smiles in such a sort
As if he mock'd himself, and scorn'd his spirit
That could be moved to smile at any thing.
Such men as he be never at heart's ease
Whiles they behold a greater than themselves,
And therefore are they very dangerous.
(I ii 189-207)

From this description, Cassius is recognizable to-day, in any country. His successors are still necessary to any effective political opposition. A century ago he might have been a Radical; fifty years ago an Anarchist; today perhaps a Communist—impelled by a mixture of the highest and lowest motives: passionate love of justice and hatred of tyranny on the one hand, passionate personal envy on the other—passionate in any case: he is the flame of passion without which no political conspiracy can live. In the play, Brutus joins the conspiracy only when Cassius strikes a spark from him and leads him into places he has not wished to enter.

In the quarrel between Brutus and Cassius (IV iii) we have another illustration, in terms that approach caricature, of Brutus' dependence on Cassius for his political existence.

I did send to you
For certain sums of gold, which you denied me;
For I can raise no money by vile means:
By heaven, I had rather coin my heart,
And drop my blood for drachmas, than to wring
From the hard hands of peasants their vile trash
By any indirection.
(IV iii 69-75)

In hard economic fact, we notice, the heart of 'the noblest Roman of them all'—even if it is, as Cassius soon afterwards says of his own, 'dearer than Pluto's mine, richer than gold'—cannot be used for money; it will not pay Brutus' legions. He must therefore demand money from Cassius, but expresses in the same breath his moral indignation at the way Cassius gets the money and his contempt for money so obtained. Brutus must keep his hands clean: that is the source of his strength and authority (which have made him, once enlisted among the conspirators, their recognized leader); we remember that the lines last quoted follow immediately after those given earlier in which Brutus says, '. . . I am arm'd so strong in honesty. . . .' But he must then depend on Cassius, who never doubts that the end justifies the means, for money that he knows to have been dishonestly obtained.

The quarrel arises out of two grievances, and that of Cassius is

no less revealing than Brutus', though, I think, less generally appreciated:

> That you have wrong'd me doth appear in this:
> You have condemn'd and noted Lucius Pella
> For taking bribes here of the Sardians;
> Wherein my letters, praying on his side,
> Because I knew the man, was slighted off.
>
> (IV iii 1-5)

Cassius neither denies the offence nor offers any extenuation of it; for him, 'Because I knew the man' is a clear and sufficient reason for dropping the case. For Brutus, of course, personal considerations were simply irrelevant in a question of justice, and his attitude is the one we expect of legislators and administrators. When we call a government corrupt, we mean simply that its members have allowed themselves to be influenced in their public functions by the kind of motive summed up in 'Because I knew the man'. If a judge attempted to justify an acquittal on the grounds that he 'knew the man', few would defend his action except others who might be encouraged to expect similar indulgences on the same grounds. Yet Cassius has apparently no notion of a standard of justice by which his appeal would be considered corrupt.

An account of the dependence of Brutus on Cassius must make some reference to the common view that Brutus failed because of his refusal to entertain necessary considerations of expediency. Once he was in the conspiracy, it is argued, his plain duty was to make it succeed; this duty must take precedence over the honour of the individual. It is perhaps the greatest difference between the older interpretation and the new, that the latter associates itself with a kind of political 'realism' that too generously condones the occasional subordination of honour to expediency. Shakespeare was evidently a political realist in the sense that he admitted that this subordination frequently took place; but there is nothing to suggest that he followed that confused chain of reasoning that leads people to believe that what ought to be recognized ought to be condoned, nor that a politician's primary duty is to gain power. On the contrary, he compels our assent when Brutus says,

> I shall have glory by this losing day
> More than Octavius and Mark Antony
> By this vile conquest shall attain unto.
>
> (V v 36-38)

This play even denies—modern 'realists' may find it profitable to chew upon this—that the pursuit of honour is less successful politically, in the long run, than the unscrupulous service of expediency. For it is Cassius who loses the battle of Philippi, not Brutus. Brutus' army is victorious, but Cassius is short-sighted (the symbolic effect of this should modify our recollection of 'He looks quite through the deeds of men': he does, but perhaps not far enough), and, mistaking victory for defeat, kills himself. We are tempted to suppose that if there had been no temperamental Cassius, Brutus might have

defeated Antony and Octavius; but we must resist this argument because what Shakespeare has already demonstrated is that there *had* to be such a Cassius, otherwise Brutus would not have been in the conspiracy nor, being in, able to maintain his troops. The force of Brutus' moral integrity might lead his army to victory, but he is defeated as a direct result of Cassius' failure to have faith in that force.

Brutus is, however, unquestionably unsuccessful when his stern honour is matched against the 'passionate intensity' of Antony for the favour of the mob. Brutus' speech is concise; its purpose is the rational one of communicating information. If there are faults in its logic, they are honest reflections of a certain confusion in Brutus himself, and if it is fragmentary, abrupt and rather pendantically and naïvely rhetorical, it reveals the speaker all the more accurately. It is luminous with honesty; Brutus makes no appeal to the feelings of his listeners and no concessions to their lack of intelligence. Antony's oration, on the other hand, is entirely an appeal to the emotions, and Antony is himself sufficiently emotional to be, in a sense, 'sincere'. At the same time, his intention is clearly to deceive, and he does it extremely well. One remembers Nick Dormer's comment, in Henry James's *The Tragic Muse*, on political oratory in general: 'The better it is, the worse it is: the *kind* is so inferior'. Antony's speech is probably the best, and therefore the worst, political speech in English literature. In the book or on the stage, Antony's motives and unscrupulous methods are obvious to the reader or spectator—we notice, for example, that what his ironic repetition of 'Brutus is an honourable man' does to the mob is not to insinuate a doubt into their minds concerning the veracity of the statement but rather to undermine their belief in honour itself, and that Antony simply doesn't care so long as the mob is effectively roused. At the same time, our contempt for the mob cannot conceal from us the distasteful truth that the kind of political speech that would rouse *us* to excited acceptance would be Antony's kind, not Brutus'.

But (there is always another 'but' when we are discussing *Julius Caesar*, for Shakespeare was not, like some mediocre dramatists, trying to prove a predetermined political theory: he was testing the theory for himself as well as for us) Brutus' speech reveals the radical flaw in his character, and in the ideal he embodies; we have to recognize this while admiring the transparent honesty of the speech that shows the man so clearly. Even before Cassius has suggested a conspiracy against Caesar, Brutus is 'with himself at war' (I ii 45). The cause becomes clear when, being still Caesar's friend, he is led to believe that it is his duty to kill Caesar. To love Caesar as a man, yet to kill him as a political idea, is evidence of a character divided against itself; a failure in Brutus to accept the complexity of a human relationship; a tendency to over-analyze and over-simplify. The division is clear in his funeral oration:

> As Caesar loved me, I weep for him; as he was fortunate, I rejoice at it; as he was valiant, I honour him; but, as he was ambitious, I slew him. There is tears, for his love; joy, for his fortune; honour, for his valour; and death, for his ambition.
>
> (III ii 25-39)

This is evidently too neat. Brutus believes that, by this analytic method, he has responded justly and adequately to each aspect of Caesar. So he has; but a man is not a number of separate and distinct parts; what Brutus has failed to do is to integrate his attitude towards Caesar into one complex and fully human response. What the whole Brutus feels about the whole Caesar remains a mystery, though his vision of Caesar's ghost suggests that he is not inwardly so complacent about the relationship as his oration seems to imply.

Brutus' final consolation is that every man has been true to him. But has he been true to Caesar? Cassius is true to Caesar when he stabs him; for one way of being true to one's enemy is to kill him. But Brutus can hardly be true to his friend when he performs the same act. When Brutus stabs Caesar, he sees only the political idea of Brutus destroying the political idea of Caesar, not the whole man—brain and blood and heart—killing his friend.

But the fault is partly Caesar's. For the man that Brutus has loved in Caesar is very elusive in the play. Caesar suffers from the same disease as Brutus, but in his case the atrophy of the private person has progressed much further. He has developed the political aspect of himself and ignored the rest. Where, in the play, *is* Caesar the whole man, the living being in all his complexity? Caesar himself has suppressed it, in the interests of the Caesar-myth. He is a dictator in the final phase: a dictator taken in almost entirely by his own propaganda. Even when alone with his wife he reveals no human Julius: only the political Caesar. If Brutus has once been a a friend of the whole man Julius Caesar, we can see that there is not much left for him to love.

The evil in Brutus is not obvious or easily definable; it is an evil that is rarely recognized as anything but a virtue in legislators and administrators; but the play reveals it as a sin against life. It is felt to be, finally, not only the pursuit of the ideal of the Noble Roman, or more generally that of the Honourable Man; the evil is the blinkered pursuit of any abstract ideal; any attempt to act consistently in accordance with a predetermined and neatly formulated theory of conduct. A political or moral theory that can be expressed simply, like Brutus' noble Republicanism or Caesar's superhuman personal Imperialism, must always leave out of consideration so much of the complexity of human life that it is bound to lead through over-simplification to distortion; to live by an over-simple view of life is to live a distorted life. Acting on the ideal of Republicanism, Brutus is logically obliged to destroy Caesarism; but because he hates Caesarism on principle, yet loves Caesar, and never

succeeds (or even seriously tries) to find out his *total* attitude towards Caesar as man *and* emperor, he becomes—though noble—that grotesque monster, one who murders without anger. He is even proud of doing so: 'Let's carve him as a dish fit for the gods'.

Yet Brutus is the dramatic hero of the play, and not only in the sense in which Macbeth is a hero. For finally there is no doubt that we admire Brutus. But the play would have failed if we did not find our admiration modified by both pity and horror. The complexity of the play must not, of course, be regarded as an unfortunate complication that obscures 'what Shakespeare really thought'. Shakespeare's judgement of Brutus emerges from the continual shift of sympathy towards and away from him; one is never permitted to feel, until the totality of the play has become a part of one's experience, that one has reached a final judgement of him. This in itself would constitute an invaluable lesson in personal relationships; but the very complexity of the play is at the same time Shakespeare's contribution to political thought and moral philosophy: it is an unescapable reminder of the inter-relation of things that we would prefer, in the interests of neatness and comprehensibility, to deal with separately. This function of the play might be summarized in two lines from what was probably Shakespeare's next play, *Hamlet:*

> There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
> Than are dreamed of in your philosophy

(not, I am convinced, '*your* philosophy', but 'your *philosophy*' in general; Horatio's only in the sense that he is a student).

(This article is to some extent an expansion of an essay first published in the *Bulletin* of the *Sociedade Brasileira de Cultura Inglêsa* for October, 1956.

All line-references are to the 1955 Arden Edition.)

CORRESPONDENCE

(*a*) WORDSWORTH AND THE QUIET

The Editors,
THEORIA.

Dear Sirs,

Theoria No. 10, which contained two letters about my article on Wordsworth, reached me too late for a reply in the next issue. Perhaps by the time *Theoria* No. 12 appears your readers will have forgotten the issues raised, and the discussion will be a little cold. In spite of this I am continuing it, because I think the points at issue are important ones, not only in relation to Wordsworth but for literature as a whole.

I am grateful to Mr Whittock and to Mr Langman for making me re-consider Wordsworth and re-read some of his poetry. Looking at my original article again, I agree that it does leave rather too negative an impression. My thinking about the significance of 'the quiet' in Wordsworth had been started off by a chance remark in one of Hale White's letters, about the pure silence at Alfoxden; and I had intended to limit myself to this one aspect. In fact I went further and discussed the significance of Wordsworth for readers to-day; but I didn't go far enough. I dwelt too much on the bottom end of the scale of quiet and the sonnet I quoted at the end of my article (*Personal Talk*—'I am not one who much or oft delight') was not sufficiently central or significant to represent Wordsworth, although it is in many ways characteristic. I cannot agree with Mr Langman in finding counter-poised against the barren silence described in this poem 'a family life that is rich, orderly, and busy'. I think rather that the poem represents a mood, a frequent one perhaps with Wordsworth, in which he is resting from creative activity. His mind and feelings are lying fallow, as he sits 'without emotion, hope, or aim'; and he would resent the intrusion and social effort of 'personal talk', idle fire-side chit-chat.

What I would myself most wish to correct in my own article is the statement: 'The authentic voice of Wordsworth that can still speak to us today is not a voice of the deep but a quiet voice'. I now think that this is misleading. It suggests a certain shallowness in Wordsworth that is inconsistent with my one reference to 'Those still moments of deep joy'. I dislike Wordsworth when he patently preaches to us, as in *The Tables Turned*, but it is wrong to suggest that his quietness is lacking in depth. It is usually when he reaches a 'happy stillness of the mind' that his poetry has its greatest depth and power.

His images of tranquillity are based upon a profound acceptance

of life, including sorrow and pain, and a deep faith in its unity and continuity. I quoted the lines (from *The Excursion*, Book I) where Wordsworth describes how the weeds and grasses growing on the ruined wall of Margaret's cottage conveyed into his heart 'So still an image of tranquillity'. I should have pointed out that this image takes its place at the end of the sad story of Margaret, and after the Wanderer has assured Wordsworth that she had learned

> 'that consolation springs
> From sorrows deeper far than deepest pain.'

Perhaps I can best correct the rather negative impression of Wordsworth that my article left by emphasising another aspect of his sensibility that is combined with the element of calm and quiet, namely, 'the deep power of joy'. Wordsworth pointed out in his *Preface to the Lyrical Ballads* that the poet is a man 'who rejoices more than other men in the spirit of life that is in him'. One of his declared aims was to speak 'Of joy in widest commonalty spread'. Reference to joy and delight, stated or implied, are found everywhere in Wordsworth. It is Nature's privilege 'to lead from joy to joy'. His recovery from the disillusion and despair that followed the failure of his hopes in France and the Revolution was a recovery of joy, in nature and in man. At the beginning of Book XIII of *The Prelude* he describes this recovery and the part played in it by nature, whose permanence contrasts with the

> 'busy dance
> Of things that pass away.'
> Thus moderated, thus composed, I found
> Once more in Man an object of delight,
> Of pure imagination, and of love. . . .'

Wordsworth's faith, his acceptance of the world seen by the eyes of imagination and love, was a cheerful one. He affirms it in *Tintern Abbey*

> nor all
> The dreary intercourse of daily life
> Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
> Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
> Is full of blessings.

This faith is re-affirmed in the preface to *The Excursion* where Wordsworth announces his intention of singing a 'spousal verse' in anticipation of the joyful union between 'the intellect of man' and 'this goodly universe'.

> while my voice proclaims
> How exquisitely the individual Mind
> . . . . to the external World
> Is fitted: and how exquisitely too . . . .
> The external World is fitted to the Mind.

I have not space to discuss fully the Worsworthian joy; it is already well known. But I would like to mention one important aspect of it. It is founded on a sense of the unity and continuity of

all life. There is a significant passage in one of Coleridge's letters (in the course of which he quotes Wordsworth) that throws light on this feeling of the oneness of all life. Coleridge is first criticizing some poems by Bowles and later comparing the Greek and Hebrew attitudes to religion.

> There reigns through all the blank verse poems such a perpetual trick of moralizing everything—which is very well occasionally—but never to see or describe any interesting appearance in Nature without connecting it, by dim analogies, with the moral world proves faintness of Impression. Nature has her proper interest, and he will know what it is who believes and feels that every Thing has a Life of its own, and that we are all *one Life*. A poet's Heart and Intellect should be *combined, intimately* combined and *unified* with the great appearances in Nature, and not merely held in solution and loose mixture with them, in the shape of formal similes. . . .
>
> In the Hebrew Poets each Thing has a Life of its own, and yet they are all one Life. In God they live and move and *have* their Being—not had, as the cold System of Newtonian Theology represents, but have.
>
> (*Collected Letters*, ed. Griggs, No. 459)

Wordsworth did sometimes labour to connect the appearances of nature with the moral world (see for example his poem *To A Skylark*—the one beginning 'Ethereal Minstrel . . .'), but when he is at his best his heart and intellect are unified with the great appearances of nature. Seeing the world through the imagination, which both he and Coleridge recognized as a creative power, he sees it as 'being limitless, the one great life'. In the famous lines describing the Simplon Pass, the varied sights and sounds that impress him so forcibly

> Were all like workings of one mind, the features
> Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree.

It was Wordsworth achievement to breathe life into the mechanical world of Newton. He saw the external world, the great appearances of Nature, as something that could be embraced with love and passion, something that formed one great whole together with 'The works of man and face of human life', not a separate dead universe. At the end of *The Prelude* he sums up the position he has reached as one of 'spiritual' or 'intellectual' love* of the universe. This love is reached through the Imagination, whose growth has been traced in the course of his spiritual autobiography.

> Imagination having been our theme,
> So also hath that intellectual Love
> For they are each in each and cannot stand
> Dividually.

* He uses both terms in Book XIV.

The joyful acceptance of the external world, including the human part of it, has brought Wordsworth to

> Faith in life endless, the sustaining thought
> Of human being, Eternity and God.

In a passage where he rejects the love of riches, fame and pleasure, the objects sought by most men, Spinoza declares that 'the love towards a thing eternal and infinite alone feeds the mind with pure joy, and is free from all sorrow'. Wordsworth achieved this love, though he arrived at it by a road quite different from Spinoza's, and he felt and communicated the pure joy that followed it.

His love of quiet is not always positive, but his 'happy stillness' does have deep roots in a positive faith and it reaches

> that peace
> Which passeth understanding, that repose
> In moral judgements which from this pure source
> Must come, or will by man be sought in vain.

Siegfried Sassoon remarked that 'it is only from the inmost silences of the heart that we know the world for what it is'. Wordsworth's view of the world was certainly founded on those inmost silences.

I find myself very largely able to accept Wordsworth's faith; and yet there is something in the way it is stated that sometimes repels me. I think this was why I chose an image of Wordsworth in one of his least exalted moments. To our generation there is perhaps something a little glib and facile about that

> cheerful faith, that all which we behold
> Is full of blessings.

We can sympathise with Hardy's strong reaction against 'Nature's holy plan' at the beginning of *Tess*. Wordsworth undoubtedly went through suffering and despair before he arrived at his faith, and he is not blind to 'the ills that vex and wrongs that crush'; yet in his presentment of his faith and in his vision of the Universe 'the destructive element' is sometimes too far out of sight. He seems too easily to surmount danger and evil. 'In the destructive element immerse', said Conrad, and twentieth century writers have certainly followed his advice. Yeats, as well as Wordsworth, believed in the power of joy. The message of his later poems is simply 'Rejoice'. But joy in Yeats is close to danger and evil; its springs up from 'the foul rag and bone shop of the heart'. In *The Dialogue of Self and Soul* he, too, affirms a positive faith and belief in life. The poem ends—

> We are blest by everything
> Everything we look upon is blest.

But in the course of the poem we are made fully aware that life is lived in 'the frog-spawn of a blind man's ditch'. John Crowe Ransome in his poem, *Old Man Playing with Children*, writes 'This life is not good but in danger and in joy'.

Wordsworth was perhaps too anxious to secure his joy, to remove

it from danger and the destructive element. One of Sean O'Casey's characters calls him 'a poet singing the song of safety first'. This is unfair, but there is an element of truth in it. Because Wordsworth tried to secure his joy, its springs failed him.

He who bends to himself a joy
Does the winged life destroy.

Could it have been that retirement among the mountains was a mistake? I am thinking less of the familiar criticism of him as a 'lost leader', than of the hardening of his spiritual arteries, which showed itself not least in his frequent use of that dead poetic diction which he had himself condemned.

It would take time and space to develop this criticism of Wordsworth. I mention it briefly now to indicate that there is a limitation in his power to speak to us to-day. But it is not an unsurmountable obstacle. I fully share the belief expressed by Mr Whittock and Mr Langman that Wordsworth is still an important and significant poet, and that his voice had depth and positive power.

ALAN WARNER

(*b*) THE GREAT ILLUSION

Dear Sirs,

In *The Great Illusion* a warning was issued to all those who make political plans or blue-prints not to think that such plans are a guarantee for founding the millenium. Now, it is true that Hitler did suffer from this illusion about his plans and that Dr Verwoerd has similar tendencies in regard to apartheid. More reputable political thinkers do not suffer from any such illusion.

The Great Illusion is against planning as such although this is true only of the general tenor of the article. The anti-planning attitude is concealed throughout by Mr Webb's denials that he advocates political inaction or ignores recent achievements of planning. An attempt is made to show the futility of planning in the face of 'the historical process which men can effectively influence in tiny fragments only' and 'which will not allow itself to be shackled by logic and moulded into men-made patterns'.

This anti-planning attitude which permeated *The Great Illusion* has been brought about by a whole set of assumptions none of which is supported by evidence. One such assumption is that planners generally believe that the plans 'in themselves can be *completely* effective and for *lasting* good'. Another is that planners expect their plans to 'work out *exactly* as intended and that they would solve *all* the existing problems and produce no new ones'. The most serious assumption is, however, that planners would 'sacrifice present good for what they believe to be future good'.

In the face of these assumptions one could adopt the attitude: 'If the cap fits . . .', but in the interest of responsible political thought a few corrections and realistic assessments seem not out of place.

Taking two important planning activities of our times as illustrations, it would be wrong to suggest that the New Deal Planners in the USA, for instance, or the present day planners of India, suffered or suffer from any aspects of *The Great Illusion.* Indeed, it is remarkable that any one should misunderstand the object of planning so completely as to suggest that the aim is 'sacrificing present good for what is believed to be future good'. If plans involve exchanges at all, they exchange present *evil* for what is believed to be future good. However, mostly plans do not aim at an exchange of one set of circumstances for another at all, but at providing the necessities of decent living for *more* people. If one takes blue-print and plan to refer to the rather more comprehensive schemes such as sets of political principles and ideologies, the assumptions referred to above are even more out of place. This can best be shown by reference to the most substantial blue-printing ideology of our times, namely socialism, which does not escape from some oblique attacks in *The Great Illusion.*

Dialectical materialism which is part and parcel of socialism expressly *prevents* its adherents from thinking that either their basic blue-print or any subsidiary time-limited plan can be regarded as a *final* solution. Socialists are obliged to regard their blue-prints and their minor plans as antithetical to what they mean to improve on, and they must regard the result of their planning as a challenge to new plans. Finally they must always expect that new problems will be created by new circumstances.

To come nearer home, for Mr Webb to suggest that, for instance, the 'common society' policy of the Liberal Party has been submitted as a solution which will not present new problems, or which will be realised *exactly* as conceived is simply ignorant.

Quite as disturbing as these unjustified assumptions made in *The Great Illusion* is the absence of a rational view about history or the 'historical process', 'which', we are told, 'will run a course largely independent of man-made schemes, but dependent on human relations'.

While human relations are of the greatest importance one should not overlook that human relations are very much a function of prevailing conditions and man-made schemes. Black-white human relations in South Africa, for instance, are progressively deteriorating precisely because of the progressive prevention of human contacts in more and more spheres (educational, social and religious) by man-made laws of the apartheid blue-print. Mr Webb offers no evidence that improved relations between individuals, without accompanying political planning, have ever brought about a real change.

In Mr Webb's strange view of history, man-made schemes are said to have little influence on the course of history. Again, sticking close to home, it is surely true to say that man-made Nationalist blue-prints *have* influenced developments in South Africa and their eventual effects will be with us for good. The Labour Party's man-made plan for the Welfare State *has* changed life in Great Britain for all to see; one could go on *ad infinitum* showing how man-made schemes have influenced history. In place of Mr Webb's somewhat mystical references to the historical process, one should accept a realistic statement that man-made schemes may have an enormous influence on the course of history, although these schemes are themselves the product of the historical process. Such an assessment shows that there is a mutual relation between the prevailing political situation and the men who live in it. Both clichés must be used simultaneously: 'Men make history' and 'History makes men'.

Finally, there are two basic arguments which condemn the anti-planning attitude. Political thinkers who feel keenly that injustice should be righted must analyse the political circumstances which they judge to be unsatisfactory, in order to recognise the principal weak point on which the unjust practices are based (e.g. the colour bar). Once this has been done, only an anarchist could avoid making a plan to bring about a change. Also, in a democratic society it is necessary to enlist support for one's views in order to become effective. The only way in which one can enlist support is to expose one's views, principles, programmes, blue-prints or plans to public comment and criticism.

The desirability, therefore, of 'blue-prints' is very real, whereas the danger of being mesmerised into uncritical adherence to these blue-prints is real only for megalomaniacs.

HANS MEIDNER.