

THEORIA

A JOURNAL OF STUDIES



- J. Y. T. GREIG AND OTHERS: WHY NOT A LIBERAL EDUCATION?
- M. NIDDRIE: FRENCH STUDIES IN SOUTH AFRICA.
- M. SCHMIDT-IHMS: FRIEDRICH SCHILLER.
- P. DU P. GROBLER: JOCHEM VAN BRUGGEN—VERTELLER OF UITBEELDER.
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- M. MARWICK: AFRICAN WITCHCRAFT AND 'ANXIETY LOAD.
- G. E. STENT: ECONOMICS AND SOCIETY.

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THEORIA

A Journal of Studies

OF THE ARTS FACULTY
Natal University College

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FOREWORD

The friendly reception accorded to the first number of *THEORIA* last year has encouraged us to produce another.

The articles once more range over the whole field of arts studies—literature, painting, history, psychology, anthropology and economics. The aim, as before, is to publish articles which present, not the raw material of research and scholarship, but the conclusions and lessons that can be drawn from specialist studies. While there has been no attempt to prescribe a common theme, it will be plain to readers that many of our contributors are concerned with the value of what they teach and learn. Many of the following articles are attempts to evaluate the various disciplines, to define in what way the study of the arts contributes to the civilised life. There is a common feeling that teachers of the arts must not be content with handing on a body of knowledge and skills, but must also help to build values and standards.

While most of the articles have been written by members of the staff of the Natal University College, we are glad to welcome three outside contributors to this number.

B. NOTCUTT,
Editor.

Durban, 1948.

Why Not A Liberal Education?

(Part of an address delivered by Professor J. Y. T. Greig to the staff and students of the Natal University College, in Pietermaritzburg and Durban on 24th March, 1948. The address is used here as the basis for a discussion by six members of the N.U.C. staff.)

No one today who makes use of the phrase "a liberal education" can avoid overtones derived from the long history of the word *liberal*. Though a speaker may not be fully aware of these overtones, both he and his hearers are affected by them all the same. One speaker or hearer will have chiefly in mind the traditional limitation of study to the so-called humanities, with a little mathematics thrown in; another, the root notion that education should be a training of free men for life in a free country; still another, the notion that education should be informed by generosity of spirit, that it should be free from prejudice, and, above all, that it should respect the inalienable right of the individual to be an individual, and not simply a unit in a totalitarian community. But though the speaker may lay his emphasis on only one sense of the word, two or three of its other and related senses will be active too, even if only sub-consciously, and certain of them perhaps more active in the mind of the hearer than in his.

I have therefore a duty, when I pose the question, "Why not a liberal education?" to make as clear as I can what I wish you to understand by the key word, *liberal*. It will perhaps be simpler if I begin by stating what I do *not* wish you to understand by it.

In the first place, I am not suggesting a return to the trivium and quadrivium of mediaeval education. Not that I believe this sevenfold curriculum turned out in practice to be quite so limited as it often sounds to us.

In the second place, I do not put forward as a liberal education for today one that is limited wholly or even chiefly to the humanities. In the world we live in, the humanities, although, heaven is our witness, they gain rather than lose in significance, are not

in themselves enough. A liberal education from, say, the age of five to the age of twenty-five must include a good deal of science, a training in the use of the hands (that is to say, a selection from the servile or mechanical arts, as the Ancients called them), and systematic exercise of the body.

Positively, the root sense of *liberal*, namely "concerned with freedom" or "befitting a free man", must be our guide. A liberal education is one designed for the training of free men and women in a free community under the conditions of life as we find them in the mid-twentieth century. We have it on pretty good authority that the truth shall make us free. Very well. Let me found my case on that. I would define a liberal education as one which enables a pupil to arrive at truth for himself in as many fields of human endeavour as time, place, and his capacities allow.

I repeat and underline, "to arrive at truth for himself". Obviously and inevitably, in the course of education from the nursery school to post-graduate study in a university, those of us who are ranged on the teaching side of this co-operative endeavour are required to pass on to our pupils a vast collection of established truths. This is no matter for complaint, provided that they are established truths. Since there is no real dispute any longer on the question whether the earth goes round the sun or the sun round the earth, we gain nothing by not giving the answer to our pupils categorically. Nor do we gain anything by allowing a debate on the square root of 9. But the habits thus established in both pupil and teacher are, I believe, the most dangerous of all in what I have just called the co-operative endeavour—education. They dam the stream. It ceases to flow. It may, and often does, become a noisome, weed-infested pool. After a very little practice on both sides, it costs the teacher no effort to impart "information" or "doctrine", and the pupil no effort to swallow it, and, when called upon, to regurgitate it. This is not education. At best, it is the preliminary to education; at worst, a substitute for it—*ersatz*, a commodity dispensed and distributed by mountebanks. Any school, college or university which does not progressively train its pupils to discover truth for themselves, especially when the question is one of opinion, not fact, is an *ersatz* institution staffed by mountebanks. And for this reason: life in a free community demands just this capacity from free men and women—the capacity to discover truth for themselves. If their education has not developed it in them, their education, however expensive to their parents or to the taxpayer, has been three parts waste.

I listened not long ago (and with pleasure) to an address in the University of the Witwatersrand by Dr. M. C. Botha, who was then Rector of the University of Pretoria. He was stressing the need for education which will "liberate" the mind, and by that I understood him to mean what I would call a "liberal" education. "Liberal" and "liberate"—these are very closely related words after all. At one point in his address, however, I found myself sharply disagreeing with him. He implied, without exactly saying, that this kind of education, which he advocated very warmly for universities, was scarcely possible to either the primary or the secondary level. If he was right, we are in poor shape in the Union of South Africa, and likely to be soon in worse; since all but a small percentage of the children we try to educate in schools ever reach a university, and those who don't, apparently, must resign themselves to being mere vessels into which their teachers pour information and accepted doctrines. I cannot believe this to be inevitable. On the contrary, I would again insist that the need to train pupils to discover truth for themselves should be the directing principle at every stage of education.

It follows that if, at any time, even at the very beginning, teachers have to choose between two conflicting duties, the duty to accumulate and impart facts, and the duty to develop in the pupil the power to acquire, sift and weigh the facts for himself, and, having done that, to use his facts for the framing of a judgment, never mind how simple, their decision must be for the second, not the first. It is not the amount that a pupil knows that matters; it is his power to use what he knows, and to find out more when he needs it. I am talking commonplaces. I know that very well. But, by heaven, these commonplaces need repetition until everyone is weary of hearing them; for three-quarters of our education today, though it may perfunctorily acknowledge the truth of these commonplaces, ignores them in practice. Both in schools and in universities we are encouraging concentration on the wrong activity—the acquiring of information—at the expense of the right activity—practice in the art of acquisition. Subservience to the external syllabus and the external examination accentuate this folly at the school level; and the breaking up of education into separate and comparatively unrelated "subjects" (sciences, if you like, rather than science) continues it at the university level.

This kind of education was never adequate. But its hopeless inadequacy for the life of our time becomes every day more apparent. Will you forgive me if, like a good Scotsman, I quote

from a Scottish document, a very remarkable document that some of you, I dare say, have read. This is a report on secondary education issued last year by the Advisory Council of Education in Scotland—a blue book, but full of mature wisdom, generous in outlook, and (unlike many a blue-book that I have had to read) uncommonly well written.

There has been (say this Advisory Council) a fresh awakening to the value and precariousness of our liberal way of life. It is clear now that the marriage of freedom and order which democracy presupposes is possible only for a people conscious of its inheritance, united in purpose, and proof against the attacks of sophistry and propaganda; and that these qualities require not merely a literate, but an educated, nation, capable of a high degree of self-discipline, objective judgment and sustained vigilance.

Those of us who believe in the liberal way of life, and are prepared to defend it against attacks from without and within, will, I believe, accept that paragraph as it stands. It is followed immediately by another paragraph that goes to the root of the matter.

But we cannot now, as in ages of less rapid change, equip our young with a stock of ideas, conventions and sentiments adequate to life's situations. Their world is shifting and changing with a rapidity that precludes all such provision for unborn tomorrow: "the breaking of new ground rather than the treading of safe ground" has become the task of all education. And so there must be a change of emphasis. There must be less store set by knowledge often irrelevant and quickly antiquated, and more concern to create in the young certain attitudes of mind. Above all the new generation needs to unite with mental poise and serenity a nimble intelligence, a high degree of adaptability and a wider range of understanding.

There you have it, a nutshell statement, if you will allow me so to call it. Whether mental poise and serenity is attainable in this our time may be doubted. But the Scottish Council has named, in the last sentence of that paragraph, the means by which it might be attained: "nimble intelligence, a high degree of adaptability, and a wider range of understanding". These, I would urge, should be the governing aims in a liberal education, whether at the school or at the university level. Any method, any discipline, any subject (if we must have subjects) which fosters a nimble intelligence, a high degree of adaptability, and

a wider range of understanding, is so far good ; any that hinders them is so far bad, and should be ruthlessly eliminated.

But any system of education, to be effectual, must have a centre from which it can radiate outwards, or, if you like, a point of rest, from which all adventures may start and to which all will return. It is the absence of some such centre, some such point of rest, in our contemporary education in schools and universities that seems to some of us a chief cause for damning it. Days were (and not so very long ago, either) when the point of rest was furnished by the study of Latin. I have no wish to return to those days. With the deepest respect to all students of the Classics, I would suggest that Latin would no longer serve our turn as the centre from which all education should expand. The true centre for us today is the mother tongue.

I dare say you are all too well mannered to say aloud what is passing through your minds now. If you did say it aloud, it might be phrased something like this : " Of course this fellow thinks the mother tongue should be the centre, because that's his own subject ". To which I would answer, in all sincerity and earnestness, that the mother tongue is not a " subject ", but the basis of every subject. But I've tried to say that before, in a pamphlet that some of you may have seen, and I don't want to repeat myself. Instead, I'll let the same Scottish Council say it for me. Here are two more paragraphs from their report :

By the study of the mother tongue we mean training in the understanding and use of spoken and written English. The unique significance of this study will never emerge if it is thought of simply as one subject among others. Rather is it the instrument and pre-condition of all intellectual progress, entering into education at every point and inescapably the concern of every teacher. It matters supremely to the individual, for to be less than fully articulate is to suffer some arrest of development and some diminution of powers. It matters no less to the community, since the continued health of democracy depends on a widely diffused ability to use and understand words—and to be proof against their misuse by others . . . The experience of two generations has revealed what an immense undertaking it is to produce a fully literate and articulate population. But educationally all else hangs on it, and to this task the schools must turn with redoubled determination and a wholly new emphasis on the spoken word.

No problem within the whole range of the secondary curriculum is comparable in urgency and importance with that of securing a good standard in the understanding and use of

English. To fail in mathematics or Latin is to leave boys and girls deficient in these subjects, but to fail in English is to leave them fundamentally uneducated. And the truth is that, despite the efforts and improvements of a generation, we are still short of full success in this primary task.

The Scottish Council is talking of secondary education. They are also talking of a country where, apart from a few thousand people in the Western Highlands, there is only one mother tongue, English. We, members of universities in South Africa, are concerned with the mother tongue not only at the school level, but also at the university level; and, what is more, we are concerned with two mother tongues. If Scottish educationists have to confess that "they are still short of full success", what about us? We might, I think, make *our* confession of failure just a *little* bit stronger.

However, I had better dismount from my hobby-horse, for fear that it might gallop off with me well into the afternoon. My concern is with a liberal education, the liberal education that we are not achieving in South Africa.

A little while ago I referred to "those of us who believe in the liberal way of life". I will assume that everybody within these four walls does. Perhaps that is a large assumption, but let it pass. What is certain is that plenty of South Africans outside these four walls don't believe in the liberal way of life, or in the liberal education that should prepare for it. Many of these are sincerely convinced that the liberal way of life is a bad way of life, and that the sooner all remnants of it are swept from South Africa the better for the community we live in. And don't imagine that all these sincere disbelievers in *our* creed belong to the Right in politics. A great many, so far as I can discover, belong to the extreme Left; for one of the odd things about extremes, as perhaps you have already discovered, is that they meet. Both groups—I won't give them names, but you know whom I have in mind—deny the right of the individual to be an individual. That is the essence of the liberal creed—a belief in the individual, queer creature though he often is. Both groups are temperamentally and therefore also theoretically opposed to the diversity of opinions and the multiplication of eccentrics which the liberal way of life encourages. Eccentrics are often a nuisance. Often, too, however, they are the salt of the earth. Both non-liberal groups demand uniformity, conformity to the standard pattern.

We, as liberals, are bound by our own creed to allow non-liberals the right to think as they please, however sharply we may

disagree with them; but they, under whatever banner they range themselves, have no obligation to accord that right to us. Their creeds require them to exterminate us if we won't conform. That, obviously, puts us at a disadvantage—at how serious a disadvantage, recent events in Europe have sufficiently demonstrated. The liberal, as Hitler repeatedly pointed out with his arrogant candour, is ineffectual because he is reluctant to use force to achieve his ends. Of course he is. It is fundamental to the liberal creed that a man may hold what views he pleases and that he shall not be molested for holding them. Consequently the liberal ceases to be a liberal if he uses force for any purposes except to defend the liberal way of life. That, I believe, he may do: he may use force to prevent, if he can, other men from enslaving him and his fellow-liberals.

Similar principles apply to the liberal education I am advocating. If it is true—and I am sure it is—that democracy presupposes that all enfranchised members of the community will be capable of thinking for themselves, then the systematic indoctrination of pupils in schools and universities strikes at the very root of democracy. For you cannot train a thinking community by persistently preventing them from thinking. That is what you do if, during the period of their education, you go on telling them *what* they are to think, and penalising them if (in examinations, for example) they do not repeat, as accurately as their memories will allow, what you have told them. We train parrots that way; not free men and women for life in a free community. It is quite a successful method, if what you really want is a nation of parrots. The totalitarian states proved that before the last war, and are proving it again beneath our eyes. It is true, of course, that for quick results you must also give your doctrines a strong emotional colouring. It's simplest to use fear, for that leads quickly to hatred and so to the liquidation of your enemies. One has to have an enemy, it seems; that is, a group that can be represented as a danger to one's own people—Jews, Indians, Communists, Nationalists, Imperialists, Natives, Republicans, anybody handy will do. All this, unfortunately, we are thoroughly familiar with in South Africa.

But the people in South Africa who do the greatest damage to the cause of liberal education are not its avowed enemies, not those with an axe to grind. After all, you can generally see the man who is grinding the axe. Sooner or later there are sparks, and the sparks give him away. It is those whose activities never produce any sparks at all, the ordinary, douce, well-meaning teachers in schools and universities to whom it has

never occurred that pumping information and respectable doctrines into their pupils is not the sole end of education ; who, with one eye, perhaps, on some examination, success in which may bring renown upon the institution they so faithfully serve, and serve to destroy, stuff their pupils with facts, formulae, fancies and faiths ; and who, when their pupils show themselves docile and receptive, willing vessels to receive the milk of the word, commend them for the very qualities they lack—intelligence, agility of mind, understanding of the world they live in—it is these worthy teachers who make the supreme task of educating for democracy wellnigh impossible. They are like the soft and gentle, but totally blind, mole that works underground. They don't know what they are doing, but parents, parsons, and politicians praise them. The blind mole is soft and gentle, but he undermines. The white ant is also soft and gentle, and, when you brush away the sheltering earth over his silent workings and expose him to the sunlight, rather pitiful. But, I confess it without shame, when I find the white ants working in my lawn or under the floors of my house, I destroy them without mercy. One does not have to be a liberal towards the white ant.

Beware the teacher, whether you find him in school or university, who professes to believe in a liberal education, but who, by doing all your thinking for you, denies you your birthright, which is freedom.

Copies of Professor Greig's address were circulated to six members of the staff of N.U.C., who were asked to reply to a series of questions based on it. The questions and answers are given below.

1.—*Do you think that the main aim of university teaching should be to enable students to think for themselves ?*

PROF. COURTS: Yes ; but the stage at which independent thinking is practicable must depend upon the nature of the material under discussion. In Physics, for example, a sound factual background is a necessary pre-requisite to independent thought, and we must, in Prof. Greig's phrase, "give the answer to our pupils categorically". It would be fraudulent to make students believe that they had rediscovered such general principles as the Newtonian law of gravitation ; although they should be introduced to the historical developments that led from Ptolemy's geocentric notions, through Copernicus and Kepler, to Newton's generalisation.

DR. COBLANS: University education must aim primarily at

stimulating the student to think. Granted this assumption, how far can this aim be achieved in practice? Training in the natural and social sciences has become largely a process of assembling evidence, tracking down information, digesting what is known. Then judgment and synthesis can be achieved on the basis of an informed background rather than ignorance and bias.

However, that is not yet critical or creative thinking, which is the product of experience and maturation and usually achieved by those with more than average intelligence. As economic circumstance rather than intelligence and aptitude is still a significant factor in university entrance, the number of students that can arrive at truths for themselves in most subjects is perhaps disappointing. High academic standards in scholarship are essential to arrive at the "truths" that we expect from research and education in universities.

PROF. HODGES: Just as there is enshrined in the term "liberal", as applied to education, the choice of "as many fields of human endeavour as time, place and his capacities allow", so must we also allow differences in method within the particular fields, once a choice has been made. All university teaching must obviously have as its main aim training students to enable them to think for themselves, but it must be the right kind of thinking—and the kind of thinking that is best suited to one Department of the university may well prove a complete failure in another. I think this is implied and accepted.

So I ask myself, what particular kind of thinking must I make my aim in my own Department? Can I adopt a uniform method which will succeed equally well in my own particular discipline and in those of other Departments? I know what particular attributes, what modes of thought, are essential for success as a scientific worker. Lord Kelvin put it like this: "When you can measure what you are speaking about, and express it in numbers, you know something about it; and when you cannot measure it, when you cannot express it in numbers, your knowledge is of a meagre and unsatisfactory kind; it may be the beginning of knowledge, but you have scarcely in your thoughts advanced to the stage of a science". Can this type of thinking, which must form the basis of my training, a type of disciplined thinking, if you like, still permit "students to think for themselves"? I think it can. But, while I realise that it is essential in my own Department, I also accept its inevitable failure in certain of the other Departments.

MRS. F. M. MACDONALD: Yes. Toynbee points out the importance of the creator or leader "who when he arises always

finds himself overwhelmingly outnumbered by the inert uncreative mass " and whose success or failure depends on whether the " mass " is able to recognise the value of his ideas and is willing to follow his leadership. This will depend, in turn, both on emotional and on intellectual reactions and the problem of the university is to ensure there will be a sufficient leaven of intellectual reaction in the mass. This means that the university must teach that our " beliefs shall be according to fact " and our actions based on " enlightened self-interest ", which will usually be the interest of the community also.

Any leader of today can have to aid him the power of the new propaganda forces. This is a two-edged weapon, therefore, the university must teach how to evaluate propaganda.

But above all the university must ensure that students acquire a broad fund of knowledge as a basis for the intelligent formulation of opinion. No amount of teaching to think (if indeed this be possible in view of the effects of early experience which psychologists allege, determine our attitudes and actions) will be of any value unless the university preserves its function of acting as a repository of past knowledge and of passing it on to students in as concentrated a form as possible.

The ability to think independently is something which will emerge in most cases by the end of a course in which the student has been introduced to the existing field of knowledge in a great many diverse subjects and has learned that there are many possible approaches to identical problems. We must remember that ages in which there were no universities to teach people to think (e.g., 6th century Athens) were not noticeably less rational in their approach to problems than is our own.

PROF. DURRANT: Yes; provided that their thinking is directed to valuable ends. " Thinking for themselves " might very well, without such a proviso, include thinking out new ways to exploit the community. Consequently a university curriculum should not only teach students to think; it should teach them to think about subjects that are of great importance to men, and to think about them in the light of the " best thought " of the past and present. In other words, a university education should be humane and catholic, as well as a stimulus to individual thought.

It is hard to reconcile these two aims, but I believe that the study of language—if it is a part of the study of classical literature and of the best contemporary literature—is one of the best ways to achieve this double aim.

PROF. FINDLAY: I should say that a university had *two* aims—(a) to acquaint the student generally with the *results* of past

thought and investigation in various fields ; (b) to enable him to *understand* and *apply* the *techniques* by which these results were obtained. I agree that there is a tendency in university (as in all) education to give a lot of time to (a) and very little to (b). And I agree that this is a fatal weakness. But I should also regard education defective in which (b) was stressed at the expense of (a). The theory, for instance, that "only techniques of thinking count" and that the "trained mind" can pick up everything else for itself, is simply not true, and *sometimes* results in minds ignorant of the map of knowledge, and skilled mainly in acquired mental knacks and mannerisms of quite limited value. Here as elsewhere technique and material are interdependent, and it is only by knowing the stuff and working with it continually that one can also have sound techniques. Furthermore, the term "thinking for oneself" is not clear in its meaning. Interpreted as the undisciplined forming of opinions it is the last thing education should encourage one to do.

2.—The second question was : *Are our present methods of teaching enabling students to think for themselves, either in general, or in your own subject particularly?*

PROF. COURTS : In the formal lectures that play such a great part in our present teaching system, independent thinking can be—and is—induced by encouraging a critical outlook, and by discussing the validity of different (and sometimes contradictory) theories.

MRS. F. M. MACDONALD : No. Because of too much specialisation, e.g., training in scientific method should be a training in independent thinking, but scientists as a body are not necessarily more resistant to (say) political propaganda than are any other section of the community. Scientific promises are interpreted by emotions which may distort. A narrow field of training fails to liberate the mind.

PROF. DURRANT : In general, university education does not encourage students to think about subjects of real importance to men. It relies too much on the transmission of facts or ready-made notions from lecturer to note-book and thence to the examination paper.

The study of English suffers perhaps more than most from the acceptance of Authority—in the shape of Histories of Literature, etc.—and from the absence of the continual need to observe and think.

PROF. FINDLAY : As I have said in (1) our present methods too often impart results rather than techniques. This is probably

less the case in my own subject (Philosophy) than in others. For philosophical results simply make no sense at all unless accompanied with arguments which exhibit philosophical techniques. In American survey courses of "periods" of philosophical history a great effort is made to make nonsense of the subject in the student's mind, but such methods have not yet been adopted here. What we do is limited, but it is authentic.

3.—*If you think that improvements of our teaching methods are possible in this respect, what are they? (i.e., by way of enabling students to think for themselves).*

PROF. COURTS: Improvements could be achieved by meeting students informally in small groups, for discussion; and (particularly with more advanced students) by holding seminar classes at which the students should present papers upon suitable topics. It is very useful for post-graduate students to hold discussions upon the subjects upon which they specialise. Further, as a training of the critical faculty, students should read in the original sources how certain results were attained—especially in cases where conflicting opinions have been supported by protagonists of equal eminence.

PROF. DURRANT: Yes, improvements are certainly possible. The seminar method, as practised in Germany, is generally a great improvement on our present lecture system, and we could do with fewer lectures.

In the study of English, the predominantly historical and philological methods of the past could with advantage give way to the study of Poetics and Rhetoric, closely combined with Practical Criticism.

PROF. FINDLAY: Improvements in university teaching demand one thing: larger staffs, in which each man will have a smaller assignment, and many minds will interact with each other and on the students. But since we have decided in this country to have many universities rather than good ones, such improvements are totally impossible.

4.—*Is competent and independent thought impossible without a good knowledge of the mother tongue?*

PROF. COURTS: The lack of a reasonable command of the mother tongue is, I think, a serious handicap to clarity in mental processes.

PROF. DURRANT: It is perhaps possible to think effectively without such knowledge in mathematics, natural science, and some branches of philosophy. But any effective transference of thought to the complex situations of real life must surely depend on a thorough command of the mother tongue.

DR. COBLANS : An adequate command of the mother tongue is the undisputed basis for all higher education. But is there not a danger that its semantic value be interpreted as the cure-all for prejudice and ignorance ?

The famous remark of the President of the Board of Education speaking at the Malvern College speech day (1942) that " he who knew Latin could take the internal combustion engine in his stride " might be re-worded—he who knows English is equipped to understand the implications of an industrial civilisation. Without " English " he certainly is not ! But is it enough ? The purely literary or " cultural " approach has produced " machine wreckers " in almost every generation.

A liberal education should *not* be—

- (a) identified with the education of a privileged class.
- (b) divorced from contemporary life and justified by its uselessness, as knowledge for its own sake.
- (c) so neutral that it entrenches what exists by obstructing change.
- (d) afraid to include controversial problems, because they affect vested interests in society. Particularly in such fields the university must promote objective research.

PROF. FINDLAY : Competent and independent thought certainly demands the power to use words in a telling way, as well as the power to understand them when used. But I don't know whether this is what is meant by a " good knowledge " of the mother tongue. A man may use English eccentrically and ungrammatically and bombastically, and yet tellingly. If " good knowledge " of English means contact with the " well of English undefiled ", or with the latest form of artificial simplicity, I think its value can be exaggerated. Students should be made to read and write a great deal and to avoid and despise all forms of hot air. But hot air can be written in the characterless " direct " prose which is now generally admired as well as in the more elaborate, indirect forms of diction often snobbishly spoken of as " journalistic ".

5.—*In your experience, have students on the whole a fairly adequate command of language for the purpose of university study, or, in particular, for studying the subject you teach ? Do you think that the university should spend more time and energy on improving the students' command of language, even if this meant sacrificing some other studies ?*

MRS. F. M. MACDONALD : No. I think that the university should institute a difficult preliminary test in use and comprehension of the language which is to be the medium of study.

Not the ordinary so-called comprehension test, but the ability to read in a limited time (say three days) and discuss, both orally and in writing, a whole book previously unfamiliar to the student. Students unable to do this should be required to spend a preliminary year reading and writing under the individual supervision of tutors (say one for every 25 students). I do not think that this year should be under any existing language department, for it would be too much to expect the department to resist making it a preliminary year in the study of its own literature and language. It should be a reading and writing year (reading rather than study). The reading should progress from the familiar, that in which the student is already interested (any subject, not necessarily literature), to the unfamiliar and more difficult, so that by the end of the year the student should be able to tackle text-books of university standard in unfamiliar subjects. The writing practice too should be utilitarian in its aim. By the end of the year the student should be expected to write clearly, directly, vigorously and grammatically on subjects that he knows and understands, not on what he imagines, and should be able to distinguish between the statement and its illustration. Students who can read intelligently and write precisely will be of more value to the department they enter, and will make a better showing in all their examinations. Style will arise gradually out of the personality of the writer and his mastery of his material.

PROF. COUTTS : Students of the physical sciences do not need the style of a Meredith, but they often lack the terseness and clarity required for the presentation of their data ; it is desirable that they should acquire the technique of simple expression before starting their scientific studies. Concurrently with the latter, their most important task is to improve their facility in the language of mathematics, which is the essential medium of expression for the greater part of their work.

PROF. DURRANT : My own impression is that students have in general an inadequate command of language for any but the most narrowly technical ends. In the study of English, the chief problem is, of course, to improve the student's command of his own language. As far as other studies are concerned it seems likely that more attention to the language used would reveal many unexamined assumptions and would contribute much to the advancement of those studies. But students are so illiterate as a class that more direct attention to language in special classes seems to me necessary.

PROF. FINDLAY : Students in Natal use language in a rather bald and childish manner : perhaps they ought first to be trained to

write in the manner of Gibbon or John Stuart Mill, and then made to purge their style. I think more time should be devoted to linguistic training and training in connected and logical composition than is the case at present. We should, in fact, institute a chair of Rhetoric at our university, thereby recognising an essential subject and also giving it an ancient and honourable name.



French Studies In South Africa

Although one may be tempted to insert a query after this title, it does not as a matter of fact introduce an academic excursion into the realm of purely speculative situations. Strange and wrong though it may seem to some South Africans, there are still, in both schools and colleges here, students who for one reason or another persist in learning to read, write and speak the French language. It is true that the lot of the French teacher in South Africa is not a happy one. Most often he has been forced into the position of having to defend himself and his *raison d'être* against a hostile world. In expanding educational institutions where development is only too often regulated in terms of strictly measurable usefulness, he has come to be regarded as, at best, an expensive luxury, and at worst, as a not very vigorous parasite soon to wither away. Even his more sympathetic colleagues are finding it increasingly hard to support him convincingly and enthusiastically. It is not so much that they object to French existing on the curriculum, as that they tend to place more and more subjects above it in the scale of priorities. Even those who have long defended the principle of encouraging South African students to learn European languages are now wondering whether perhaps the sacrifice is not too great for the benefits received. The French teacher, at bay, is either defending his standards desperately, or, more wily, managing to outwit his opponents and win more recruits to his classes by offering nice assimilable bits of culture through the medium of English or Afrikaans.

Is there anything really worth fighting for, and does the struggle affect anyone else besides the French teacher himself? I do most sincerely believe so, but it is most important to be clear about the issue. This raises all the time-worn arguments usually advanced in favour of language teaching. They fall mainly into one of two categories—those which stress the disciplinary and cultural value of language study, and those which include all the direct practical advantages of learning a particular language or group of languages. It should be clearly realised that of all the benefits usually regarded as being the most vital

aims of language study not one is really attainable by a course conducted entirely through the medium of the home language. Thus the university teacher of French who gives in to the natural temptation to make his classes more accessible to students by increasing formal lectures in civilisation and cultural "survey" at the expense of language and critical work in the foreign medium is actually destroying himself slowly and insidiously and will probably disappear finally when people realise they are not getting the benefits they had hoped for. No good can possibly come of giving students prepared lectures in English or Afrikaans on subjects chosen from French history and literature, unless they inspire one or two to learn the language and go straight to the source themselves, and in that case, how much better it would have been to start them on the right road from the beginning. If South Africans need French at all, it is the knowledge and practice of the language that they need before all else, and if specialists in modern methods of language teaching were given a chance in our schools they could obtain that knowledge with a great deal less pain and bother than the layman believes. Such a study would, I am convinced, be the best possible corrective for some of the defects in our educational programme, which with the dropping of compulsory Latin and Mathematics has come to give so much time to learning about things, and so little to learning to do things oneself. It is possible now to matriculate well without ever having had one's mental capacity seriously put to the test. Languages, like mathematics, are not only indispensable to whoever hopes to pass for educated in the full sense of the word, they are a test of skill and mental vigour and should be allowed to play their part in whatever discipline is devised for the minds of young South Africans.

The position of French studies in South Africa cannot be exactly equated with the position in England or the United States, though useful comparisons can be made. In England French is unquestionably the first modern language studied and ranks with Mathematics as one of the principal subjects in public examinations. This is as much because of its practical use and necessity as for its cultural or disciplinary value as a subject of study. Not only is French the language of a close friendly country linked to England by every bond both historical and actual, but it is still a compulsory qualification for entry into many trades and professions, and an almost essential accomplishment for scholars and scientists in all branches of learning and research. In England, then, French studies need no advocate. They have established themselves,

particularly with the noticeable decline of classical studies, in a position of strength and privilege which only the most die-hard humanists have any wish to challenge.

One must admit immediately that the same arguments do not hold in South Africa, and that it would be foolish to attempt to apply them in the same way. This admission does not, however, settle the question out of hand as so many people seem to think it should. To say that a knowledge of French language and culture is unimportant or unnecessary in South Africa because it has no practical value is to lose sight of real values and to degrade the function of education. Surely we are not yet prepared to admit publicly that we wish to limit our children's education to instruction in those things which can be turned to direct practical use in their immediate environment? There may be those who are willing to make this admission without even a blush of shame, and, if so, I believe them to be treading a dangerous path. Such arguments may lead to the disappearance from the curriculum of other subjects which on closer examination prove to be dispensable, and to their replacement by officially inspired information courses designed to fit students for their place in a particular kind of society. The quest of the useful and the "socially desirable" in education must surely lead to the suffocation of real scholarship and of the qualities which make a nation eminent. Any real education must surely admit a great many studies whose value is abstract and incalculable. It must do more than provide for the immediate practical needs of humdrum individuals, it must stimulate the brains of future artists, scientists and philosophers. It can even be argued that a good system of education should be designed to suit that fortunate intellectual elite rather than the inarticulate majority. It must at least provide an atmosphere in which the greater minds can thrive. It must, as well as giving the general public something for its money, provide the spiritual stimulus necessary for developing the imagination and the critical faculties of the better citizens. It must foster intellectual curiosity, clarity of thought, tolerance and discriminating appreciation. It must educate the youth of the country to the point where they can fulfil themselves in their work and leisure, enjoy, appreciate, and criticise with well-founded confidence the expressions of life and art which they see around them. It must teach them to read newspapers with sharpened discernment and a better understanding of national and international points of view; to sift out in contemporary art, literature and politics (I select what may be regarded as the inescapable pursuits of

the average intelligent human being in this age) what is new and significant from what is traditional or outworn or historically unacceptable to certain groups of people.

This, I claim, can only be done by an education which is truly catholic and various, and which provides ample matter for critical comparison. It cannot be achieved where there is complete ignorance of the thoughts and aspirations of every nation except one's own. Such ignorance is the enemy of international harmony as well as of civilisation and culture.

Learning to know the French or the German language and way of life does not merely serve to make one more tolerant of the French or German way of life (though that would in itself be a good thing no doubt), it broadens one's general sympathies and helps to make one more tolerant and wise in all matters where foreign standards of life are involved. Such understanding and tolerance, even though they may remain associated with academic intolerance of certain social or political principles, are the mark of the truly educated person, and an essential element of true wisdom. Lack of curiosity about other cultures than one's own, and ignorance of them, must always remain in South Africa, as elsewhere, a flaw in the make-up of any educated person.

Now it is possible to argue that it is not necessary to learn a foreign language in order to know its people and civilisation. This opinion is not supported by those who believe that no work of art really survives translation intact, and that the essence of a people, the spirit of its genius, is most often expressed in a peculiar national idiom quite untranslatable in any other. I think it is true to say that a student who can stumble even imperfectly through the original text of Montaigne or Bergson gets closer to the spirit of these writers than one who reads the best known translations. What is certain is that the struggling student who understands anything of the original text at all gets an intellectual satisfaction of a high order which is denied to the rest.

Moreover, it is usually impossible to obtain translations of contemporary works, and ignorance of the language cuts one off from personal contacts, from newspapers, and from public utterances. It must be agreed that to study a foreign people entirely through the medium of one's own language is to study at a great disadvantage.

To study no foreign civilisation at all is to lack any yardstick by which to measure one's own national achievements. Whether it be in the domain of letters, politics or art, one's

preferences, enthusiasms, and prejudices can best be dissipated or justified by comparison with similar achievements in other countries. In South Africa, particularly, it is important to emphasise this because geographical isolation can so easily lead to a blind parochialism in such matters. Bilingualism is no protection from this, indeed, quite the contrary is proving to be the case. The English and Afrikaans tongues are not sufficiently distant the one from the other to make adequate cultural complements.

In studying the other language of the country, whether it be English or Afrikaans, we are not venturing far enough away from our own environment to make the journey intellectually satisfying. We are not breaking fresh ground, but only turning over and over the ground we have trodden all our lives. There is even a danger that having made the effort necessary to become bilingual South Africans may imagine they have done all that is required of them in the matter of foreign tongues, and so be lulled into believing that they have acquired a certain cosmopolitanism. This must be dangerous for two reasons, dangerous both to the future of bilingualism and to the future of scholarship in this country. As long as the other official language, whichever it may be, is regarded as a foreign language replacing a European one, national unity and the South African "spirit" will remain hypothetical and unreal, and as long as the second official language ousts the study of a European language from our schools and universities we shall be palming off an inferior brand of education on the youth of the country. Moreover, it is quite likely that the greatest fillip that could be offered to the promotion of bilingualism in South Africa might come from the encouragement of the study of a third language, preferably a European language as different as can be from either English or Afrikaans. It is the student who knows no other language but English, and that in consequence indifferently, who finds insuperable difficulties in the study of Afrikaans. The remedy for being bad at languages is, generally speaking, to learn more of them. Students who enter English universities all have three languages, English, Latin and French or some other modern European tongue. Of these, two may be said to be entirely foreign to him. Why, then, is it held to be taxing the South African student too much to expect him to know Afrikaans, English and one other language, particularly as only one of the three would be foreign to him in the strict sense of the word? Citizens in a bilingual country should surely be better at languages than those brought up in one-

tongued insularity, and if they are not it should surely be their business to remedy the defect as soon as possible.

In the past one heard a great deal of the congenital difficulty experienced by some people in learning to speak foreign languages. English-speaking people, especially, tend to regard this not as a disability, but as a national peculiarity of which they can be justly proud. In a vague way, facility in foreign tongues is regarded as being un-English and almost always traceable to a taint of Scottish, Irish or Dutch blood. This attitude is common among English-speaking South Africans who use it to excuse themselves for not being bilingual. How far this refractoriness to language study is due to inborn deficiencies, and how far to self-consciousness, lack of interest and poor training, is hard to determine. What is true is that the incapacity of the few has been grossly exaggerated and has been held to account for the slowness of apparently intelligent Englishmen in learning even to read foreign languages. Some fault must be laid at the door of the teacher. It is noteworthy that in recent years, with the immensely improved methods of language teaching, much less is heard of the alleged linguistic incapacity of the English. It is now quite common to meet young men, graduate and non-graduate alike, with fluent French and German and an almost impeccable accent in both. This improvement is alas not noticeable in South Africa where a steady decline in modern language teaching over a number of years is now making itself felt, both in the acute shortage of teachers fit to carry on the work, and in the dearth of pupils. This is especially true of French since for some time the relative unimportance of the subject in school curricula has weighed against the appointment of specialists. Where there were French pupils who refused to be discouraged, they were simply handed over to a teacher who happened to have studied French somewhere at some time. This policy, detrimental to any subject, is fatal in the case of a modern language where one needs to be thoroughly versed and fluent to teach even beginners. Except in a few remaining private schools where the standard of French teaching is relatively high, the subject is firmly discouraged both by precept and by example. This in turn reduces the number of students eligible to follow the normal courses in the universities, and still further limits the French scholars who might find their way back into the schools and raise standards there.

It seems then that unless there is a radical change of attitude to the study of French in South Africa, it may well disappear altogether from our educational curricula. Latin, which has

also been relegated to the list of unessential subjects, has one advantage over French in the struggle for existence in that it is still a qualification for entry into certain professions. The most disquieting thing is that the two languages should disappear together. An educational programme which excludes the study of both Latin and French (or of some other Romance language) must be lopsided from the point of view of language and culture. English and Afrikaans are heavily weighted on the Teutonic side. No one can be said to be well versed in literature or in language (though philological considerations are perhaps of less importance) who has no acquaintance at all with the classical tradition so poorly represented in both English and Afrikaans. Such a person lacks not only that special knowledge, but a whole set of values to apply to art and to life. He can remedy the deficiency in some small measure by a study of French literature where classicism in a modified form has inspired works worthy to be compared with those of classical antiquity. His achievement would thus serve a double purpose. While being initiated into classical modes of thought he would at the same time be gaining knowledge of a living language and so forging a link with European culture. The fundamental difference between the Latin and Teutonic temperament and tradition makes a study of each other not only mutually profitable, but almost a duty to the student who wishes to have a broad outlook and a balanced appraisal of social and artistic achievement.

Finally, if this country is to achieve distinction in the civilised world it seems clear that there must be some training in verbal skill. In English, particularly, the level of expression is noticeably low in both the written and the spoken word. The average man in the street, though matriculated, is barely informed enough in linguistic matters to recognise the ineptitudes of our worst journalists and public speakers, still less to criticise them in intelligible English. French prose with its logical construction, and its unadorned clarity, offers a most excellent model. If we are to raise the standard of expression in the mother tongue there must be more linguistic practice, and here, again, French can most suitably deputise for Latin. The French language is not so difficult that it is possible after two or three years study to be still unable to read texts with ease, yet it is complex enough to make the study of it profitable from the linguistic point of view. For the average student sacrifice and profit are perhaps more evenly balanced here than in the study of the ancient tongues.

The third language has recently been receiving more con-

sideration in school curricula, but it is to the universities that we must look for a lead in this matter. It is there that must be fashioned not only language specialists, but scholars in all branches of learning who use their mother tongue to the fullest advantage, conscious of all that is required to achieve clarity and grace.

M. K. NIDDRIE.



Friedrich Schiller

(SOME ASPECTS OF HIS DRAMATIC WORKS)

In the first number of *Theoria* there appeared an essay on Goethe which tried to show the development of German thought in the eighteenth century as mirrored in *Faust*. The present essay deals with Goethe's intimate friend Schiller, the second classical German poet. In a brief analysis of his plays *Wallenstein*, *Maria Stuart*, *Die Jungfrau von Orleans*, and *Die Braut von Messina* we shall consider some aspects of German drama in the eighteenth century. Such an analysis should be of topical interest even to those who have not concerned themselves with German literature, as the productions of *King Oedipus*, *The Trojan Women*, and *Macbeth* by the N.U.C. Dramatic Society in Pietermaritzburg and the N.U.C. Department of English in Durban provide precisely the background of experience that we require to understand Schiller's plays. For Sophocles (to a lesser degree Euripides also) and Shakespeare are the two poles that determine German drama and dramatic theory in the eighteenth century.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century the Germans were completely under the spell of the French theatre. They admired the lucidity of the plays of French classicism; they recognised the usefulness as well as the necessity of the three unities of place, time, and action; they approved of the clear distinction between tragedy and comedy, which excludes all comic elements from tragedy; and found it right and proper that the heroes of tragedy should belong to the nobility, and that comedy should only show the bourgeois. They did not for a moment doubt that in these rules the French dramatists remain true to the original aims of the Greeks as defined by Aristotle, and that French classicism is a living example of Attic tradition. For this reason the Germans did not even go to the trouble of reading Aristotle, Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides in the original. All plays written and produced around 1740 in Germany were either translations or imitations of French dramatical works.

With Shakespeare the Germans became acquainted only in

1741 when a translation of *Julius Caesar* in alexandrines was published. Its merit was immediately assessed by rigidly applying the standards laid down by French dramatic theory, with the result that it was brushed aside as completely barbarian, crude, and chaotic. Gradually, however, a few courageous men dared to praise Shakespeare, because they were attracted by the vitality of his heroes as well as by the convincing characterisation and because they recognised that though he might not satisfy the intellect's desire for lucidity, he did evoke a strong emotional response. In the years 1762-1766 a prose translation by Wieland of all Shakespeare's works was published and the influence of Shakespeare extended to a wider circle.

Lessing was the first critic to analyse the reasons for Shakespeare's influence on German audiences. He started off by comparing him with some of the French classicists and came to the conclusion that if only the Germans reacted spontaneously, *i.e.*, without preconceived notions about the "rules" of drama, they would respond much more to Shakespeare's influence than to that of the French. He then made a careful study of the Greeks in the original texts and measured both French playwrights and Shakespeare against the standards of the ancient Greeks. He found that Shakespeare's plays conform to the spirit of Attic drama far more than classical French plays do, despite the latter's strict adherence to the three unities. Although he believed that Shakespeare would have made a deeper impression if he had not disregarded the dramatic rules, he had no hesitation in calling Shakespeare "the brother of Sophocles". Both Shakespeare and Sophocles achieve equally well the aim of tragedy, which is to arouse sympathy and fear—sympathy with the tragic hero, and fear that a similar fate might befall us.

The analysis of ancient Greek, classical French and Shakespearean drama was carried a stage further by Herder. He was the first to show convincingly that there can be no eternally valid laws for any form of art. Creative achievements, he argued, are subject to the conditions inherent in the epoch in which they come into existence, and drama, too, is bound in form and spirit to epochs, nations, and the existing cultures. To be genuine and great Shakespeare dare therefore not write in the style of the Greek or the French. In his famous essay on Shakespeare Herder showed how Shakespeare follows the laws of his own nature, epoch, nation, and culture. It is only because he does not imitate the Greek tragedians that he achieves what Aristotle defined as the aim of drama, the evocation of sympathy and fear, and for this reason Herder ranked Shakespeare far

above the French classicists. Shakespeare, he said, is different from Sophocles, but nevertheless his peer. In his zeal to prove that criticism of Shakespeare on the grounds of his disregard of the dramatic rules is beside the point, he failed to recognise another fundamental difference between ancient Greek and Shakespearian tragedy, which was to play such an important role in those plays of Schiller that we want to consider here. This difference was later described by Goethe and Schiller as that between the "tragedy of fate" and the "tragedy of character".

In his enthusiastic account of Shakespeare's influence the young Goethe said that Shakespeare's plays show how the autonomous individual, conscious of his own free will, comes up against the laws of the universe. This implies that man has to shape his own destiny and that tragedy also arises from forces in the hero himself. That Goethe should define this so pointedly is no coincidence, for in *Götz von Berlichingen* he tried to compete with Shakespeare. It seemed to him that the unity of a Shakespearian tragedy lay not in external circumstances but in the tragic hero himself, and he, therefore, felt justified in letting *Götz von Berlichingen* end with the death of the hero, although the general conflict with which the play is concerned—the struggle of the knights against the dawning new social order—is not yet resolved.

In his early years Schiller also admired above all else the robust virility and freedom of will of Shakespeare's characters, and the heroes of his own early plays obviously bear the mark of Shakespeare's influence.

For a quarter of a century Shakespeare stimulated German minds; then interest in him was overshadowed by a revived admiration for the Greeks. More than any other single event it was Goethe's journey to Italy, with its decisive consequences for his own conceptions of art and literature, that drew attention to aspects of the culture of the ancients which previously escaped notice. Schiller joined Goethe in his enthusiasm for Greek antiquity, and together they tried to achieve a deeper understanding of Attic drama. They realised that the Greek tragedians showed the inevitable unfolding of a fate predestined by the gods; and were thus concerned with the tragedy of destiny as opposed to Shakespeare's tragedy of character. Sophocles' *King Oedipus* became for Goethe and Schiller the prototype of Greek tragedy. The fate of Oedipus is decided by will of the gods; the oracle reveals their intentions. Man in his shortsightedness immediately conspires to divert the course of destiny; in reality,

however, he is playing into the hands of superhuman forces. Because Oedipus is cast out as an infant, his fate in marrying his own mother and in bringing misery over his people can all the more easily take its course. This unawareness of man that he is active in his own destruction has been called "tragic irony". When Oedipus puts out his eyes the physical blindness is only the symbol of the spiritual blindness with which the gods have stricken him. As the will of destiny is known from the beginning, the play can only show the details of how the intentions of the gods are carried out. The tragedy can thus only give an analysis of the chain of inevitable events. The personality of the hero, whether he is good or bad, whether he endures his fate passively or revolts against it, is of secondary importance. In Greek tragedy Goethe and Schiller admired the coherent structure and the consistent manner in which the role of fate is displayed. Now Shakespeare was again measured against the standards of the Greeks, and this time the title "brother of Sophocles" was denied him. Shakespeare, they felt, emphasised too strongly the freedom of action of the autonomous individual. What Goethe and Schiller objected to in Shakespeare comes out very clearly in Schiller's remark about *Macbeth* that "destiny itself contributes too little, and the faults of the hero too much to his misfortune". When Schiller adapted *Macbeth* for a production in Goethe's theatre at Weimar he did his best to bring out the inevitability of fate. He described the witches as "sisters of destiny" and over-emphasised their influence on Macbeth. In addition he made him a victim of Lady Macbeth who is represented as his evil demon. This and the fact that his crimes are shown to be the result of ambitious desires arising from the unconscious over which he has little control make Schiller's *Macbeth* a passive hero. To arouse associations from Attic tragedy the parts of the witches were played by male actors in masks and on cothurni. What strikes us most forcibly, however, is that Schiller projects his own moral evaluations into Shakespeare's characters and that destiny becomes, so to say, the executive agent of a moral order in which crime finds its just and ineluctable retribution.

In his own last tragedies with which we are to concern ourselves here, Schiller attempted in different ways to create for the German people a tragedy in the style of *King Oedipus*.

In *Wallenstein* Schiller was obviously still thinking of a compromise between the Shakespearian tragedy of character and the Attic tragedy of fate. *Wallenstein* was a historical figure, the leader of the Catholic forces in the Thirty Years War. Schiller

recognised that excessive ambition and lust for revenge were keynotes of his character. Yet he admired his forceful personality, his power over people, his absolute faith in himself and in his mission, his undoubtedly great abilities as politician and as a military commander, the friendly human side of his nature which he showed to those who knew him well, and last, but not least, his greatness and self-mastery in adversity. This imposing character Schiller made the hero of his tragedy. With a talent that had profited from the study of Shakespeare he depicted him in all his greatness.

In accordance with the views he had developed in his analysis of ancient tragedy he set himself the task, however, of letting this great man meet his doom not as a result of actions that he undertook of his own free will but by an inescapable destiny. As neither Wallenstein nor Schiller nor the people for whom the drama was written believed in the Greek gods and the fate they ordain, Schiller tried to prove that the fall of Wallenstein was the necessary outcome of events beyond his own control. Schiller emphasised therefore—with some historical justification—Wallenstein's belief that man's destiny is determined by the stars and that the course of a man's life can be predicted from the astronomical constellations. We know from remarks which Schiller made to Goethe that the belief in the stars was to take the place of the oracle in Attic tragedy. This alone, however, was not sufficient for the poet to explain the inevitability of Wallenstein's fate. He attempted to convince us, therefore, that Wallenstein becomes the victim of events over which he has no control. Wallenstein toys with the idea of revolting against the emperor in order to become King of Bohemia and at last to bring peace to the German people. To achieve this aim he has to combine with the Swedish enemy, at least temporarily. Quite undecided as to whether he really wants to put his plan into practice, he takes the first tentative steps of negotiating with the enemy. This seals his fate. Henceforward he has no freedom of choice, the logic of events overpowers him. It is the emperor who takes the initiative. He has been warned against possible betrayal by his commander, and he deals with Wallenstein as though he had already committed treason. Wallenstein must now accept the responsibility for his dangerous though tentative move, must form a pact with the enemy, persuade soldiers and officers to betray the emperor and thus bring about his own ultimate fall. Schiller's statement in his historical treatise on the Thirty Years War: "Wallenstein did not fall because he was a rebel, but he rebelled because he

was falling ” indicates clearly how he interpreted the destiny of his hero. Just as in *King Oedipus* the tragic end is already decided at the beginning, so also in *Wallenstein* we are to have no doubts about the inevitability of the fate that befalls him and his followers. But as Schiller himself admired Wallenstein for his great will-power and forcefulness, he had great difficulty in explaining convincingly that this strong personality is crushed by a fate he had not shaped himself. To give enough weight to the events which finally bring about Wallenstein’s doom Schiller had to write a whole trilogy.

Schiller set himself the task in *Maria Stuart* to approach even nearer to the ideal of ancient tragedy. He decided to give in this play merely an analysis of tragedy, to deal with the causal connection of the circumstances that lead to the pre-determined tragic end. No substitute for the Greek belief in oracles is suggested, but we are nevertheless to experience that human endeavour is futile and can only bring nearer the final doom. The action begins when the death sentence has already been passed on Mary Queen of Scots. There can be no doubt about her fate in spite of the hope of rescue Mary herself cherishes. Schiller invented characters or events freely to suit his purpose: Mortimer, a countryman and fellow-believer, comes to liberate her; a love affair between Leicester, Queen Elizabeth’s lover, and Mary almost sets her free; a meeting between the two queens, which forms the climax of the play, arouses Mary’s final and most ardent hope of deliverance. Elizabeth has pronounced the death sentence on her enemy long since, but she has not yet been able to make up her mind about the execution of the sentence. When Mary Queen of Scots comes before her, Queen Elizabeth realises that her beauty could make her a dangerous competitor for the favour of men, and when Mary humiliates her in the presence of Leicester, jealousy and a desire for vengeance strengthen her determination to get rid of her rival. Mary knows now that her death is certain, but instead of suffering agonies of despair she gains in moral strength. She resigns herself to her fate, because she sees a direct connection between the unjust death sentence and her murder of Darnley, which has not yet been atoned for. She accepts the miscarriage of justice as her self-chosen death of atonement.

This interpretation of Mary’s death proves very conclusively that despite superficial similarities of his technique with that of Sophocles Schiller did not succeed in giving an analysis of tragedy as he had set out to do. The fate which is forced upon Mary Queen of Scots does not destroy her, but gives her the

moral freedom which is born of self-mastery. By this interpretation Schiller shows himself to be neither an imitator of the Greeks, nor a pupil of Shakespeare, but only himself: a German of the eighteenth century who has completely absorbed Kant's ethical philosophy.

In *Die Jungfrau von Orleans* Schiller replaced the ancient belief in the gods by the medieval conception of miracles. St. Joan is chosen by the Virgin Mary to free France, on condition that she remain a pure virgin untainted by the love of men. Joan agrees to this condition willingly and in the full knowledge of its implications. In the strength of her virtue she secures victory for her nation. Then, however, temptation comes her way. She falls in love with Lionel, who, to make matters worse, is the commander of the enemy forces. While the whole of France is celebrating the victory, she torments herself with remorse for having broken her vow. She feels guilty, and when her father comes to the coronation at Reims to accuse her of witchcraft and sorcery, she does not defend herself. When, in addition, a terrifying storm comes up, she hears in it the voice of God. The people lose faith in her and pursue her as a witch. Forsaken by all she wanders about the country and is eventually captured by the enemy. Lionel saves her from death, but Joan denies him her love. With this she has regained control of herself and she is once more worthy of her high mission. When France is in danger again, her supernatural powers return to her. By a miracle she breaks the heavy chain with which she is bound. Again she leads the French army to victory, but as she has once yielded to temptation she is no longer invulnerable. The last scene shows her dying on the field of battle; heaven opens and the reconciled Mother of God appears to receive her.

Schiller did his utmost to give to the command of the Virgin Mary the same significance as the decision of the gods had in Attic tragedy. But as in *Maria Stuart* what he intends to be tragedy of fate on the Greek model turns out to be something quite different. It is not only the influence of Shakespeare and the admiration of human greatness that is responsible for this. *Die Jungfrau von Orleans* like *Maria Stuart* is not merely the enthusiastic portrayal of an exceptional personality but the glorification of moral strength which man can attain by self-mastery.

Schiller himself, however, believed that he had come very near to the Greek ideal. In *Die Braut von Messina* he made his final attempt to achieve it. He introduced now also the chorus which had been such an integral part of Attic tragedy. *Die*

Braut von Messina differs in many respects from all his previous plays. In the first instance it has no hero, and it seems as though destiny itself were the main actor. Moreover, Schiller did not take the plot from history as in his other tragedies but invented every single detail. This enabled him to follow more closely than ever before the pattern of *King Oedipus*. As in Sophocles' tragedy human caution, contriving to avert disaster, is the instrument of fate. The oracle is replaced by dreams and their interpretation. The Duke of Messina has the meaning of his dreams explained to him and learns that his daughter will murder both his sons, thus causing the dynasty to die out. He therefore commands that his daughter be killed. But the Duchess also has a dream according to which the same daughter will unite the two brothers in love, and she arranges for the rescue of the child in a monastery. One of the most striking features of the Oedipus tragedy is that the change from joy to sorrow, from happiness to misery is so sudden that the contrast is felt all the more strongly. Schiller adopts this technique as well. *Die Braut von Messina* begins with the reconciliation of the hostile brothers; and Isabella, the widowed Duchess of Messina, enjoys the prospect of once more being able to lead a happy life, when her sons promise to introduce their brides to her on this very day. She now reveals to them the secret of their sister and her plans to have her brought home immediately. But then disaster sets in. The brothers discover that they love the same girl, and Don Cesar kills his brother. He realises too late that both of them were in love with their own sister, and to atone for the murder he commits suicide. Thus both dreams have come true, the brothers have been united in love of their sister, and they have lost their lives through her. On the evening of the day that was to bring her three daughters Isabella has to bury the bodies of her sons. Human hopes and plans have been dashed within the span of a few hours. Schiller approximated so closely to Greek tragedy in this play that some of the passages are said to be taken directly from his great models. *Die Braut von Messina* has even been described as a "philological study in imitation of the Greeks" to indicate that Schiller's personal conviction and judgment of moral values hardly entered into the drama. This opinion is correct only to a very limited extent, for Don Cesar's suicide brings out Schiller's own belief in the moral order of the world and in the necessity for a balance between freedom and duty. For him the self-inflicted death of Don Cesar does not mean the enforcement of the will of the gods but atonement for guilt and thereby re-establishment of the

moral order. Thus even in this play Schiller deviates from his model *King Oedipus*.

We can conclude our brief analysis by defining Schiller's debt to the ancient Greeks and Shakespeare and his own contribution to German drama of the eighteenth century.

From the Greeks Schiller took over the idea of the inevitability of fate. He attempted in his plays to construct a chain of events in which cause and effect are convincingly linked. Nevertheless, Schiller did not succeed in creating tragedies of destiny in the manner of the Attic tragedians. For the ancient Greeks the impression of inevitability arose out of their belief in gods. These gods of destiny are alien to man who is at the mercy of their whims. Schiller, on the other hand, regarded fate as the dispensation of moral law. This moral law is not alien to man's own striving, and not imposed on him by external forces, but meets his own needs, for Schiller recognised not only the autonomy of man but also his orientation towards moral values. He is convinced that man must atone for violation of the moral order, but that it is man himself who is responsible for the consequences of his deeds. Fate is thus controlled by man himself.

Like Shakespeare Schiller depicted great personalities who shape their destiny themselves and thus bear witness to the freedom and autonomy of man. But while Shakespeare was occasionally attracted even by the great criminal—a fact to which German students of Shakespeare have perhaps given too much prominence—Schiller was guided more by his moral evaluation of greatness. As a German of the eighteenth century and pupil of Kant Schiller believed that human greatness reveals itself in the free decision of men to uphold the moral order, even when such a decision brings about their own physical ruin.

M. SCHMIDT-IHMS.

Jochem van Bruggen: Verteller of Uitbeelder?

(Gedagtes n.a.v. sy „Kranskop I, Oupa”, 1943)

My eerste kennismaking met die naam Jochem van Bruggen was op 'n reënerige dag in die Karoo toe ek as knapie van vyf jaar pens en pootjies in die groot outydse vuurherd langs die stoof in die kombuis gesit het. Ons buurman se jong het net pas die pos van die dorp af gebring en my moeder het 'n stoel voor die stoof getrek om my oudste broer se brief aan ons voor te lees. 'n Brief van my oudste broer wat in 'n ver dorp met 'n snaakse naam op hoërskool was, was vir ons altyd 'n gebeurtenis. Dié dag was daar in die koevert ook 'n uitknipsel uit „Die Burger”. Ek onthou nog goed dat dit 'n lang artikel was, te lank en te moeilik vir my om te lees, alhoewel ek kastig hard probeer het. Dit was deur P. C. Schoonees en het gegaan oor „Ampie, die Natuurkind”. My moeder het dit toe aan ons voorgelees. Die eerste sin kan ek nog min of meer onthou: „'n Paar weke het ek stil-gelukkig met „Ampie” deurgebring”. (Natuurlik het ek dit later weer gelees; ek spog maar net 'n bietjie met my geheue.) Ek kon die artikel nie bra verstaan nie, maar het darem so vaagweg gevoel dat dit 'n mooi boek moet wees.

Die rede waarom ek die gebeurtenis so helder onthou, is dat die naam Jochem (erg onvleiende assosiasie vir Van Bruggen, waarvoor ek om verskoning vra) by my 'n herinnering aan sekere bergbewoners opgeroep het. Deur die jare het die naam Jochem en die assosiasie in my geheue bly steek. Vandag nog, as ek die naam hoor of daaraan dink, gaan ek terug na dié reënerige dag in 1924, maar nou wek dit nie meer 'n ongunstige assosiasie nie.

My tweede kennismaking was meer aktueel. Dit was 'n jaar of vier later toe ek „Op Veld en Rande” in die hande gekry het en die verhaal van die praatmasjien gelees het. Die eintlike waarde van die verhaal het natuurlik nie by my ingang gevind nie, maar dit was darem so 'n komieklieke storie, om nie eens te praat van die komieklieke naam nie. Daarna het ander werke gevolg: „Teleurgestel,” „Die Sprinkaanbeampte van Sluis” en uiteindelik „Ampie” wat ek gelees en weer en weer gelees het.

Dit was altyd 'n aangename vriendskap, dié tussen my en Van Bruggen se boeke, 'n rustige, gemoedelike vriendskap wat nooit banaal geword het en ook nooit verflou het nie. Vriendskap, dit is wat Van Bruggen se werke aan 'n mens gee; nie geweldige entoesiasme of matelose bewondering nie, maar 'n innige, eenvoudige vriendskap wat ná aan die aarde is en tog die frisse glans van pasgevonde, ryke innerlikheid bewaar. Dit is 'n vriendskap sonder veel skakerings, met slegs enkele fasette waarvan ons die skittering des te suiwerder en blywender kan ervaar.

In die meer as twintig jaar sedert my eerste kennismaking daarmee, het die naam Jochem van Bruggen vir my al meer en meer sinoniem geword met die uitbeelder by uitnemendheid van die armblanke en die eenvoudige boeretipes op die platteland. Vir my bly hy nog steeds die rustig-ingetoë realis met 'n warme humorsin, 'n stemmingsuitbeelder in wie se werk ons nie hewige dramatiek moet soek nie. Daarvoor is sy figure nie kragtig, heroïes genoeg nie. Maar binne sy beperkinge het hy 'n paar van ons belangrikste romans geskep. Sy „Ampie I” —dit het al 'n gemeenplaas geword—bly nog vandag die beste wat ons jong romankuns kon oplewer.

Oor baie jare het Van Bruggen homself getrou gebly: Boek na boek die gemoedelike, beheerste uitbeelding van die armes, stoflik en gestelik. Gedurende die meer as twintig jaar sedert sy verskyning het hy voortborduur op dieselfde patroon wat reeds (met onsekere kontoere) aanwesig is in die karakter Liepie Stols in „Teleurgestel”. Gedurende dié tydperk het die kritiek oor sy werk ook feitlik deurgaans gunstig gebly. Dit is waar dat ons nie by hom voldoende psigologiese diepgang vind nie, dat sy uitbeelding van die armblanke nie in genoegsame mate van-binne-uit geskied nie; daarom moet hy hier onderdoen vir die eerliker en suiwerder siening van Holmer Johanssen in „Die Ontferdes” (1944). Maar as ons ons stel op Van Bruggen se eie standpunt, dié van die gegoede grondbesitter, moet ons erken dat sy gemoedelik-lokale realisme 'n mylpaal is waarop ons met dankbaarheid kan terugkyk. Waar sou die Afrikaanse prosa gewees het sonder Van Bruggen?

Gaandeweg moes hy blykbaar begin voel het dat dit nie voldoende is om die armblanke as sodanig uit te beeld nie; hy moet ook die sosiale en ekonomiese oorsake van die ontstaan van ons armbankedom histories naspoor. En dit is dan wat hy ons probeer gee in „Kranskop I, Oupa.” Hier is eintlik nog slegs aanvoerwerk; ons kan stellig verwag dat „Kranskop” 'n trilogie gaan word.

Van Bruggen wil ons hier 'n beeld probeer gee van die rustige landelike lewe in die ou Suid-Afrikaanse Republiek onder Oom Paul. Eers die byna argelose idilliese bestaan, die rustige plaasatmosfeer; dan gaandeweg die versteuring hiervan deur nuwe ekonomiese omstandighede meegebring deur die toestroming van vreemde kapitaal, gepaard met die gewetelose uitbuiting deur vreemdelinge, en uiteindelik die verloregaan van die ou waardes en tradisies van die Boerevolk. (In hierdie opsig herinner „Oupa” ons sterk aan Totius se „Trekkerswee”.) Aangesien Van Bruggen baie van die sosiale, ekonomiese en politieke gebeurtenisse voor 1900 self beleef het, het hy hier die los vorm van die outobiografiese roman gekies (Vgl. D. J. Opperman, *Ons Eie Boek*, Maart 1944).

Waar Van Bruggen hom vroeër onderskei het as die uitbeelders wat met rustige objektiwiteit kan skrywe, maar wat terselfdertyd kan indring in die siel van 'n ander, al bly dit dan deurgaans effe uit die hoogte gesien, tree hy hier na vore in 'n nuwe gedaante. Hier is sy panorama egter ook veel groter as ooit tevore. Dit verg oneindig meer. As hy elke belangrike persoonlikheid in hierdie verhaal deur middel van sy ou beproefde styl van gedagtepraat wou uitbeeld, spreek dit vanself dat hy 'n enorme doek daarvoor nodig sou hê. Hy het dit besef en gevolglik die maklikste en moeilikste weg gekies. Ons vind hom hier nie meer in eerste instansie as uitbeelders nie, maar as verteller. Ongelukkig was Van Bruggen ook nie hiermee tevrede nie: Soms is hy die verteller wat suiwer objektief meedeel, soms verval hy in vervelige, moraliserende betoog. En dit gee 'n tweeslagtige affêre af. Stukke van die boek is nog beslis die moeite werd om te lees, plek-plek is dit niks meer as derderangse joernalistiek nie.

Alhoewel ek altyd 'n hekel gehad het aan 'n kunstenaar wat 'n formulettjie ontdek en dan maar vrolik daarmee voortgaan sonder variasie (ons het al genoeg De Jonghs, Volschenks en Pierneefs, ook in die letterkunde), vind ek dit tog jammer dat Van Bruggen hier sy ou beproefde styl versak en 'n nuwe rigting inslaan waarvoor hy nie in eerste instansie aangelê is nie, temeer nog daar by nooit van die styl van mymertaal die volle logiese gebruik gemaak het nie. Ek verwag nie dat Van Bruggen dit tot dieselfde uiterstes moes deurvoer as James Joyce nie—sy gerigtheid is immers anders—maar hy kon die styl ook meer op ander karakters toegepas het. Dan sou sy werk 'n ryker verskeidenheid gebied het.

As verteller vind ek Van Bruggen werklik nie boeiend genoeg nie. Die rustige verteltrant kan (soos by Van Melle in „En ek

is nog hy . . .”) na al die grootdoenerigheid van so baie Afrikaanse romans, ’n besliste aanwys wees, maar Van Bruggen onderbreek telkens die kroniek deur die verhaal vooruit te loop en weer terug te krap, deur die dorre moraliserings wat ons grenseloos verveel.

Die gevaar dat die skrywer sy artistieke seleksie nie konsekvent en krities sal deurvoer nie, is in die outobiografiese roman altyd meer aktueel en groter as in enige ander roman, en aan hierdie gevaar het „Oupa” ook nie ontsnap nie. ’n Groot aantal herinneringe dring hulle aan die skrywer op en hulle is soms so lastig dat hy nie meer weet waar om in te las en wat om uit te laat nie. Van Bruggen probeer te veel motiewe in hierdie verhaal saamvat. En hy slaag nie daarin om al die drade te ontwar of om al die gebeurtenisse binne die raamwerk van die verhaal sin en eenheidswaarde te gee nie. Somtyds kry ’n mens die gevoel dat jy hier met ’n klompie los sketse te doen het wat om een persoon saamgeflans is, sonder dat hulle noodwendig verband hou met die sentrale epiese draad.

Op byna elke bladsy is dit duidelik dat Van Bruggen geen verteller is nie. Die verteller moet in eerste instansie groot kompositoriese vermoë besit. En Van Bruggen se krag lê nie in die strukturele nie. Sy enigste roman wat vir my struktureel bevredigend is, „Ampie I,” dank sy eenheid aan die hoofkarakter wat die sentrale bindende faktor is. Daarom is die ander karakters dan ook, hoewel nie heeltemal verwaarloos nie, tog afgeskeep.

Die pragtige genuanseerdheid van die karakteruitbeelding in „Ampie” ontbreek hier totaal. Trouens, karakteruitbeelding in die wesentlike sin van die woord vind ons hier skaars. Die mense—en daar is te veel van hulle wat slegs name bly—openbaar nie hulle karakters deur hulle eie optrede nie; hulle word doodgewoon beskryf. En dan is die beskrywing deurgaans te opsetlik (Vgl. veral hoofstukke I en II). Soos ons by hierdie skrywer kan verwag, is daar nog verdienstelike sienings van tipes (Oupa, Oom Piet, Siets) maar ’n persoonlikheid van menslike formaat is hier nie. Die beskrywing van karakters het eensydig en oppervlakkig gebly. Dit is onbesielde redenering, geen skeppende beelding nie.

’n Ander essensiële beswaar is dat die skrywer homself as ’n kind voorstel, maar die waarneming is nie dié van ’n kind nie. Dit doen baie afbreuk aan die totaalpsigologie van die werk. Die kinderlewe self met al sy kaskenades, kalwerliefde, al sy argeloosheid, is goed gesien, maar dis nog nie genoeg om die inherente swakhede van die boek te neutraliseer nie. Ek verwag

dit nie van 'n skrywer dat hy altyd 'n karakter volledig van binne uit moet onthul of dat hy alles moet konsentreer op die skepping van karakter nie—'n gebore verteller soos Van Schendel doen dit nie—maar dan moet die verhaal strakker opgebou wees, moet die episodes en motiewe tot 'n hoër eenheid saamgevoeg word.

'n Kunstenaar moet die vermoë besit om die dinge en feite wat hy in sy werk betrek, geestelike waarde te gee deur hulle self te laat spreek. Opsetlike pogings tot vergeesteliking of moralisering is altyd verwerplik. Dit is jammer dat Van Bruggen in hierdie boek altyd beklemtoon: Kyk, gister was dit mooi en edel, maar vandag is dit vals en lelik—die voorbeelde is legio. Dit is blote dorre betoog, geen direkte of indirekte beelding wat 'n visioen van die verlede voor ons optower, wat die dinge in 'n besielde verband saamtrek en 'n stuk geskiedenis vir ons laat leef nie.

Van Bruggen se beeld van die verlede is te geïdealiseerd en dié van die hede te verwronge. Is dit artistieke eerlikheid? Kuns is per slot van rekening (en hiermee sal Van Bruggen saamstem) ook 'n etiese kwessie. Maar dit is nie sy eensydige voorstelling waarteen ek in eerste instansie beswaar maak nie. Dat sy eensydigheid so onoortuigend en ongeloofwaardig is, dié is onvergeeflik. Dat iemand met sy sin vir humor nie die betreklikheid van verlede en hede kan insien nie, is onbegryplik. Of het hy miskien sy humorsin verloor? Is hy ook al aangetas deur die jammerlike swaarwigtigheid, die siekte wat ons romankuns al hoe lamleddiger maak? 'n Skrywer met so 'n gebrekkige historiese perspektief kan geen historiese roman skryf nie.

Die verlede het in hierdie boek geen betekenis gekry nie omdat die skrywer nie daarin slaag om vir ons 'n eenheidsbeeld van die sosiale, ekonomiese en menslike werklikheid van die tyd te gee nie. Ondanks al die historiese gegewens, of miskien juis daarom, adem die werk nie die gees van die tyd nie. Dit is 'n betreklik waardevolle sosiaal-historiese dokument, maar 'n roman het dit nie geword nie. Die groeikrag wat die gebeure tot 'n organiese eenheid moes ophef, het ontbreek.

Ten slotte wil ek ruitertlik erken dat hierdie boek nog kop en skouers uitstaan bo die meeste prosawerke van die afgelope paar jaar. Maar dit sê niks. Van Van Bruggen verwag ons meer, en met reg. Vroeër was hy leier van die trop Is hy dit nog?

P. du P. GROBLER.

Die Digter D. J. Opperman¹

(veral na aanleiding van sy jongste bundel)

Reeds in sy eerste bundel het Opperman hom geopenbaar as 'n digter met onbetwisbare gawes. Met bewonderingswaardige selfkritiek en intellektuele tug het hy alles wat toevallig en bykomstig is uit sy werk geweier, sodat alleen die essensiële kon bly, en die beste gedigte sonder praal, hard en naak soos winterbome daar staan.

Hierdie poësie is gesond, groei uit die aarde, bloei op uit die werklike ervaringsfeer van die digter, is deurspoel met die son en die geur van die Afrikaanse landskap, en dit, tesame met die strakheid, soberheid en oorspronklikheid van segging, die dinamiese geladenheid van sy beste verse, was beloftetekens vir verdere groei.

Een gebrek het die leser egter sterk in *Heilige Beeste* aangevoel, en dit is dat die gedigte, waarvan sommige so gegroei het tot 'n organies-bevredigende geheel, nog nie saam tot 'n volkome eenheidsstruktuur kon ryp nie. Die digter het dit self besef; van daar sy poging om met die titelgedig 'n band tussen die motiewe van die bundel te lê.

Hierdie beswaar moet in *Negester oor Ninevé* verval. Die drie motiewe, die aardse, die vrou en die Groot-Groot-Gees het in hierdie ryper bundel verband gekry. Daar is nog die siening van die stad (*Grootstad*, p. 3), in dieselfde lyn as die fel-ekspressionistiese *Stad in die Mis*, hoewel die siening nie nou so elementêr is nie, nie so met een skok ontstaan het nie; daar is nog die siening van die vrou, maar nou as draer van die lewe. Die eerste liefde was 'n „wit galop van hingste: ontdekkings, avonture, 'n geïlle slaap in holtes langs rooi vure”, maar nou:

„Starend van 'n hoë krans
voed een bron ons vergesigte—
'n hoër vreugde, diepet angs.”

(*Mont-Aux-Sources*);

daar is nog die siening van 'n God wat uit die aardse baaierd in helder gestaltes tot selfverweseningliking wring en aan die ewige kring van geboorte en dood sin en betekenis gee. Maar

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in *Negester oor Ninevé* word hierdie drifte op 'n hoër plan tot 'n eenheid versmelt.

Negester—Ninevé; hiermee word die pole aangegee waartussen die gedigte afspeel. Negester met sy getalsimboliek—die altyd-herskeppende beginsel van bevrugting, nuwe lewe en geboorte, die voortplantingsbelofte (en -bevel) waar God hom in elke geboorte in 'n nuwe gestalte openbaar, die singewing aan die sinlose. Ninevé—die grootstad, die hoer, wat met die meedoënlose beperking van die moderne beskawing die geboortewonder weerstaan (vgl. p. 1):

„In ysterhokke
ver van randjies en langgras
werp ape en waterbokke
nog hul kleintjies af”

maar : „net in 'n enkelkamer ek en jy
van hulle vreugde afgeskei”

of in die reeds-genoemde *Grootstad*:

„Voel ons tussen heupe van haar skoot
smoor ons as saad kunsmatig dood”.

Kan die meedoënloosheid van die stad, met sy masjinale roetine-
arbeid van „gillende draaisae”, „die geneul van swart motore”,
die stad met sy leë vermaak en kwasie-erns, sy siekteverskynsels
en dood aangrypender verwoord word as in *Die Ballade van die
Grysland*? En onder dit alles volg hom die donker obsessie:
Die Rekenmeester, wat geïnterpreteer kan word as 'n skuld-
gevoel soos ge-openbaar in hierdie verse:

„'n Knop het in my keel gekom
die oggend toe die peerboom
in die steenkoolerf wit blom” (p. 15).

Die nuwe lente en geboorte dus waaraan hy geen deel het nie.

Die skuldgevoel van hierdie digter kom op tweërlei wyse tot
openbaring: enersyds, soos ons hierbo probeer aantoon het,
die besef dat hy onder die beperkinge van die moderne stadselewe
met sy enkelkamers en hotelbestaan nie deel kan hê aan die
skeppingstaak nie (vgl. pp. 1, 11, 12),

en ook in *Jona*: „Maar wie het rede vir die ramp gegee?

Kom laat ons loot . . . O Ninevé, O Ninevé !”

Andersyds word hierdie skuldgevoel gebore uit die wete dat
hy in sinnelikheid en blinde drif bevrediging soek, en miskien
nog „verder vrou en kind as offers eis” (p. 34). Ook in *Aankon-
diging*, waar daar vir die vrou 'n nuwe landskap oopgaan, maar:

„ek hoor geklik van hakke, boeie,
'n stem wat roep tot rekenskap”.

Belangrik is in die opsig ook *Spel* (p. 35) waar die digter tot die bitter besef kom dat die verwekking van die kind 'n blinde dobbelspel is, 'n roekelose blootstel aan die gevare van die lewe (vgl. *Skip*, p. 41).

Hierdie skuldgevoel hang ten nouste saam met die idee van die uitverkiesing (p. 32), waar die digter gekonfronteer word met die ontstellende vraag wie die chromosome beheer, daardie geheinsinnige draers van die erflikheid. Hierdie skuldgevoel beheers die hele reeks kwatryne met die sprekende titel *Almanak* —die wisselende stemmings van die man deur die lang maande van verwagting en kommer en vrees, terwyl hy hom besin op die implikasies van die naderende vaderskap.

Telkens keer daar in hierdie poësie sekere woorde, wendinge en beelde terug. In die eerste bundel was dit die kleur *rooi* met die suggestie van sinnelikheid en vitale lewensdrang. By sommige skrywers mag dit verklaar word uit 'n armoed van verbeelding en siening. By Opperman met sy ryk digterlike verbeelding, sou so 'n verklaring egter belaglik wees. Hierdie telkens-terugkerende elemente het by hom die magiese towerkrag van simbole gekry. Een van hierdie simbole is *wier*, en in nou verband daarmee; seegrass, stort, water, baaierd (vgl. pp. 48, 49, 52, 56). Dit roep voor ons gees op die vormlose wat met die dood en ontbinding in verband staan. Vergelyk *Nagwaak by 'n ou Man* met so 'n verrassende siening:

„Nou dat die berge, sterre in hom stort
en baard en oë riet en water word,
sien jy in hom die ruie oer-moeras
waaruit jy kruip. . . .”

Daarnaas kom die kreatiewe woord van God (heeltmaal in die lyn van *Dertiende Dissipel* uit die eerste bundel):

„Jy moet geboorte gee
aan stringe kuile, kranse en die see
en so aan My: Ek is die skepping, roer
van poel tot poel, en wee die blinde moer!”

Hierdie merkwaardige verse bring dus nie net 'n siening van die elementêre spel van meedoënloos afslopende natuurkragte nie, maar daarnaas wek hulle tog ook die suggestie van 'n swaargistende moeras waaruit die nuwe lewenskieme loskom.

So verwesenlik God hom met elke nuwe geboorte, staan Hy op uit die donker-gistende ondergrond en groei tot mooier vorme van „Zoeloe, tarentaal en vingerpoel” (*Heilige Beeste*). In die jongste bundel klink dit: „deur klip en varing na 'n verre doel”, en elders: „mens en kiepersol en kiewietvlerk” (p. 24).

Hierdie idee van die kristal—'n ander simbool wat ook voorkom (p. 6), die harde sinvolle kern wat uit die donker vormlose gehaal word, klink voortdurend deur :

„Die dood, 'n see
wat aan die hart bly klots
en ons verower *rots na rots*, (p. 51).

So moet ons ook *Man met Flits* verstaan, waar die digter met die klein wit lig van die denke die stortende chaos beheer in die besef dat 'n duister land alkant dreig. Dis 'n edagte wat ons telkens by Van Wyk Louw ook teëkom (vgl. *Aan die Skoonheid* : „En weet dat stilte en verskrikking weerskant lê”). Ook in *Vooraf Gespeel* : „O Woord, swart klip waaroor die water stort”).

In die otter wat blink uit die stroom kom, sien Opperman die koms en belofte van die nuwe lewe. So word geboorte teenoor chaos gestel. In hierdie verband is van belang 'n ander simbool wat telkens voorkom, nl. *Ark* (of *skip*), die vrou as draer van dié lewe wat die magte van ontbinding beheers. Dit blyk duidelik uit daardie pragtige gedig *Legende van die Drenkelinge*, 'n gedig wat nog nie uitgroeï tot een grootse visioen van ondergang nie, maar wat tog onderdele bied van aangrypende skoonheid (dink maar aan die passasie wat begin met „maar later toe . . .” op p. 16—wat 'n rykdom van plastiese sieninge, wat 'n vaart!). Met sterk, dinamiese verse en geslaagde enjampering word die treffende Bybelverhaal van die sonvloed beskryf, maar geïnterpreteer in die lig van die digter se eie lewensbeskouing (soos Opperman so dikwels met ou verhale en Bybelse stof doen—vgl. *Echo en Narcissus*, *Nagskip langs Afrika* uit die eerste bundel, en hier : *Legende van die drie Versoekinge*, *Jona*, ens.). Met grootste plastiek teken hy die worsteling van die magtigste enkelinge van die aarde om uit te klim bo die stygende branding van God :

„U stroom groot en gryns om die klip
en die wêreld bly enkel 'n skip
in U roering en kolk”.

(Kursivering deurgaans van my.)

Maar bo hierdie „donker geklots van diep branders” is dit enkel en alleen die „Ark van genade” wat draer van die toekoms bly. Ons kom die gedagte ook teë in *Negester en Stedelig* (let op die simboliese drakrag van die titel), met die besef, nés in *Nagwaak by die ou Man*, dat elke nuwe wese van vooraf die stryd teen die chaos sal moet besleg :

„Jy is 'n vegter weer van die begin, alleen”.

So word die ewige kringloop van geboorte en dood sinvol.

Dit is die grondmotief van die bundel, hierdie angswekkende besef van die donker-biologiese ondergrond, waaruit geslag na geslag en mens na mens hom weer deur die selfverweselingsenergie van 'n kreatief-evolutionistiese Godheid van nuuts af aan moet loswring op soek na 'n skoner lewe langs „ongekaarte weë” (vgl. *Vigili Magna* waar ons hele geskiedenis, met ons ewig-rustelose soeke na geluk in felle taferale met 'n verblindende vaart voor ons verbytrek). In al die groot gedigte kom ons hierdie konsepsie teë, telkens maar weer in nuwe verrassende beelde weergegee. So kry ons die gedig *Genesis*—alweer 'n suggestiewe titel—met sy drie groot onderdele: *Spel*—die eerste uitbundige huweliksdag en die voorspelling van swangerskap en dood—*Grot* die verbasende knap psigologiese skildering van die eensame vrou wat in die „leë nagte” met behulp van die alfabet en 'n glas kontak met die man probeer kry—en *Ark* waar die kringloop voltooi word:

„haar skoot
is die klein ark! maar in die dood
se waters reeds . . . het hy gesê
die eiers van die maaier is gelê?”

En verder: „en ruime van haar skoot
word die ark oor waters van die dood” (p. 52).

Met die dood en ontbinding is die belofte en kiem van die nuwe lewe dus reeds daar. Uit die puin en die as van die lewe en dade van enkelinge (ook van Christus) is die feniks al aan die kom (*Vuur*). So sal 'n nuwe lewe, liggaamlik en geestelik immer voortwoeker (*Rooi voël—Wit voël*). Daarom dat die bundel in die laaste gedig, *Moederstad*, na al die geswerf en spanning op so 'n triomfantelike noot kan eindig:

„Solank die mens aan My geboorte gee
hang nog my Negester oor Ninevé”.

Geboorte dus, die enigste antwoord aan die chaos en ontredering van ons eeu, die skeppingsbeginsel wat seëvier oor die materialisme en die dood.

Dit is byna onmoontlik om in 'n enkele artikel op al die skoonhede in hierdie ryk bundel te wys. Ek kan egter nie nalaat om melding te maak van *Nagstorm oor die See* nie. Hier word die verwekkingsdaad vir ons geteken in een van die magtigste visionêre sienings wat ek ken in ons literatuur. Hier styg die digter ver uit bo die sinnelike. Die seksdaad word iets mistieks, word gesien in die lig van die ewigheid.

Die digter wil in hierdie bundel deurdring tot die wese van die mees fundamentele probleem vir die mens—dié van lewe en

dood, die donker-biologiese proses van paring, bevrugting, ontkieming, wasdom en ontbinding. Ten spyte van sy ernstige indringing in dié geheimenis, die strewe om uit die veelheid verskynsels 'n sintese op te bou, wat in hierdie bundel byna die afmetings van 'n stelsel aanneem, het die poësie nooit in duisterheid en onklarheid verval nie. Ten spyte van 'n heel sterk intellektuele besinning, doen hierdie verse nêrens as nugtere verstandswerk aan nie, het alles glansryk en beeldend gebly. Neem so 'n gedig soos *Man met Flits*. Dit het die stralende suiwerheid van 'n edelsteen—hard, kantig, geslyp. Opperman het die geheim van die sober enkelwoord, sonder mooi-doenery en fraaiings, ontdek.

Kloos het eenmaal na aanleiding van Gorter se *Verzen* gesê dat ons die goeie mense waaragtig nie kan kwalik neem as hulle sulke poësie nie kan begryp nie. Dit geld in 'n sterk mate ook vir Opperman se verse. Daar is baie gedigte wat vir sommige poësie-liefhebbers selfs ontoeganklik sal bly, nie omdat hulle slordig verwoord is, of omdat die gedagtegang van die digter onklar is nie, maar omdat dié ontroering so diep skuilgaan agter die intellektuele beheersing. Die wat nog met groot inspanning sal deurdring tot die uiterlike betekenis van die gedig, sal versteld bly staan voor die skynbare nugterheid en onbewoënhed van die digter. Neem die eerste gedig as voorbeeld. Wat kan nugterder meer „alledaags”, meer direk wees as :

„Twee kraaie het hul nes gemaak
van stukkie draad” ?

Dit is slegs wanneer ons hierdie skynbaar vormlose gedig deurgelees het tot by die verrassende slot (iets waarin Opperman uitmunt), dat ons agter die nugtere, skynbaar onbewoë uiterlik die smartlike gelaat van die mens te sien kry. Hiervoor is meer as botte verstand nodig.

Dit gaan in dié poësie nie meer om die klankryke woord, die musikaliteit nie. Die enkelwoord het 'n nuwe en elementêre slaankrag gekry. Hier staan op die voorgrond die flitsende siening, die skerp-getekende voorstelling, die felle ekspressie. Die welluidende vers, met sy uiterlike woordetooi, het nie meer plek in hierdie masjien-eeu met sy harde eise van snelheid, kantigheid en weerbaarheid nie. Hier is 'n mens wat die brutale meedoënloosheid van sy tyd tot die diepste peil en deurlig, en die leser moet hier dus geen gemoedelike sangerigheid en breed-uitgewerkte vergelykings soek nie, geen oortollige woorde en beskrywings nie. Neem hierdie verse uit die eerste bundel :

„Teen vensters gryp geel strooi van die reën,
die dakke kwyn tot malvas lig”.

Slegs met behulp van die verbeelding kan die leser die oorgang bewerkstellig tussen die verwante sieninge wat die digter hier naasmekaar plaas. Vir die logiese verstand sal so iets dwaasheid wees.

Opperman het homself in *Die Digter* goed gekarakteriseer. Soos wat 'n skip met groot inspanning, konsentrasie en geduld in dié eng ruimte van 'n bottel deur die nou bek opgebou moet word, so moet sy hele lewenservaring met al die resultate van sy vorsende denke in streng artistieke vorm gepers word, moet hy „deur die smal poort van die wonder” sy woorde skik „tot stellasies vers”. Dis hier geen ydele spel nie; hierdie pynlike arbeid is sy dagtaak, en daardie „skip”, „geslote agter glas”, is die enigste middel waarmee hy kan ontsnap aan sy doen waar hy verban sit „êrens in die ewigheid op 'n Ceylon”. So voel die digter hom verwant aan die grotes deur die eeue op wie die eensaamheid soos 'n vloek rus. Belangrik is in die verband die *Legende van die drie versoekinge*. Dit bly die roeping van elke profeet deur die eeue om hom, nes Christus, „bewus (af te sonder) van die klein dorpies”, dat in eensaamheid „die troebel menslikheid moet sink”, en die deernis met die broodsgebrek, vrees en ellende van die mensheid gelouter kan word tot die besef „dat die gees moet groei deur selfbedwang”, en hy uiteindeelik „verhelder en versterk” sy lydingsweg kan gaan in die wete dat hy verheerlik sal opstaan uit die dood om, nes die son, lewe en lig te bring.

A. P. GROVE.

Observations On Literary Criticism

In Western Europe, in the Middle East, and in China, writing about imaginative literature in the last two thousand years must have occupied about as many acres of paper as the literature itself. It is interesting to enquire into the meaning of this enormous activity. Writing about literature can be roughly classified into reviewing, scholarship, and criticism, though in practice these often overlap. Reviewing means reporting on a newly published work, and indicating enough of its manner and content to enable others to decide whether they want to read it. This is obviously an important activity, but it will not concern us here.

Scholarship usually concentrates on the past, and is concerned with discovering the facts about the composition and publication of important works : determination of the text actually composed by the author ; date and mode of publication, and reception by the public ; the facts of an author's life, and the circumstances in which he wrote his works ; construing or paraphrasing of difficult passages, tracing allusions and influences, grouping works into schools, movements and traditions ; analysis of metrical rules and conventions. It would be interesting to inquire what keeps the scholar's nose to his book, what inner reward compensates him for his mighty labours, how he comes to regard a life as well spent in which he has traced the date of Chaucer's marriage, the identity of Shakespeare's laundryman, the place where Nausicaa met Odysseus. But this problem, however fascinating, is not our business. We are concerned rather with criticism proper.

Criticism finds its father in Aristotle, the father of so much besides. Following his lead, ancient criticism occupied itself mainly with laying down general principles of literary form, and was not concerned with a detailed discussion of particular works. This is true also of Renaissance critics. In so far as a critic dealt with particular works, he approached them mainly as a judge. His business was to apply the rules, discover whether the writer had carried them out properly, and award him marks for his performance.

During the romantic period a new kind of criticism came into

vogue, based on the antithesis of genius and taste. The new kind of criticism was concerned, not to tell the author what he should have done, but to help others to enjoy things that the critic had enjoyed. The new criticism had the merit of getting close to literature, instead of remaining in the clouds of general principle ; but if we take Lamb and Hazlitt as typical of this kind, we must often feel that, though they may add to our enjoyment of poetry, they add little to our understanding ; their main criticism is to say " how nice ", or " let me read you this bit ".

Side by side with the appreciators, there appeared a much more valuable kind, the interpreters. Coleridge in England, Goethe and Schlegel in Germany, regarded one of the main functions of criticism as discovering the meaning of a great work. They approached their material with some proper humility, realising that the meaning does not always lie on the surface, that a great poet does not always explain everything he means, that there may be much in his works that he can say only through symbols, which the critic can help others to see. During the nineteenth century interpretative criticism increased its scope and power in Sainte Beuve and Matthew Arnold. The great European tradition had at last found worthy interpreters.

Criticism did not stand still. In the present generation it has gained in depth and power by utilising two new disciplines—sociology and psychology. The sociological approach is today superceding the old " Hist. Lit. ", by treating literature as part of general history, instead of a separate compartment. The older kind of literary history was written as a self-contained causal sequence largely isolated from other events. According to this kind of thinking, Denham and Waller wrote in heroic couplets because literary men were tired of metaphysical conceits ; Gray and Wordsworth wrote about nature because the " school of Pope " had lost vitality ; Chateaubriand reacted against Boileau, Hugo against Voltaire, or what not. Historians of philosophy used a similar technique, and discussed Hume as if his work were a lifelong argument with his predecessors. When literature becomes part of general history, it ceases to be merely another step in literary fashion, and is regarded as part of the whole life process. Donne's lyrics become a part of the conflict between religion and science, much of Wordsworth is a response to the industrial revolution, and so on. There is, of course, nothing new about the idea ; what is important is the scope and subtlety of the analogies that can now be perceived. The scholar must not merely trace obscure contemporary allusions, but must try to reconstruct the whole world-picture of the writer, and see the

world in his terms. We can see this new type of historical imagination at work in C. S. Lewis' *Preface to Paradise Lost*, in Orwell's essay on Dickens, in Willey, Tillyard and Trilling. It is the same imagination that is required of the social anthropologist since Malinowski; he is no longer content to record the quaint customs of savages, but wants to see situations through their own eyes, as part of a meaningful pattern. This sensitiveness to other people's points of view is today an essential part of the critic's equipment.

The other recent enlargement of the critic's equipment is modern psychology. There are two fields of psychology that have a bearing on criticism—the Gestalt psychology of mental structures, and the psychology of personality, largely Freudian in origin, with its derivatives, the theory of motives and the theory of symbolism. Nobody has yet made an effective use of Gestalt psychology in relation to literary form, but it is high time that somebody started. What constitutes the completeness of a work, how do we know when we have come to the end, how do we recognise an irrelevance, these are questions that should be asked more seriously than they have been. But our aim is not to invent a new subject, but to review what exists, so we pass on.

There are several ways in which psychology can operate on literature. One is simply a particular application of the sociological method, to show how writers are influenced by psychological theory. It is obvious that many novelists today are making use of current psychology. Most directly, a clinician's case history may be translated directly into a novel, as in Koestler's *Arrival and Departure*, or Balchin's *Mine Own Executioner*. Even *Mourning Becomes Electra* has a faint smell of the textbook. More generally, most modern novelists assume, like the psychologist, that there is a continuity between personality in childhood and in adult life, that we have many unconscious motives, and that trivial acts are often the bearers of important symbols. It is no new thing for writers to make use of psychological theory. Shakespeare and Jonson used the theory of humours, and current astrological ideas; Sterne used Locke's theory of association. Every story-teller is working with an implicit set of assumptions about human nature, and these can be formulated by the critic.

Another approach is to study a writer's works as part of himself, just as a clinician studies the imaginative productions of his patient. The enormous volume of gossip that has accumulated about writers of the past bears witness to the fact that people have long recognised the connection. It has always been obvious that there is an important relation between a writer's life and his

works. He may directly identify himself with one of his characters, like Shelley, 'who in another's fate now wept his own', or Cowper with his *Castaway* :

Obscurest night involved the sky,
Th' Atlantic billows roar'd,
When such a destin'd wretch as I,
Wash'd headlong from on board,
Of friends, of hope, of all bereft,
His floating home for ever left.

Or he may state a personal problem in a general form : no one has ever supposed it to be a coincidence that *Samson Agonistes* was written by a blind and defeated revolutionary ; or that *Adam Bede*, *Silas Marner* and *The Mill on the Floss* were written by one who had a personal reason for being disturbed about irregular marriages. Again, modern psychology emphasises the close relation between personal motives, and attitudes to public affairs. Shelley's dislike of God and the Government was in part a repetition of his earlier dislike of Sir Timothy. Matthew Arnold expresses in the Marguerite poems his loneliness, and inability to make warm emotional contacts with other people ; in *The Scholar-Gipsy* this becomes the isolation of the intellectual in a commerce-ridden society and in the essays it becomes the provincial individualism of English literature, the lack of an academy which should be some kind of substitute for the God in whom he no longer believed. Again, it is not altogether fanciful to see some connection between the ten years' engagement that preceded Tennyson's marriage, and his quivering indecision on religious questions in *In Memoriam*, his "inability to follow, and unwillingness to abandon, any train of reasoning which seemed likely to lead to an unpleasant conclusion". The hypothesis of the unity of personality leads to many illuminating suggestions about the relation of the works to one another, and to their author.

The psychological analysis of literary themes can be pursued in another way, ignoring the personality of the writer, and taking account of the needs of the reader. If works of imagination were merely the private fantasies of the author, that and nothing more, then there would be no point in his publishing them, and equally little point, for anyone except a psychologist, in reading them. A writer puts his works on paper and publishes them, not merely because he has fantasies, but because he has an urgent need to communicate them, to share something with his readers ; and in order to do so the writer has to adapt his fantasies to his public, to express them in a common idiom that

will have a meaning for others as well as himself. Published works are always a joint production of author and public. That is why great writers do not suddenly appear by chance among a degraded or illiterate populace.

A work of imagination finds readers because it supplements their own private fantasies, provides new material, and sometimes enlarges and enriches them. Thus it must always be the statement of a problem which has a private meaning for each member of the public to whom it is addressed. It is always significant to ask, what need does this work seek to satisfy? How does it help the reader to resolve his own dilemma? The question is by no means a trivial or obvious one. Often it is central to the understanding of the work. There are works, like *The Bacchae*, *Hamlet*, *The Ancient Mariner*, *The Witch of Atlas*, *Rosmersholm*, whose fascination lies in the obscurity, not of their detail, but of their general aim. We feel strangely stirred by them, but we do not know why, what hidden longings they fulfil, or were meant to fulfil. Psychology may help here by recognising in them the disguised expression of certain universal human themes, unconscious and long forgotten desires that are buried in all our yesterdays. A number of such basic themes can now be recognised; and in understanding them psychologists have been accustomed to draw on literary models, ever since Freud appropriated the story of Oedipus. The meaning of a work may be something different from what the author intended. Indeed, works whose meaning is too fully and consciously understood by the author often have a flat and unsatisfying quality, as in *Dear Brutus*, or the Edwardian problem plays. We scratch the surface, and there is nothing more to find.

Instead of looking at the general plan or aim, we may try to analyse texture, to interpret the symbolism line by line, phrase by phrase, drawing on the techniques of analysis first used by Freud on dreams. The method was applied to literature by William Empson, a pupil of I. A. Richards. Empson's seven types of ambiguity are the dream-work mechanisms described by Freud—condensation, inversion, displacement of affect, reaction-formation, and so on. His method is that of free association, but association disciplined by scholarship and historical imagination. To interpret a Shakespearian sonnet one has to ask, not, what does this remind me of, but rather, what associations would it have stirred in a contemporary reader? The method draws heavily on the Parallel Passage method (for which the old school editions, like Verity's Milton, are an invaluable assistance), and results in a prose version, often

surprisingly different from the original, and much longer. Empsonism is now widely practised as a critical technique, though there is no one, so far as I know, who can compete with the inventor.

Empson is, of course, primarily a literary man, and an amateur of psychology in so far as it assists his criticism. The psychologists, for their own ends, have been developing a somewhat similar technique in the analysis of thematic apperceptions. H. A. Murray's *Thematic Apperception Test* (or T.A.T.) was devised ten or twelve years ago at the Harvard Psychological Clinic. The subject is shown a series of twenty standard pictures, and is asked to make up exciting stories about them, taking about five minutes for each. The interpreter works on the assumption that every story is in some degree about the storyteller. Every device of literary criticism is brought to bear on these little productions, and the results are often a surprising revelation of the subject's personality. So far the T.A.T. has been used only for the psychologist's purposes, but it should have a distinguished future as a means of exploring and understanding literary technique and critical method.

In the recent intrusion of psychology into criticism, there has been much to irritate and offend those who love literature for its own sake, and it is interesting to consider why this is so.

Some grounds of offence lie in the psychological assumptions that are made. The Freudian psychology, which has been most fertile in suggesting critical ideas, has two very irritating qualities. One is its tendency to interpret the normal in terms of what is perverse and pathological. For Freud, human beings had only two important motives, lust and murder, and in various elaborate ways all other interests and diversions could be reduced to aim-inhibited expressions of these. He defines the stages of psychic development in terms of the sexual perversions to which they give rise, and the only alternative to perversion is neurosis. Freudians have no theory of health or normality. They can describe a normal person only in terms of the mental disease he has managed to escape. Sanity is the ability to avoid certification. To describe works of genius as disguised forms of insanity or perversion is felt by lovers of literature to be an inadequate tribute to their achievement. An example of this crude use of psycho-analysis is seen in Ludwig Lewisohn's *Expression in America*, although it is in many respects a finely conceived and sensitive work. Whitman is explained by his homosexuality, Hawthorne suffered from Oedipus guilt, Emerson and Thoreau were impotent, and so on. However true these facts may be, it

is plain that a neurosis, even the most severe, will not of itself produce great literature. One is reminded of Lombroso's ridiculous old book about *The Man of Genius*. ". . . Julius Caesar, Dostoievsky, Petrarch, Moliere, Flaubert, Charles V, St. Paul, and Handel appear to have been all subject to epilepsy, and there was a constant quiver on Thomas Campbell's thin lips." "Six strokes with a birch-rod would not be too heavy a punishment for such impertinence", wrote Augustine Birrell in just indignation.

Another aspect of Freudian psychology is its "nothing but" approach to all the more splendid achievements of human endeavour. This attitude it shared with Russian reflexology and American behaviorism. In America in 1920 thought was known to be nothing but a sub-vocal tremor of the larynx; in Russia it had long been reduced to a submaxillary dribble. To the orthodox Freudian the sculptures of Michael Angelo were a prolongation of infantile habits of smearing dirt, the plays of Sophocles revived the politics of the nursery, and Arthur's sword was just another phallic symbol. The Freudian doctrine of fixation suggested that no important developments occurred after the age of about five and a half years, and any innovation attempted later could be little more than a repetition of an earlier trauma. Although Freud's works are themselves the product of a rich poetic imagination, as can be seen in his later meta-psychology, he felt it to be his duty as a nineteenth century scientist to debunk idealistic pretensions.

If the psychologist approaches literature with a view to finding confirmation of his theories, there is no quarrel; but if he does so with the object of explaining literature away, then it is not surprising that the critic leaps to the defence of his subject. Some psychologists write about *Hamlet* as if they had just read it for the first time. Such freshness of approach brings certain advantages, and sometimes enables them to detect what lay unnoticed under the eye; but ignorance of scholarship also exposes them to the danger of a certain crudity. It is furthermore noticeable that psychological analysis does not contribute very much to value judgments; it can be applied as readily to *Jack and the Beanstalk* or the *True Love Magazine* as to *Faust* or *Macbeth*. It is a flower-in-the-crannied-wall technique, and every lane leads to the inevitable booby-trap. Yet the critic feels that the understanding of great literature is the only part of his work that really matters. In so far as he needs to know anything about the *True Love Magazine*, it is merely in order to purify his taste so that he can learn to ignore it, and to concentrate on what is

really worth having. This does not mean that he must become a prude and a snob, like that lady in Cambridge who allowed young men to praise only seven writers after 1900, and classified the rest as middle-brows and low-brows. But it does mean that psychological techniques are of little value to criticism unless practised by those who really know and love literature. Psychology is not a substitute for discrimination and scholarship, but rather an adjunct to them. It is no substitute for an ear for rhythm, a knowledge of tradition. The critic sometimes feels that the psychologist is giving him a patronising pat on the back and explaining that while critics have made quite a creditable effort in the past with the miserable tools at their disposal it is now time that Science took over. Progress requires that the tractor shall replace the hoe . . . The notion that criticism, psychological or otherwise, can be "objective" and "scientific" is, of course, nonsense. Really "scientific" criticism would provide a formula for producing great works of art, as Professor Birkhoff tried to find the mathematical equation for the perfect Chinese vase; and once the formula had been found, the works produced by it would immediately become worthless. True art is always new, always unique. Twenty *Paradise Losts* would destroy the value of one. Psychological criticism can not explain away a work of art; it should rather provide fresh and richer meanings for old things that have grown stale by familiarity; even the *Golden Treasury*, the school anthology, can come alive in odd, fantastic ways, gain an elaborate richness of unsuspected allusion, and recede into vistas of interlacing symbols. Used in this way, it can prove a source of refreshment to the jaded critic, and a challenge to the novice. It can help to focus the reader's attention more closely upon the text, by reminding him what momentous implications may be hidden in a faltering of the rhythm, a misplaced comma, an echo of Lucretius. Of course, it can easily become also a tiresome pedantry. But that has happened so often before with other types of criticism that no one can hope to prevent it.

B. NOTCUTT.

Towards An Appreciation Of Art

To have a degree in fine arts means nothing unless it carries with it a belief in the importance of the arts. Art as a necessity, an interest which will not die out at the end of a four years' course. With this must come the knowledge that a degree is not a halo to be conferred and worn like a uniform cap as the sign of a superior person or as the entrée to a more highly paid position. Our problem is how to stimulate an interest in Art as a reality . . . Here in Natal powerful, exciting influences tend to dominate the student's interest. Sport and the sun-drugged beaches, cars and comfortable cinemas—these are easy and popular and one goes with the crowd. Interest in painting may be more difficult, personal and require more effort. Apathy and ignorance are the enemies of appreciation. But can we blame the students when so often he or she has had little or no opportunity (at home or outside) to come face to face with a live painting of importance? And it is appreciation that we want—not mere scholarship. "In order to have a taste for enriching the mind," says Rouault, "it is perhaps not necessary to be a graduate or have a degree or to be a mandarin with mother of pearl buttons." ! ! The exclamation marks are mine and are directed at the student who considers a *degree* as the end all.

In one of my books I find that I wrote this on the fly-leaf: "The sun was shining and the day was full with Autumn. In the Rue Castiglione I saw this book and bought it to remind me of Paris then . . . We went to the Louvre and the small Watteau was very perfect . . . In the gardens of the Tuileries, Watteau's vision lives and dies daily. The air was warm and the children enjoyed their evening by running and shouting among the statues. A hoop fell quivering at my feet. How beautiful it was. I must never forget the beauty of France, or Watteau . . ." But what has this to do with the appreciation of Painting? What have the children in the Tuileries gardens to do with the Watteau in the Louvre? Everything. The children were very much alive; so, too, was the Watteau, for the picture has a life of its own which has nothing to do with its history or value.

Seeing Art, like living, is an experience. If the spectator can open his eyes, and through them his emotions, *then* the picture can stimulate his vision, make him more conscious of life around him and thereby enhance his experience of living. For we see the past only through the eyes of the painters of the period. No, there is more to it than that, for the Watteau helped me to see the children in the gardens more intensely—the recurrent patterns of the trees, the statues, the pattern of the moving figures. “Time present and time past are both contained in time future . . .” If this happens to the spectator, then from that time on will start his appreciation of the importance of Art. Art, not as something apart from life in a book or a gallery, but as a personal experience like love or the pleasure one derives from one’s dog.

In the calendar I find, “The college has an excellent library of Art books, also a collection of nearly 2,000 mounted photographs representing all periods of art. . . .” (We must be grateful for the honesty of the qualifying word “representing.”) In this library are more books on Art than were available to the whole of quattrocento Italy; sufficient material for the study of the *History* of Art. And if the publication of books goes on at its present rate and volume (which I don’t doubt that it will), one can only be sorry for the student of the future, who will have so many more data to wade through in his approach to the subject. But books alone are not enough. Through them can be gained no personal experience of painting. The vast Sistine Frescoes which awed even the scale conscious G.I.’s; the shrouded mystery of the *Night Watch*; the intimate eye of Chardin or the tortured Picassos which set London aflame with controversy: in books these will have shrunk to a few square inches of half-tone, or at best a set of ambiguous colour prints. Their very size and personality will have vanished. While as a reminder to one who has seen the originals, these prints will be no more satisfying than the snaps of home and beauty in a soldier’s wallet. Art books are only completely satisfactory in themselves as books, as productions to weigh in the hand and feel the fineness of the paper. In this lies the importance of the fine edition; but this is the Art of the book. Books on Art can be even dangerous in some cases. An artist friend of mine once complained: “Books, yes, everyone wants Art books nowadays. Sometimes I wonder whether they, like the Germans Huxley estimated as preferring lectures on Heaven to Heaven itself, are not more interested in the Books than the Art. The

real thing that is. Books look good in a room, they show you're cultured. In them everything is explained and reduced and glossy—there the moderns don't offend and Goya doesn't shock. They are easy to get and cheap . . .”

To understand French painting it will be of use to study Wilenski and to know of the Revolution, the Commune and the Romantic movement. But to experience a work of Art this is not necessary. For the true appreciation of painting the mere cataloguing of dates and schools, proportions and media is not enough. As for an understanding of the great masters? Well, here in Natal the most important factor is missing—the opportunity for the student to experience the shock of meeting the works face to face. So we envy the English Department. Milton can be read anywhere in a cheap edition and is no jot the different from an original edition in the Bodleian—not in the poetry of it that is. . . . We in the Fine Arts can only end by saying to the student, “Go and see for yourself,” and hope that his or her parents will be able to finance a grand tour of the centres and countries covered in Course III! But before we say this, we can have helped the student to learn to *look* and to appreciate what he sees.

The major part of the B.A. Fine Arts degree course is devoted to practical work. This working in a school is the best substitute we have for the bodega system of the past. The old masters started very young generally, working in the studio of their master, to whom they were apprenticed. Having often ground colours while still children, they learned their trade on their masters' pictures. By 18 they had learned to express themselves and were fully equipped to start creating. . . . And our students? They draw and paint; but if we are to accept in the main Picasso's dictum, that there are only two kinds of painting, *Good* and *Bad*; then how are we to assist them to a sense of values, of criticism which, when applied to their work, will enable them to say that this is *Good* and that *Bad*? Books cannot help, neither can history nor lecturers alone. Our problem is not so much the production of *artists*. They are born and can appear without the aid of a university. Our first concern must be the cultivation of appreciators (how few of our students continue to paint seriously in after life), with a sense for what is good and bad. And to learn to appreciate they must come into contact with *good* live paintings. Then and only then can they begin to see paintings as objects in their own right, stripped

of history and well documented approbation. For to worship the accepted Gods is easy, while to find a God by one's own judgment is another matter.

At this stage galleries are our great necessity. Galleries as a meeting place for students and painting. Though I doubt whether the Government would be prepared to spend the millions—for millions would be necessary—to purchase original old masters (on the presumption that they would be available) and to equip galleries throughout the country. And our millionaires? (Odendaalsrust must have made many.) Can we look to them for help, for collections such as were built up by Barnes and Rockefeller, to mention but two of their counterparts in America? Alas, most have so far only evolved to the bigger and better car stage. Max Michaelis was an exception—but for us in Natal this collection is more than a thousand miles away! Here in Maritzburg, what is perhaps the best collection of British Painting in the Union is confined to little better than an attic in the Town Hall—the result of a public meeting which decided on a policy of drains before Art (and this in a self-styled “cultured community”!). Few good one-man shows come our way, for few artists care to exhibit in a shop—the only commercial “gallery” in the town. So our only hope is that the students hunt out the good paintings (there are not so many) on view in other centres. This they must do in their vacations. But, if old masters are out of the question, is there any reason why we should be out of touch with the work of our contemporaries? There are *good* painters in Europe, England and the Union whose works are within the means of even this university to purchase. That we are forced to purchase and make our own collection is the penalty we must pay as an Art School situated unhappily in a centre where no real art gallery exists, and where no travelling exhibitions are organised, and there is no scheme for the purchase of works of art, contemporary or otherwise.

Each time I pass the Zoology Department I see the shelves of specimens, bottled and ready for examination or dissection. “Specimens” are as necessary for the Art student. Necessary to give the lie to the statement made by one university lecturer that prints are as good as the original painting. Necessary, so that every day the student may come into contact with the personality of a live picture of real merit, and be able to compare paint with paint, and experience the sensation of seeing, even

touching the skin, as it were, of the painting. (How different this is from the mechanical surface deadness which characterises even the finest print.) And necessary for the development of the all-important sense of values, the ability to differentiate *good* from *bad*, and *History* from *Art*.

Now we have two original paintings.* They hang in the Art School for all students to be aware of, consciously and unconsciously, during their time at the School. Already the students are interested, they begin to see their own work in a new light. Comparison is now possible. It is too early to assess results or to draw conclusions. Possibly the students themselves don't notice any change. Some may even be disappointed, in much the same way as one can be when one meets a great actor, and for the time being the illusion is lost. But they *are* looking and experiencing the works at first hand. In some the passion may start, for interest in painting can become a passion. And, if the student falls in love with painting, *then* we are well on the road to real appreciation. And more real appreciators among the public are vital for the survival of art.

*The Art School has inaugurated a scheme for the purchase from time to time of paintings for study purposes. We owe a debt of gratitude to Mr. Enslin du Plessis, who, as a friend of the artists concerned, has been able to secure these examples of their work for us. Mr. du Plessis is at present in South Africa engaged on preparing an exhibition of his paintings. On his return to London he has kindly consented to act as our agent in London. Among other paintings he will obtain representative works from Graham Sutherland and Henry Moore.

And the paintings? Both are small works. (Our fund is very limited: public benefactors and art patrons please note.) Perhaps they are better for that; they are not so remote from the students, beyond the possibilities of achievement or comprehension. The still life by Victor Passmore* is a lesson in itself, in its very simplicity of subject. Here is the pointer to an understanding of the humble Chardins and the purity of the Cézanne still lifes. No carefully selected group of exciting objects wear away the interest from the painting as a whole. The painting stands on its own unencumbered by any literary meaning, as pure in its appeal of line, form and colour as an abstract—in fact one's eye is held delighted by the interplay of shapes and spaces. Here one realises that the artist has developed his

painting from the simplest objects, an everyday phenomenon, some fruit and is it a kitchen table? But the objects are not really important, no more so than the original A.B.C.D. that went to make up a Bach fugue. What is important is the development of the theme, the flight of imagination and control, that have gone into the making of the completed whole as we see it now. This example of what I call *pure* painting is a fine basis for any modest collection. The Rogers* "Landscape of Bristol" will serve another purpose. It may help to show how an "on the spot" painting can, by control of colour and form, be firmly knit into a fresh, yet almost monumental work within what is in reality a small canvas. Both these paintings are by young painters whose work is well in the forefront of contemporary British painting. But enough of writing about painting. Now (for a change) the reproductions can be compared with the originals, and conclusions drawn—not primarily about technique or history (though these artists are making history) but as to the effect upon one of a good painting—the personal experiencing of Art.

*Victor Passmore and Claude Rogers belonged to what is now known (the prevalent fashion for pigeon-holing artists in groups and schools!) as the Euston Road School. Other members were William Coldstream and the late Graham Bell (from Natal). Lawrence Gowing, a one-time student of the school, is now associated with the group. No good mixed show in London is without examples of their work. All now teach part-time at the Camberwell School of Art, London. For those interested in further details of Victor Passmore's work I can best refer them to the fine monograph on this artist in the Penguin Modern Painters Series.

GEOFFREY LONG.

The Aims and Methods of the Clinical Psychologist

During the last few years it has become increasingly clear that the general health practices are incomplete without the inclusion of a new professional group, that of the clinical psychologist. Evidence in support of this view has been accumulating as a result of research, the findings of medical practice, and from the experiences of the general public. Despite considerable opposition from all sides the clinical psychologist has in many instances forced his way into responsible positions, and there proved his worth, although official recognition of his status is still generally withheld.

The psychologist depends for his effectiveness as a therapist almost entirely on the active, interested co-operation of his patient, and is thus peculiarly dependent on public attitudes. Misunderstanding, prejudice, fears based on ignorance, and outdated conventional views, not only reduce the effectiveness of psychotherapy, but deprive large numbers of unhappy and maladjusted individuals of the necessary treatment and assistance.

It is in an attempt to remove or reduce some of these obstacles to progress in health practice that this article is written.

The field of clinical psychology is in the process of being defined. An early and now rather naïve definition of this field could have been "the treatment of psychological or mental disorders". This definition no longer suffices, since it has become evident that a large proportion of physical disorders are psychological in origin, and an even larger proportion of disorders showing physical symptoms owe their existence to a combination of physical or constitutional weakness and emotional disturbance.

In the past the patients of the psychologist consisted of those cases rejected by doctors as not being medically treatable; the field was not defined in terms of accurate classifications or diagnoses. Theoretically those disorders which were psychogenic or functional in origin were considered to be the responsibility of the psychologist, while those organically caused were the responsibility of the medical practitioners. Since in practice cases

were only labelled psychogenic if no organic basis for the symptoms could be discovered (this step being delayed for varying periods of time, depending on the conscientiousness in examination, the diagnostic skill, and the beliefs of the practitioner concerned), individuals receiving psychotherapy were the meagre remnants of a lengthy and often exhausting process of selection.

Today it is recognised that such a distinction between psychogenic and organogenic is both false and misleading, since all symptoms, illnesses or behaviour patterns are functions of the whole man, and must be treated as such. Nevertheless, it remains true in practice that certain disorders, showing either psychological or physical symptoms or both, respond to psychotherapy where they do not respond to other forms of therapy, and that others respond to drug and surgical therapy where psychotherapy is almost certain to be ineffective. In between these groups fall a large number of disorders which can be most effectively dealt with by a combination of these therapies.

It is accepted by psychologists generally that the selective field of psychotherapy is that of disorders, whether they are revealed in the form of physical or psychological symptoms, or of both together, which are caused by neurotic conflicts or emotional disturbances. The essential characteristic of the neurotic conflict is that the individual concerned cannot consciously or rationally influence it, but instead is, in the relevant aspects of his life, controlled to varying extents by it. The conflict, of which the individual is generally unaware, achieves expression in distorted forms, often interfering seriously with the individual's life, health and happiness. The symptoms resulting may vary from purely mental disturbances such as obsessive thoughts or phobias, through hysterical paralyses, and incapacitating anxiety attacks, to predominantly physical conditions, such as asthma, or high blood pressure.

Broadly, then, one can say that the aim of the clinical psychologist is to diagnose, treat and cure, wherever possible, individuals suffering from complaints based on psychological and emotional disturbances, and to give psychological advice and treatment to all other individuals needing such assistance, in co-operation with other practitioners engaged in remedial work.

Here, it is necessary to emphasise the difference between "the removal of a symptom" and a "cure", since considerable confusion between the two tends to arise in the public mind, and also to a regrettable extent in the professional mind. It must be recognised that the removal of a symptom or of the symptoms is not a satisfactory criterion of a cure. The successful medical

treatment of a peptic ulcer, which is the result of a longstanding condition of anxiety and its effects on the gastric processes, unless the anxiety condition is removed, is not a cure, because the original cause of the ulcer remains untreated, and either a relapse or the formation of some other symptoms is not only likely but highly probable. The basic disturbance under these circumstances has not been affected.

In psychotherapy it is necessary not merely to return the patient to life in the condition he was in before he was "stricken with the disease" (i.e., developed the troublesome symptoms), but to return him in as perfectly adjusted a condition as possible. This often implies the return of the patient in a better general condition of health than he ever experienced before, since the majority of neurotic disorders have a history practically as long as the individual's own.

Despite these highly laudable aims and this generally accepted rationale, the psychologist remains an object of suspicion, fear, and general distrust to the public, these attitudes frequently being shown in the form of jokes and ridicule. He seems to be gratefully accepted mainly by the authors of sensational stories, and the producers of sensational films, who show their gratitude by highlighting the glamorous non-essentials and emphasising the bizarre elements of the therapeutic procedures.

The layman is influenced by such portrayals to a greater extent than he realises and it is instructive to analyse some of the common conventional ideas he has about the psychologist. One very popular view of the psychologist sees him as a patriarchal figure, almost invariably bearded and stern. Naturally with this concept goes the corresponding view of psychotherapy as a harsh, magical procedure whereby the psychologist reads the patient's thoughts, influences him and controls him by hypnotic and other weird devices. The patient is powerless. The exaggeration of this description is easily recognised, but a large number of intelligent individuals still cling to the idea that the psychologist is authoritarian in approach, dogmatic and fixed in his strange ideas, and that psychotherapy consists in forcing the patient into a mould of the psychologist's designing, by means of hypnotic and persuasive influence.

There are admittedly a large number of different forms of psychotherapy, which are today used in different circumstances. Admittedly there are psychotherapists who use hypnosis, but the crude authoritarian approach as visualised above has been recognised for a long time as valueless in the treatment of

neuroses, only being utilised for special purposes on rare occasions by a small minority of psychotherapists.

The idea of the omnipotence of the psychologist is a remnant of magical thought; it has something in it of the attitude of the tribesman to the witch-doctor, which is flattering neither to the man in the street nor to the psychologist. It derives, of course also from the much publicised views of psychologists like Watson the Behaviourist, who claimed to be able to take any child and by training make what he willed of him, criminal, artist, lawyer or beggar; and the equally publicised and equally dogmatic views of Freud and others, emphasising the irreversible effects of seemingly quite normal occurrences of infancy and childhood. Added to these is the common idea of the hypnotist, in whom the general public has always had a very strong and frequently morbid interest, and around whom a vast body of mystical fantasy has grown.

Although misconceptions such as these form the grounds whereby a large number of people reject the orthodox psychologists, the public continue to support numerous hypnotists, faith healers, mental telepathists and other "therapists" who fit the above description fairly exactly. The cynic might add "and allow themselves to be cured in disgustingly large numbers by these people". This is true in only a limited sense. The nearer the therapist can approximate himself to God in the eyes of his public, the greater the impression of magical powers he can create, the greater his reputation and accordingly the quicker and the more miraculous his cures. These "cures", however, as pointed out earlier represent merely the removal of symptoms, the disorder itself is not affected, and relapses or the production of new symptoms are to be expected. The vast majority of such cures represent the removal of hysterical symptoms, such as paralyses, or blindness and other physical symptoms of underlying psychological disorder.

All authoritarian methods of therapy suffer from this defect. **They do not remove the cause of the disorder, merely its symptoms.**

Reverting to the discussion of the neurotic conflict, which is the basis of the disorder, it can be said that this conflict is one between an instinctual urge striving for expression and a counter-urge based on the demands of the individual's conscience, or his fears of the consequences, in which the latter has succeeded in repressing the former, in pushing it out of consciousness and at the same time rendering it inaccessible to conscious rational control. An alteration of the symptoms can occur then in two

ways, either by the increase or the decrease of the strength of the countercharges.

Authoritarian therapy either increases or decreases the countercharges (the repressing agencies) by means of persuasion, threats, coercion, hypnotic influence or other forceful means; usually such therapies act by increasing the strength of the countercharges.

These therapies do not give the patient a real understanding of his problems, he does not obtain the necessary insight to enable him to control and manage these problems on his own. Once the support of the therapist or the therapeutic agency is removed, the patient is likely to relapse. In a very real sense he has substituted one neurosis for another—he has exchanged for his original symptoms an extreme, unreasoning and immature dependence on the therapist. Where the therapeutic agent is a mystical or semi-religious faith the patient substitutes for his original neurosis a blind, unreasoning adherence to such a faith. He forfeits his individuality. In such therapies the presence of large groups of converts intensify the magical authoritarian influence and “cures” become possible without individual contact between therapist and patient, although such contact renders the “cure” more likely.

Many other forms of therapy show the same faults, some within the field of general medical practice. The very common methods of the auto-suggestive type replace the original symptoms with obsessive-compulsive rituals, the individual nevertheless claiming to be cured, as long as he repeats the magic formulae and carries out the prescribed ceremonials regularly. Phobias (unrecognised as such) relating to tobacco, alcohol, various foods or activities replace the original symptoms frequently on the doctor's advice.

The important element in these cases is the relationship between the therapist and the patient. If the patient has a high degree of confidence in the therapist such substitutions are likely to occur. The suggested remedy may not be acceptable to the patient in certain cases, because it is too alien to his personality make-up. This complication is usually avoided fairly easily by the patient since, whatever his personality requirements, he will search until he can find a “good” therapist who will recommend the most acceptable remedy. Such persons are to a very great degree, unwittingly, their own doctors.

Throughout the discussion of authoritarian therapies the magical elements can clearly be seen. The ailing individual is in the mood for magicians; the neurotic individual practically demands them. The older superstitious methods persist in new

disguises even in the medical field. During the First World War the Germans and the Austrians used very painful electric shocks as treatment for the war neuroses. They were highly successful. Battalions of war neurotics fled back to apparent health as speedily as possible. They were not cured. They merely found their anxieties and mental disturbances easier to face than the repeated electric shocks. These shocks reinforced the repressing agencies, and thus changed the neuroses into other, probably deeper and more serious, forms.

Today numerous kinds of shock and drastic therapies are used varying from electric shock to refrigeration for the insane. These methods bear a strong resemblance to the older treatments of "flogging out the devils".

Here again, it is probable that the reinforcement of the repressing agencies is the so-called "therapeutic" factor.

Such methods are found to be most consistently effective in cases of depression, where the patients regularly complain of overwhelming guilt feelings, of complete unworthiness, of sinfulness and wickedness. Perhaps even the patients agree that they have devils which should be frightened, beaten or frozen out of them, or that they deserve such punishment for harbouring these demons.

That there is a public demand for such magical measures is clear from the numbers of individuals who ask for such drastic treatments in order to cure often trivial disorders. This continues despite comments made by eminent authorities such as Sullivan : "The philosophy (of shock-therapy) is something to the effect that it is better to be a contented imbecile than a schizophrenic".

I do not intend to imply that if a carry-over from magical practice to modern method can be demonstrated the modern method is therefore necessarily faulty. It has been pointed out by Reik that although the use of police dogs can be traced back to the animal oracles, and has affinities with many magical systems of "smelling out the criminal", it is nevertheless effective. Such traces are common in all fields ; certainly psychology is not without them, but it has the means and the interest to discover these traces and determine their significance.

From the evidence above it seems that the general public both search for authoritarian control and at the same time fear it. A consideration of some of the factors at work within our society may explain this partially. In education and early life children are set two contradictory ideals : that of obedient submission and that of active independence. They must give way to others and yet are expected to compete successfully. There is a very

powerful emphasis on individuality and at the same time the chances of individual success are exceedingly remote. In subtle ways, through propaganda, advertising, and other strong social stimulations the individual is controlled and directed, most often being unaware of this subtle domination. These factors lead to intense insecurity; the heightened sense of individuality brings with it a heightened sense of isolation and powerlessness. As a result of these two factors, the individual is at one and the same time highly sensitive to any new form of control, which he will resent, and highly desirous of some authoritarian direction which would relieve him of the feeling of isolation and the anxieties of individual responsibility. The balance between these two drives in each individual is swayed by his success or failure in life, by the conditions of his physical and emotional health. Thus when failure outweighs success he is likely to swing more to the aim of shelving responsibility, of accepting the control and direction of another individual or system. The same naturally applies when the individual's health deteriorates.

Real and effective psychotherapy does not provide this form of authoritarian support and direction. It cannot, since by doing so it would defeat its own ends. The dilemma of the clinical psychologist is plain. His methods, which involve helping the individual to face up to his problems, instead of to hide them, to accept his responsibilities, instead of to shelve them, are opposed by the traditional health services, which are mainly of the authoritarian kind (the phrase "under the doctor's orders" summarises this neatly), by the desires of the people it is his task to help, and also by the views of the well-adjusted members of the community who misunderstand his function and avoid and fear his techniques.

The need for such psychological services is very urgent. Figures relating to neurosis, psychosis, delinquency and crime are continually being published, and are regularly becoming more disturbing. Eminent medical authorities state that between 40 and 60 per cent. of the patients visiting the doctors' consulting rooms are neurotic. In the U.S.A. more than 50 per cent. of the hospital beds are occupied by mentally disturbed patients. A well-known American surgeon reported that since he had had all his appendicitis cases psychiatrically examined less than 25 per cent. of them had come to the operating table. These are statistics picked at random from an overwhelming mass of evidence.

In order that these services can be provided it is clear that the

support and the understanding of the people must be obtained, and the co-operation of the existing health services.

The fact that illness is an aspect of the behaviour of the individual which can only be understood and cured by a consideration of the individual as an integrated whole, behaving as a unit within a social framework, must be accepted. Teamwork is the only answer if this approach is to be made possible. Certain cases, once the diagnosis is made, would be treated only by the doctor, others only by the psychologist (because in some cases the two forms of therapy would be mutually exclusive, or both would be unnecessary), others by both in co-operation, each working within his own field but with understanding knowledge of the other's methods.

The prejudices must be removed before this can be achieved. It is strange that psychology should be accused of authoritarianism, since it is this science which has so clearly pointed out the dangers of an authoritarian approach, particularly in the health services. All authoritarian treatment is in its essence bad, because the patient does not gain an understanding of his problems, because he is at the mercy of forces which he cannot control. The psychologist acts as a catalyst; his task is not to mould the patient, nor even to change the patient, but to assist the patient to come to grips with his problems and achieve a solution to them. As Fenichel puts it, the psychotherapist remains the unemotional mirror which reflects the patient to himself. This task of enabling the individual to accept and to use effectively responsibility for himself is one which does not end merely in the cure of an individual neurotic. The problem is one which vitally affects every aspect of our civilisation. It would seem wise to take every possible step to solve it.

B. M. PECHAY.

The Ego Concept in Theories of Personality

The following comments on the "ego" in the theory of personality are an attempt to clarify the concept and the phenomena to which it refers, not a complete account of all the different shades of meaning that are given to it by various investigators. Such a clarification I believe to be vitally necessary in the scientific study of personality at the present time, for the irritating vagueness of the term in semi-popular usage is paralleled in scientific usage by a confusing variety of specific meanings that psychologists attach to it in disregard of other existing usages.

There are at least three approaches to the study of behaviour that seem to necessitate the use of such concepts as "ego" and "self": the analysis of certain conscious experiences or mental processes, the study of certain dynamic trends in organism-environment relationships generally, and the analysis of what is perhaps rather pretentiously called "the structure of personality."

I

The first approach uncovers phenomena that have been labelled "self-awareness" or "ego-awareness" or "consciousness of self." These phenomena have been described frequently; some of the best descriptions were given already by William James, and more recently the work of Piaget in Switzerland has focused attention on interesting facts concerning the development of self-awareness in children.

Introspection reveals that in many situations we are acutely aware of our own identity, that we experience ourselves as entities separate from and sometimes opposed to others. Some things we look upon as parts of ourselves, intimately associated with ourselves, while others are regarded as alien. Normally the body, for instance, is experienced as part of the self, though under certain circumstances this may not be the case; a paralysed limb for instance may be temporarily dissociated from the self, and in certain forms of psychoses the body may lose its ego-reference. For most people, especially women, clothes are parts of their selves, and severe emotional strain may result when they discover what seems to them to be a discrepancy between their

clothes and the rest of their self. One's property also tends to become a part of the self, especially when the possession of property has a high prestige value. Some of our wishes and cravings we feel to belong to the self, others are experienced as overpowering us and we tend to disown them. Some of the knowledge we acquire is closely associated with our "selves"; a vast amount of knowledge is only vaguely associated with our "selves" or not at all; fortunately some of it is kept in reserve and incorporated into, our "selves" later when we are ready for it; occasionally it may overpower us and rob us of our spontaneity—we then quote what others say, and distrust our own observations and perceptions.

We cannot, however, draw a clear dividing line between what is experienced as belonging to the self and what is felt to be alien to it. The line of division certainly cannot be thought of in spatial terms, as is already indicated by the examples given. We can only distinguish between degrees of ego-involvement, some things and processes and events being closely associated with the self, others only peripherally, and still others being definitely felt as alien. Furthermore, what has intimate ego-reference at one stage may only be vaguely associated at another; the example of a limb in its healthy and in its paralysed state illustrates the point. In the case of children, particularly, objects are continually changing their ego-reference.

When we analyse the conditions that determine or at any rate influence the development of self-awareness we are struck by the overwhelming role of the environmental impact on the individual. It is true that there are certain physiological pre-conditions that have to be taken into account. The development of the memory centres, for instance, is a pre-condition for being able to connect up past experiences with present ones and for recognising the dependence of both on what is then vaguely felt as the self. Nevertheless, it is the influence of the impact of the environment that stands out most clearly. Our social group holds us responsible for our actions, and even for our thoughts, desires, and strivings generally. Though it may be more lenient in the case of children; it does not exempt them from responsibility for their own actions; in fact, many of the so-called "behaviour problems" arising in early childhood in our culture are the direct result of crediting the child with more responsibility for his own actions than it is capable of. Also, children come up against resistance from other people when trying to satisfy some of their desires, for instance, those that we do not approve of or those that conflict with the legitimate

needs and interests of others. The effect of this pressure and resistance of the social environment is that children are gradually weaned from the naive assumption, which Piaget has shown them to hold, that thoughts and desires exist independently of the individuals experiencing them, and that therefore the thoughts and desires experienced by the individual child are necessarily in harmony with those of all other people. They learn that thoughts and desires do not simply "pass through them," but that *they* have them and that *they* are held responsible for them. The material environment also frequently offers resistance to what they naively assume to be not so much their own desires as desires that force themselves upon them and therefore must be gratified. In this way children receive successive shocks from their social and material environment, forcing upon them the awareness of not being simply embedded in a friendly world of people and of things, but rather of being separate entities with feelings, desires, aspirations, thoughts and characteristics of their own. There are, of course, many specific ways in which the environment impinges upon the developing individual with resulting ego-awareness; G. W. Allport, for instance, emphasises the importance of having a name as a kind of anchorage for selfhood, and no doubt one could look upon competitiveness in our society as both cause and effect of increasing self-awareness. These and other specific ways of inducing and encouraging self-awareness we can subsume under our general formula of the effect of the environmental impact on the individual.

II

The second approach to the study of behaviour that we have mentioned, viz., the study of certain dynamic trends in organism-environment relationships generally, brings into focus characteristics which human beings seem to share with all other organisms.

When we study these dynamic trends we fix our attention not on the organism abstracted from the relationship in which it exists, but on what Angyal has termed the "biosphere." "Biosphere" is the equivalent of the expressive German word "Lebenskreis," meaning the realm in which life takes place. It is the totality of which organism and environment are distinguishable features. It is obvious that "environment" in this context is not synonymous with "surrounding world," for only a small segment of the surrounding world enters into a significant relationship with an organism. Life only exists when there are vital dynamic trends linking organism and

environment. When an organism ceases to be dynamically linked with its environment, it ceases to exist as an organism ; it becomes a corpse or a carcass or simply "matter" with chemical and physical properties.

When we look at organism-environment relationships in this way, then we find that all dynamic trends are determined by both organism and environment. We can describe them according to the relative predominance of organismic and environmental determination. If we follow up the trends revealing relative predominance of organismic determination, we encounter certain features that are important for the clarification of the ego concept. Organisms react to stimuli in a relatively autonomous way, in keeping with their own needs and structurally defined possibilities. A stimulus does not *cause* a response, it arouses, elicits, or *prompts* it ; it depends on the nature of the organism what precisely the response will be. Within limits—i.e., the limits imposed by the structure of the organism itself as well as by the environment—organisms are "self-governing entities," not "inactive points." These limits will vary between different species ; for instance, when there is a drought, plants can spread out their roots in search of more water, but still are confined to their own locality, while an animal can leave its locality in search of food elsewhere. Differences between individuals of the same species are perhaps best illustrated with reference to human beings : the highly intelligent individual for instance has a much better chance of determining his own reaction to environmental stimulation than the mentally defective.

We can agree with Angyal when he finds that all organisms—plant, animal, human—show what he calls a trend towards increased autonomy, i.e., to increase self-determination of behaviour at the expense of environmental determination. This is certainly not the only trend that we can observe, and no doubt there are individual organisms where the trend is so counteracted by environmental pressure and impeded by malfunctioning of the organism itself that it seems to be almost reversed—for instance, in the case of some neurotic people. But this apparent reversal only confirms the existence of the general trend, for it shows that where it is hemmed in too severely, abnormalities of behaviour arise.

This general trend towards increasing the self-determination of behaviour, which we observe when studying organism-environment relationships generally (behaviouristically as it were) is obviously related to what psychologists have uncovered by introspection. In the one case we find an awareness of self

extending further and further into the environment, in the other we find determination of behaviour by the organism itself increasing at the expense of environmental determination. In the one case we recognise differences in intensity and clarity of self-awareness, in the other we formulate differences in the proportion of organismic (or self-) determination to environmental determination. The question arises: what exactly is the relation between the two sets of data? Is the one merely a kind of reflex or barometer of the other or is the relationship more complex? We shall attempt to answer the question when we have seen what additional light our third approach to the study of behaviour throws on the problem.

III

In the study of personality we are also concerned with dynamic organism-environment relationships as the basic reality we want to understand. We ask, for instance: why does this particular individual revolt against authority? or: how can we explain this boy's absorbing interest in mechanical things? or: why does this very successful individual have a strong fear of failure? In trying to answer such and similar questions concerning dynamic relationships between one particular individual and features of his own specific environment we discover continuity in a person's behaviour. This continuity we can sometimes explain by pointing to the role of the environment: we can say, for instance, that a person revolts against authority, because he has always experienced authority exercised in accordance with personal caprice and selfish interest rather than social and moral necessity, and that revolt against authority is the natural reaction against the arbitrary enforcement of authority. When it is pointed out, however, that some people become passive and subservient and anxious when in this predicament, then the explanation proceeds in terms of what vaguely we call "personality," we say, for instance, that the difference between him and other people who do not revolt against authority, though they have all been subjected to the same provocation, is that he is naturally more self-assertive.

It would lead too far afield to attempt any comprehensive definition of personality. It is obvious, however, that in the study of human behaviour the concept "personality" takes the place of "organism," but that it differs from the latter in that it refers to something that we cannot see but only *infer* from actual behaviour. From frequent self-assertion in many different situations we infer that a person has a tendency to be self-

assertive ; if a person is dishonest in a wide variety of situations we conclude that a tendency to be dishonest has become a part of his personality ; from the fact that people strive for sexual satisfaction we infer that sexual urges form a part of personality. To explain *actual behaviour* we postulate psychophysical *dispositions to behave* in certain ways. Personality is then thought of as consisting of psychophysical dispositions, more or less integrated, and helping us to account for the continuity of a person's behaviour.

Of course, we also want to know how dispositions arise, for instance, what part physiological processes and characteristics play in the sexual urge or how social pressures give rise to competitiveness and acquisitiveness. But in describing the "structure of personality" that is not our primary concern. Our primary concern then is to see the interrelationships between different dispositions inferred from actual behaviour. We thus create a differentiated conceptual framework to aid us in understanding actual behaviour in so far as it depends upon the person, not the environment.

One of the concepts used to indicate a group of apparently closely related psychophysical dispositions is "ego." Superficially it seems as though there were no lack of clarity with regard to the term, for it is always used to refer to a group of activities that have the function of *controlling and regulating* behaviour in such a way as to safeguard and assert the integrity of the individual. Freud (*The Ego and the Id*), for instance, distinguishes the ego from the "id" and the "superego" ; the ego controls and regulates the instinctual urges (of which the id is the reservoir) and brings their expression into conformity with the demands of society (internalised as the super-ego). He describes the ego as growing out of the id, and as being that part of the id that is turned towards the external world, capable of perceiving and interpreting the latter. H. A. Murray (*Explorations in Personality*) takes over the Freudian concepts, but as he does not want to indulge in Freud's dangerous practice of personifying psychological entities he gives us an account in less dramatic and more cautious terms. He tells us that the ego concept refers to "the determining significance of (1) conscious, freely willed acts : making a resolution (with oneself) or dedicating oneself to a life-long vocation, all of which 'bind' the personality over long periods of time ; (2) the establishment of a cathected Ego Ideal (image of a person one wants to become) ; and (3) the inhibition of drives that conflict with the above mentioned intentions, decisions and

planned schedules of behaviour." P. Lersch (*Der Aufbau des Charakters*), who takes over many concepts from L. Klages, emphasises the controlling function of the ego even more strongly, and makes the ego responsible for acts of "willing" which he contrasts with mere striving, whether such striving be of the predominantly biological variety (comparable to the instincts of Freud) or of the kind that is directed towards moral, aesthetic, spiritual, and religious values (not comparable to Freud's superego, which represents the demands of society and not the spontaneous striving of the individual towards values that transcend the individual). He speaks of the "conscious ego" as "rising like an island above the troubled ocean of emotional impulses" and as becoming "the pivotal point from which behavioural tendencies are regulated or inhibited."

When we look more closely, however, we find that the concept is not used as unambiguously as it seems. The ambiguity reveals itself primarily in the fact that some tendencies which are also concerned with safeguarding the integrity of the individual, are either not subsumed under the ego concept or are grouped in an inconsistent manner. The reason for this inconsistency is that the relationship between all the strivings that safeguard the integrity of the individual is not clarified.

Freud distinguishes what he calls "ego-instincts" (e.g., aggressiveness, instinct for self-preservation), but it is not at all clear where they belong, for as *instincts* he groups them under Eros and thus under the id, while as *ego-instincts* they fall under the ego. Murray does not, as one might expect, group his "needs" for autonomy, for dominance, and for aggression under the ego concept at all. Lersch clearly distinguishes between "ego" and "self," using the latter term as the super-ordinate concept under which such tendencies as striving for power and for prestige, feelings of self-confidence and self-esteem are subsumed.

What we find, in fact, is that we are again confronted with two sets of data indicating self-determining tendencies of the individual, the one group being concerned with self-determination accompanied by a high degree of self-awareness, the other with self-determination of behaviour at a level where the degree of consciousness is not specified. These two sets of data seem to correspond fairly closely to what was revealed by introspection on the one hand and a study of organism-environment relationships generally on the other; differences arise from the fact that now the function in the structure of personality is emphasised.

We are still faced with the question : what is the relation between the two sets of phenomena ?

The answer to this question has theoretical as well as practical implications. For as long as the relationship is not clearly seen, we can expect the wide divergence of views as to the actual effectiveness of conscious self-determination that, in fact, does exist today, both among psychologists and people generally. To some the very idea of conscious self-determination, with implied responsibility for one's own actions, smacks of mysticism and seems incompatible with what psychology and the biological sciences generally teach us about the role of heredity and of environment in the behaviour of organisms generally. To others the possibility of conscious self-determination is the distinguishing feature of human as against animal existence.

The answer that I suggest is that highly conscious self-determination is simply a special case of organismic self-determination generally, and that it would therefore be better if the use of the ego concept did not separate artificially what in actual fact is too closely related to warrant such separation.

If we accept this view, then two points require clarification : the way in which conscious self-determination grows out of self-determining tendencies generally, and the specific role of consciousness within the self-determining tendencies.

The first point offers no great difficulties and will not concern us here. The conditions producing self-awareness described above must eventually make the individual conscious of being responsible for his own behaviour. The specific role of consciousness in self-determining behaviour is not so easy to explain. Perhaps we can do it on the lines suggested by Angyal (*The Science of Personality*) and implied in Lersch's description of emotions and strivings. We can look upon *all* mental (i.e., conscious) processes as being symbolic in character. How this applies to perceptions, images, and concepts is fairly obvious. The percept for instance can be regarded as a symbol, for that which is perceptually given is not the same as the object itself. The object is richer in traits than the perceptual datum which indicates the object for the observer. What is unusual in this view is that the conscious experience of emotions and strivings (conative processes) is also regarded as symbolic in character, referring to something that exists independently of the experience. Emotions are, according to this view, "the experience of the state and of the situation of the person under the aspect of value" (Angyal); they refer therefore to a total situation and its relevance to the individual. Just as perception may give

us a wrong impression of an object, so the experience of an emotion may give us a faulty evaluation of a situation. The conscious experience of striving can be regarded as the symbol which refers to organismic trends and processes. The striving itself is not "conscious" or "mental," but it can be symbolised in consciousness. This symbol may mislead us too; the real striving may not be reflected adequately in consciousness, in fact, it may not be reflected at all. All this holds true for the ego-strivings as well. The conscious experience of such strivings reflects self-determining tendencies generally, but may do this incompletely and inadequately.

This gives us the possibility of evaluating the effectiveness of conscious self-determination of behaviour. Its effectiveness does not depend on the fact of being conscious as such, but on the adequacy of the symbolic representation involved. Conscious self-determination is not a kind of "free-will," but is itself subject to the limitations imposed by the total organism-environment relationship, in which the autonomous trends, however intensified they may be by consciousness, still remain opposed by external determination.

W. H. O. SCHMIDT.



The Depopulation of the Ancient World

(An address delivered before the University Club in Durban, and before the Historical Association in Pietermaritzburg, in June, 1948).

I have chosen what may seem a subject of rather academic interest, remote from the present time and place. It is nevertheless one which is holding the attention of scholars today, and that there has been more than one recent study on it may be due to its relevance to modern problems of population, bureaucratic growth, decline of the liberty of the individual and so on; for it is well known that historical problems attract attention and begin to be understood not before present-day circumstances are able to throw light on them. Thus in the discussion before us historian, economist and sociologist can unite; and those who hanker after historical cycles, in the manner of Spengler and to some extent of Toynbee, feel that lessons may still be drawn from the late Roman Empire.

The decline of the ancient world is a large subject, which would require several volumes to treat adequately; so I have tonight tried to limit myself to the specific problems of depopulation and mental stagnation. Even these I can illustrate but cursorily, and I want rather to discuss their physiological and psychological causes than to dawdle over the facts, which I will give as briefly as possible, so far as they can be ascertained.

The whole Mediterranean world underwent in the last centuries B.C. and the first centuries A.D. a marked numerical decline of population. This decline attacked the most civilised regions first. Greece was becoming underpopulated by 200 B.C., in Italy we can trace the beginnings of decay by 150 B.C., and the population-problem was serious by 20 B.C. For other regions there is less positive evidence; cities in Anatolia were decaying in the second century A.D., and in the third most of those of the west contracted to a fraction of their former areas. Both Africa and Egypt were considered amazingly prolific, though their populations do not seem to have been more than stationary.

Depopulation was felt first, for political and economic reasons,

in the countryside, where subsistence-farming by peasants gave way, in Greece in the IV century B.C., in Italy in the II, in other regions probably later, to capitalist ranches and small plantations usually worked by slaves. This was partly due to continued warfare. When peasants' holdings were ravaged, they had not the necessary reserve to support themselves while restoring them to cultivation. Even where land remained immune from the enemy, conscription called peasants away from their farms for years, and the excitements of a soldier's life gave them little inclination to return to the drudgery of primitive agriculture. At the same time, chances of acquiring wealth were offered by the production for market of wine, oil and cattle; and as the ancient world gave few opportunities for investment with reasonable security, there was a demand for land by those who had money, and the peasant could obtain a good price. Already in the II century B.C. the Roman government had had to ensure corn-growing in its provinces to enable Italians to turn to more profitable forms of land-utilisation.

Depopulation, however, spread from the country and the country-towns to the large cities; and in this respect the ancient world stands in contrast to the modern, where large cities grow continually at the expense of the rest of the community. Rome offered all the attractions of a capital, free food for the poor and plenty of amusements; and there was certainly a steady immigration from all parts of the empire. Yet in the first two centuries A.D. the corn-consumption and so the population of the city seems to have declined by more than half.

Concomitant and probably connected with the decline of population was a serious decline in mental alertness and progressiveness. We know of few technical and industrial improvements in the first four centuries A.D., and what there were spread slowly. Discoveries were made in laboratories. Hero had in the III century B.C. gone far in his applications of steam-power; the use of water-power for mills was known by the I century B.C. Yet neither steam nor water power were applied to industry. Some of the early alchemists made important empirical discoveries in chemistry, but they were not followed up. Yet skilled slaves were not so cheap as to make technical advances unprofitable. Improvements were even officially discouraged; when someone claimed to have invented a malleable glass, his workshop was destroyed by the police, not, we are told, because he was a charlatan, but because this new substance would lower the price of precious metals. Vespasian also refused to accept

certain machines for hauling large stones, because they would deprive the poor of work.

The mental outlook of the Roman Empire was stereotyped officialdom. Typical is an instance on the Roman Wall in England. It was the rule that forts be built with four gates, but this particular fort was sighted so that one side gave on to a precipice. Nevertheless, a gate led to the precipice, though it could be of no value. This instance is symbolic of the ever-increasing bureaucratisation which invaded all branches of life. The Roman emperors, intolerant of inefficiency and unable to understand that the middleman is worthy of his hire, interfered more and more in local autonomy. They imposed on the whole Mediterranean world a totalitarian system derived from Egypt; there it had been first applied to agriculture, owing to the necessity of controlling irrigation, and had been extended to other industries by a commercially minded dynasty. The Roman bureaucracy became more and more unwieldy and corrupt, until in the west it collapsed through mere inertia before a vigorous and unscrupulous crew of feudal despots, and in the east the bishops, relying on their influence over the proletariat, succeeded in re-establishing local autonomy in the teeth of the emperor.

The suggested explanations for the decay of ancient civilisation may be roughly grouped as material and psychological. Some cannot be classified solely in either category; and I am going to suggest that even the purely physical fact of depopulation may have been partly due to psychological troubles.

The most obvious material cause is the prevalence of certain endemic diseases. Of those common today, syphilis may be ruled out, as attempts to demonstrate its existence in Europe in pre-Columban times have failed. Diphtheria may be identified in ancient medical writings, but was not widely prevalent. Typhoid is less certain; but though it was probably known, it does not seem to have been a serious scourge, whether owing to the almost instinctive appreciation by Mediterranean peoples of pure water and their avoidance of milk; or because their diet was in other ways so insanitary that they became hardened.

We hear of occasional plagues which caused severe mortality. It does not seem certain whether these were bubonic, typhus, cholera or small-pox. But these diseases apparently did not become endemic, and the rat had not yet reached Europe. Some plagues seem to have had more lasting effects than we would expect; for instance, it has been thought that the Roman empire never recovered from that of 170 A.D. A vigorous people

should revive within a few years ; and if the Romans after this date, and probably the Athenians after 429 B.C., apparently did not, they may have been already declining. In general, plague was uncommon in the ancient world, because the organisation of society was sufficiently advanced to counteract local famines.

Malaria was undoubtedly spreading in ancient times. There is reason for thinking that it had not reached Greece before the V century B.C. or Italy until a later date (perhaps in most parts not before the II century B.C.). Its spread might account and has been adduced to account for all the phenomena described above. It seriously shortens human life. It probably increases sterility, it certainly increases infant-mortality. It has also marked moral effects, inertia, lack of originality, and cowardice. Further, the ancients knew no satisfactory preventative or cure. They were apparently not skin-sensitive enough to be driven to combat mosquitoes, which would at least have kept malaria in check.

But malaria cannot have been more than a contributory cause to the decay of ancient civilisation. It was probably widespread in Greece, where stagnant water near the coast is difficult to drain. A few parts of Italy may have become very malarial. But it is difficult to believe that Rome would have remained the capital of the empire if malaria had there been rife ; and the desolation of the Campagna has been ascribed not so much to the decline of cultivation in the II century B.C. as to the cutting of the aqueducts in the VI century A.D., which turned the whole country into a morass ideal for mosquito-life. Malaria cannot have become endemic over the whole or even over greater parts of the empire ; for why should it have ceased to be endemic, especially in those parts of Spain, Italy and France which were to become flourishing centres of medieval culture ? Furthermore, though our unsatisfactory statistics shew that the expectation of longevity was lower in the ancient world than now, it was nothing like so low as that of malarial regions today.

Gonorrhoea seems to have been prevalent in the ancient world. It would have induced sterility, and so may have been a contributory cause to depopulation. But it can hardly have affected the mental and moral outlook of the ancients.

Recent researches have shown that over-indulgence in hot baths induces a high rate of temporary sterility. The Romans probably bathed oftener and in hotter water than most west Europeans today ; and the habit of bathing was not confined to city-dwellers, but was usual among soldiers and peasants. There is, however, little evidence that hot baths have deleterious psychological effects.

Tuberculosis is mentioned in ancient medical writers and elsewhere. It is prevalent today among Balkan peasants, owing to insanitary sleeping accommodation ; and similar circumstances probably operated in the ancient world. I doubt, however, if it would affect seriously any but a declining civilisation, as it weeds out the weaker members of a society, and should leave an exceptionally tough residue.

Our statistics for infant-mortality in the ancient world are useless ; but we may assume that it was high, though perhaps not as high as in the middle ages. Cases where all of four children died before adolescence are symptomatic, but not conclusive. We have rather more evidence for thinking that childbirth exacted a heavy toll. Statistics compiled from parts of ancient Italy shew that the mortality between 16 and 30 was five and a half times as high as in Prussia in the XIX century ; and of these deaths 60 per cent. were women. These figures refer only to those wealthy enough to afford grave-inscriptions, and presumably, therefore, medical attention.

In modern Albania custom does not allow a woman to lie more than one or two days after childbirth ; this frequently causes internal disorders and sterility. We do not know whether this practice was usual in the Roman empire ; but Albania preserves many relics of old Balkan civilisation ; and where farm-work devolves on women it is natural that their husbands should be inconsiderate and impatient.

Interbreeding accentuating congenital weaknesses of certain tribes may have been increased by the Romans compulsorily settling the peoples of most of Europe, instead of allowing them to continue their nomadic ways, and so by intermixture with outsiders to dissipate characteristics militating against survival.

Thus, no probable endemic disease is likely to have done more than assist the decay of the ancient world. We must therefore turn to the psychological side. The first line of this enquiry should be the attitude of the ancients to sex, seeing that this has a physical as well as a psychological aspect, and would seem directly connected with the problem of population.

The Greeks were romantic and not reticent about homosexuality ; but the relation seems usually to have been that of knight and squire, and there is no evidence that their energies were diverted from natural propagation. In the V century we hear little of married or family life. The sexes were much isolated, and I think that Greek men felt a mystical shyness about womanhood, which made them prefer not to discuss the family, but to regard it as sacred and private as in France today. Unlike modern

novelists, Greek tragedians rarely used for their plots sex-problems of any type. The older comedy, with its everyday atmosphere, introduces few women. Later comedians have stock romantic plots ; but the wife and family play little part in them, and moreover it is agreed that they are not typical of contemporary society. The Greek attitude is summed up by Thucydides (ii 45) : " Great is your glory if you fall not below the standard which nature has set for your sex, and great also is hers of whom there is least talk among men whether in praise or in blame ".

At the same time, club-life was highly developed in the Greek world. That it could be carried to excess, to the detriment of the family and of a society founded on it, is shewn by Polybius' criticisms of Boeotia in the II century B.C. (xx 6 5-6) : " The childless would not bequeath their property to their kindred, as had previously been the custom there, but spent it on banquets and drink, and distributed it among their friends. Many even of those who had families used to divide out most of their wealth among their companions, so that many of them had more dinner-parties than there were days in the month ". Polybius' account, however, refers to a country which was notorious for its insensibility to higher qualities, at a period of political and moral collapse induced by brutal foreign interference. At Athens at the same date there is reason to think that large families were being reared.

Roman literature, however, gives a more sordid picture. Frequent indulgence and resultant boredom led the Romans to unrestrained experimentation in sex-perversions. But we must remember also that Roman literature describes mainly an aristocracy which plunged more rapidly than most aristocracies towards race-suicide, and a professorial class which in its cult of rhetorical form had lost all touch with reality. An intelligentsia is little loss to a community, as it can be easily replaced ; and it is advantageous to a society to die off at the top, so that vigorous developments of inferior classes be not stifled.

Unwillingness to marry was observed in Rome in the II century B.C. In 131 the censor Metellus admonished the people as follows (Gellius i 6) : " If we could live without wives, we would be free of all the trouble arising from them. But as nature has laid it down that we cannot live with them comfortably or without them at all, we must consider our lasting preservation rather than the pleasure of the moment ". Greek enlightenment had at Rome relaxed the bonds of discipline and family-life, and had suggested that man's object in this world was to amuse himself rather than to maintain that religious respect for family

and for tradition which had held together Roman society. About 10 B.C. the government attempted to encourage marriage, but without success, first because taxation was imposed on bachelors and not on spinsters; and secondly because the emperors readily granted to their friends remission of the penalties prescribed by law. These attempts, however, were confined to the very rich, because the Roman government had no conception of encouraging the proletariat to breed and shouldering the liability for the children so produced. Bachelors, indeed, had a better time; for, owing to the widespread practice of captation, those without natural heirs would be courted and flattered in the hope of bequests. Indeed, Augustus in his attempted reform here again seized the wrong end of the stick, by imposing restrictions on bachelors receiving and not on their giving legacies.

Self-indulgence among men would probably have had little effect on the Roman population. Polygamy of any sort has the advantage that a mother is left alone during pregnancy and lactation. But the emancipation of women is mentioned in several ancient states as a potent cause of decline. We hear complaints about their greed in acquiring property, their difficult tempers and lack of self-control when once they felt independent, and their frequent incontinence in a society which, having cast aside ancestral custom, used as its ethical justification an intellectual code which most women could not understand.

It has been stated that the Romans became sexually perverted because they had little conception of marriage for love. This I doubt, as marriage for love is largely a modern fetish. Successful marriages have often been arranged in the past for political or similar reasons; and in most societies woman has had little to say in the choice of her husband. Nor are marriages not contracted for love less prolific. Indeed, they often avoid disappointments and disillusionments; one of the most severe, sterility, was counteracted in the ancient world by the disparity of age between partners. A man normally married at 30-35, a woman at 15-20. Yet ancient marriages were frequently successful, being based on the relations of teacher and pupil. Xenophon in the IV century pictures an inexperienced wife, 15 years old, receiving instruction from her husband in household management. He trains her in her duties; he insists especially on the virtue of orderliness; he hopes for children as a common possession and as a comfort for old age; and he makes it clear that in a perfect home man and woman have different and coordinate functions: "It is better for the woman to remain

indoors than to stay out, and it is shameful for the man to stay in rather than to look after things outside”.

Sex-abnormalities are insufficient to explain the decline of ancient civilisation, because they occurred mainly in a small aristocratic circle at Rome, which had been replaced by 100 A.D. by an Italian and provincial aristocracy of very different outlook. Numerous grave-inscriptions from all parts of the Roman world seem to shew happy and faithful married life, though often without children. There was, however, a continual drift from country to towns; and as townspeople are normally less prolific than peasants, the population might gradually dwindle. Surplus children were commonly disposed of by exposure, which meant not that the baby died, but that it was reared by a slave-dealer. Polybius says of the depopulation of Greece in the II century B.C. (xxxvi 17): “As men had fallen into such a state of pre-tentiousness, avarice and indolence that they did not wish to marry, or if they married, rear the children born to them, or at most as a rule but one or two of them, so as to leave these in affluence and bring them up to waste their substance, the evil rapidly and insensibly grew”. Yet while these causes might explain the decline of population, they seem insufficient to account for the mental stagnation which accompanied it.

That Roman society was unhealthy is shewn by the cleft between the upper classes and the proletariat. This had developed when Greek civilisation had spread rapidly beyond the frontiers of Greece in the III century B.C. The numerous immigrants into the newly conquered lands and the superficially civilised native aristocracies and priesthoods were regarded by the proletariat, untouched by this movement of hellenism, as foreign in race as well as in culture. This cleft was most marked in the proletarian risings of the late II and early I centuries B.C. The lower classes were then suppressed by Rome for centuries, to make themselves felt again with the dominance of Christianity.

Nearly all forms of artistic production declined in the first two centuries A.D. Latin literature first became flashy and rhetorical and then disappeared almost completely; Greek letters underwent an artificial revival which was almost worse than extinction. Sculpture and probably painting decayed after the middle of the II century, and the new style of the late empire was transformed in spirit, a little barbarised, and medieval rather than classical. Architecture progressed, but owing to the adoption from the Semitic world of techniques which never entered into the spirit of the west.

The mental inertia of the upper classes was due partly to the

lack of the idea of progress in the ancient world. The Greek was a rationalist, in science a mathematician who created neat abstract worlds with no loose edges. Aristotle, the biologist, came nearest to the idea of progress; but he converted the end to which things strive into a cause, thus making it present instead of future and finite instead of infinite. More often, thinkers looked back to an ideal past, and believed in progressive degeneration. Horace says: "The age of our parents, worse than our grandparents, bore us more wicked than them, fated to produce an even more degenerate offspring". These words are not surprising in a period of decline; it is more remarkable that the theory of progressive degeneration is emphatically stated by Hesiod in the VIII century B.C., when Greek civilisation was in its growth-stage. The Greeks, with their superb rationalism, had discarded the shackles of primitive religion and its deadening traditionalism. Even societies which have the comfort of religious magic find the future uncertain and difficult, the past fixed and so not liable to treacherous change. This problem of the future would vex more grievously a society which had discarded the means of exorcising it. And when that society handed its rationalist doctrines to converts who did not quite understand them, the future must have looked black indeed.

The comforting ideal of progress, either in infinite time or more commonly to a defined future ideal, was a discovery of the spiritual oriental religions, especially of Judaism, which had succeeded, largely under stress of political circumstances, in converting the magic link between God and man into a covenant, with a definite promise by God of future blessings to man. This doctrine could be enforced only by an autocratic church, which claimed infallibility and the absolute spiritual submission of its devotees. It was impossible to a people which had the vaguest conception of any divinity; and the Greco-Romans betook themselves rather to fatalism, with spiritually deadening consequences.

The upper classes in the Roman world degenerated also owing to the absence of stimulus. They were in contact with no external intellectual society; even politically the neighbours of the Roman empire were of little account beside it. As a result, the political and military power of Rome decayed, until the German tribes were able to break through the frontiers, through no improvements of their own, but owing to the torpor of the Roman military machine. This Roman military inertia was not only intellectual but physical. Quick dismissals of soldiers meant expense on pensions, and emperors were often in such

straits or so parsimonious that they retained men of the line until the age of 50 and higher officers till 80, with naturally a decline in the mobility and alacrity of their units.

Some scholars have accounted for the torpor of the aristocracy by the deliberate extinction of the most original and vigorous elements of the Greco-Roman world in the IV century B.C.—I century A.D. by revolution and proscription. Revolutions were alarmingly frequent; they demanded large sacrifices, by execution and exile. In consequence, few with any spark of mental alertness escaped destruction at one period or another, and there was developed a race of cowards and idiots, skilled by natural selection at sitting on fences.

Hopelessness, absence of progress and lack of stimulus may well have caused not only the mental stagnation of the Roman empire but also its depopulation. There was probably conscious restriction of children; people felt then, as today, that it was not worth while to bring offspring into a world where their prospects would be less good than their parents' had been. But conscious restriction of children operates inversely to standard of living, and so has little effect on a proletariat; and I would suggest that mental torpor and despair may have induced partial sterility, just as other group-feelings seem to influence proportions of births of either sex.

The lower classes also despaired of present conditions. Indeed, their lot was harder because their material resources were more slender, and their destined role in the vast machine of the Roman empire was even less conspicuous and more deadening than that of the aristocracy. Intellectual sanctions and the dying classical culture they could not understand; but they retained a strong vein of non-intellectual mysticism, and they turned to the rising spiritual religions, of which the most important was Christianity. They were thus able to escape the miseries of this world. But in so doing they came to admire and practise an ascetism which was fatal to an already failing population. And so under the Christian empire and in the middle ages we find that the organisation of the Roman world has broken down, that most districts are thinly peopled and liable to plagues and famines due to faulty communications, and that the Greco-Roman intellect has given way to an atmosphere of faith, of credulity and of falsehood excused because it is *ad maiorem gloriam Dei*.

To sum up, I would suggest that no physical cause adequately accounts for either the physical depopulation or the mental decline of the ancient world. Epidemic and endemic diseases may have assisted to undermine an already tottering structure.

But the real reason of the failure of Greco-Roman civilisation I believe to have been the precocity of its intellectual development, which cast aside the sanctions of a threadbare religion when it could replace them with nothing that the masses could understand; it thus created a mental and moral vacuum, and men in despair turned to conscious and unconscious race-suicide, to escape from a world which held no guidance for them and which they could not comprehend.

And if we turn to the modern world, we shall see some identical symptoms. An intellectual enlightenment has been extended to a majority which is incapable of more than superficial education. It has destroyed traditional sanctions, and people, spiritually starved, have turned either to a peevish hedonism or to nihilist and nationalist enthusiasms. Though intellectualism is essential for the improvement of human life, if properly restrained and cloistered as in a medieval monastery or a medieval university, or among the class-conscious aristocrats of the XVIII century, its belief in itself causes it to missionise irresponsibly among those who are unfit to receive it, and through it will become unbalanced and degenerate.

O. DAVIES.

Random Thoughts on the Nature and Future of Archæology

Until quite recently the term archæology was disliked both by the Press and the public. Where it was not disliked it was, and still unfortunately often is, of doubtful meaning and value. It seemed to frighten people. When the Archæological Survey of the Union of South Africa was established in 1934, the editor of one of our leading daily papers welcomed the new venture, but in doing so observed that "it is a pity, in some respects, that the formal and somewhat forbidding term archæology has no popular equivalent. The fact has probably stood in the way of development of the study it defines more than even its devotees imagine. A simpler word would promote more familiarity and friendliness for what is largely a very everyday thing : the study of the older history of mankind as told in our country by the implements and pottery, the ruins and graves, the pictures and sculptures which vanished races have left behind them. There is no need to emphasise the importance which is given to this in all parts of the world. Not only scientific literature but ordinary publications, including the illustrations and daily papers in Britain, France, Germany and America—in fact, in every intellectual country—show the wide interest which is taken in archæology."

It is unfortunate that a word which is really so simple should discomfort men so ; more especially as it has certainly come to stay. Nevertheless we would be foolish to ignore the misgivings which have been expressed. Let us therefore take heed of our friendly editor's warning, but in doing so let us not forget that suitable as his definition of the subject may be it covers the material aspects and approaches only. As archæologists in South Africa are mainly concerned with reconstructions of prehistoric or preliterate human *material* cultures and as we are prone to overlook the non-material and less tangible values of human progress and endeavour, I propose to attempt to direct attention to a few of the less well-known meanings and values of archæological enquiry and research.

The uninitiated invariably visualise the archæologist as a bowed and bearded figure bent on unearthing the old bones and baubles of bygone days, a picture which I am afraid is destined to persist for some time. Until men like these are helped to do so, they cannot possibly realise how exacting and exciting archæological exploration is, nor can they realise how much strength and energy are required of those of its devotees who work in the field; still less are they able to appreciate the inspiration which is to be derived from any attempt which may be made to fill in the background of those whose bones and baubles are unearthed, for much as they tell us, these earthly remains enable us to form only a partial picture of man's *material* culture. The bones and stone implements we collect do not disclose man's mind and thoughts, nor do they disclose his aims and aspirations; still less do they tell us anything about his intellectual and spiritual needs. They leave us with missing elements both actual and imagined, which are always most elusive and tantalising—elements of culture which are destined in the vast majority of cases to remain for ever missing. The further we go back in time the more numerous do these missing elements become; the more abysmal the gaps in our knowledge.

The material aspects and the primary aims and objects of archæological exploration are so well known that I do not propose to deal with them here. It is my intention rather to attempt to fill in a few of the gaps in the backcloth of the stage on which we work, and in doing so I would crave your indulgence if at times I appear to wander rather far afield. I shall not deal with the past so much as with the present, for the true nature and value of the subject are revealed in the present as much as they are in the past.

The hopes which so often well up in man's mind and heart when his thoughts turn to the establishment of a league of nations or of a united nations organisation intended to foster goodwill and to maintain peace among men reveal his innate appreciation of a sense of kinship, of a "consciousness of kind" and thus of common human aims and destiny if not always of common bonds and an essential human brotherhood. In the certain knowledge that unity does not necessarily imply uniformity, our greater leaders desire world unity and a federation of mankind. Their biggest problem is to know how to reconcile a multiplicity of aims with a unity of effort—and that, many feel, is a problem they should be able to solve. Yet all too often they fail, and we fail with them.

It has been repeatedly asserted, especially in churches, syna-

gogues and temples, that the most urgent problem of our time is the spiritual problem. Unless this is solved civilisation, it is claimed, will fail. With this most of us will agree. Owing to the lack of appreciation of spiritual issues, based on common human bonds and brotherhood, and of the common needs of the common man and all too often of the evils of race prejudice, we already have a foretaste of that failure in many parts of the world today.

Those who are deeply conscious of the essential wholeness of humanity—and there are more in our midst than most of us imagine—regret their incapacity to attain the ideals which stimulate them when men from different parts of the world assemble, as they are now assembling, to discuss their various problems. “How,” these men ask themselves, “how are we to overcome this incapacity, this weakness in ourselves?” For they feel that it is a weakness within them which they should boldly face and try to overcome.

Because so many distinguished men of letters have so often maintained that the only thing which can save our sagging culture is a revival of religious faith, it is natural that many should seek guidance in religious teachings, but they soon find that religion as it is understood and practised by the man in the street does not help them beyond their immediate environs or outside their own religious circle. In the world community in which we live they see one religious institution in conflict with another: Catholicism in discord with Protestantism, Mohammedanism with Hinduism, Pakistan versus Hindustan, and so on. Beyond all these they see a cool and aloof Confucianism—and as a diabolic thread weaving through most of these teachings where they come into contact they see conflict and competition and all too often intolerance and distrust, the offspring of misunderstanding. Yet deep in his heart man feels that he should be able to do something to help to overcome the misunderstandings and the fears and misgivings which arise from them. “But how?” he cries. And all too often Echo woefully answers: “How?”

So we fumble and go our devious ways, occasionally witnessing the rise of one who succeeds in his guidance and leadership only where his teaching is based on man's common heritage, common ties and common brotherhood; of one who recognises that society can only be cured of its ills by a return to man's “biological heritage of co-operation and true social integration.” Such a leader was Christ whose followers have all too frequently failed him miserably. Wars bear tragic witness to our failures;

wars in which men on opposing sides have repeatedly claimed the same Christ as their champion. In my own brief span of life I have heard such claims in three major wars which rivetted our attention for a period of no less than thirteen out of a total of less than fifty years—wars from each of which we emerged to a short-lived or uncertain peace. And man wants peace because he wants prosperity and security. He hates war because he feels that it is a disease of society, just as schizophrenia is a disease of the human personality.

After many years of study devoted to human origins and developments in pre- and protohistoric times, I wish in all earnestness and humility to suggest that such a study gives a much fuller and a much finer appreciation of our common brotherhood regardless of creed, colour or class than most others can. The horizons of prehistoric studies go so far beyond the historic that the recorded history of man covers a mere two-hundredth part of the whole. They who study the history of western European civilisation only, stand in relation to them whose study is man from his simplest prehistoric beginning as he whose knowledge of history is confined to the last great war stands in relation to him whose knowledge covers the growth of Christianity. Now it would indeed be a sad world if we knew no more of man than we may learn of him from the past decade only; yet this is the position of those whose knowledge covers the past two millennia *vis-a-vis* the prehistorian whose knowledge of man covers a million years of human development and endeavour.

As a prehistorian I see man as a unit in an everchanging ecology, first spreading slowly from an equable equatorial climate in Africa from which, after very many millennia and vicissitudes, he ultimately reached Europe in the north, Asia in the east and the Union in the south as long possibly as a million years ago. Then, after more millennia, we see those who had chosen northern latitudes driven from most of Europe by repeated advances of ice which very nearly reduced that continent to the state in which Greenland is today. Great ice-sheets had made Europe uninhabitable and most of those who had gone there were forced to return to Africa or go elsewhere. But, as climatic changes at last brought about a melting of the ice, man slowly returned and re-occupied his northern hunting grounds—only to be driven out again and again until conditions became more equable and stable, and he was finally able to stay. This coming and going of man in the north was largely paralleled by similar migratory movements in the south, but for different

reasons. Here our early ancestors were repeatedly driven out of most of the Union by very long periods of drought ; when conditions were so inhospitable that they could not stay. But, as the Ice Age passed from Europe, the climate of the Union became more equable and man was able to remain. Throughout the hundreds of thousands of years that passed in this way, Africa stands out as the greatest and most important stage on which the drama of human evolution was enacted. It has echoed the tread of human feet literally from time immemorial. Sometimes they went north, at others they came south, and sometimes they went east. Impressive evidence of all this wandering is to be found in the occurrence of most remarkably similar assemblages of stone implements man made and left in his tracks in India, in the Union and in Europe as long possibly as a quarter of million years ago. And all through this long time and complicated process of cultural osmosis man thrived in his ancestral home in Africa. But ultimately our more than kind climate stayed his progress, and civilisation as we usually think of it was set in motion elsewhere. Literacy, and with it recorded history, began in northern latitudes some 5,000 years ago and the south was left, first with its prehistoric, and later with its protohistoric records only, until our so-called European forbears returned to their ancestral home here a few centuries ago.

The earlier scenes reveal man in the Stone Age living among creatures that no longer exist and in a climate and ecological setting quite distinct from that which we now enjoy. As we pass from scene to scene, from act to act, we see man emerging from his humble Stone Age beginning and slowly but surely mounting the ladder of success in a variety of settings. We see those who went north as the "first cousins" of those who went south ; just as we see them who went east as the "first cousins" of both. So ever outward and upwards man went his ways, evolving as he went, but never losing his common physical and spiritual ties.

Another unusually interesting feature of human evolution is the fact that perhaps as long as 50,000 years ago man buried his dead with ceremony—a custom which suggests a belief in life after death. His mind was evolving too. He saw more in life than just the things around him. And thus were laid the foundations of philosophic thought which led to a more rapid spiritual growth—possibly 50,000 years ago, not the mere 5,000 years of recorded history with its dogmas and orthodoxy, its dynasties and wars which receive such unfortunate and biased stress in our schools and colleges.

If we wish to learn something about ourselves and to get some idea of the trend of our lives we should know whence we came and how we got here. We should follow the growth of the plant from its roots upwards. We should know where the roots lie and what feeds them lest we fail to appreciate the rate, intensity and direction of our growth. Those who devote some of their time—not necessarily only those who devote all their time—to the pursuit of archæological knowledge are I believe among the more fortunate, for it is in the pursuit of such knowledge that we find a medium not of discord but rather of patient and sympathetic concord. And that is an ever-present and urgent need. The differences in belief, in outlook and logic which alienate and separate human beings and nations from one another are so many and so complicated in nature that, until we dig into the very soil in which the roots of our civilisation lie, we cannot easily find that basis for synthesis and that medium for concord of which we all stand in such sore need. And in that very soil—especially in our African soil—lie the secrets of archæological knowledge in which in turn lie some of the most vital clues to harmony.

Such contemplation of the past makes one hopeful not only for a future of better human understanding but for a future of more archæological exploration and teaching to speed us on our way to that understanding. I also feel that to be mentally and spiritually healthy we need to participate in something bigger than we ourselves are, and that the pursuit of archæological knowledge provides this need in a more intimate and vital manner than most other pursuits possibly can—even if by meeting our need in this way we commit ourselves to the “angelic fallacy.”

The teaching of recorded history only gives us what a well-known professor of philosophy and religion once termed a “cut-flower civilisation.” He was urging a return to the spiritual teaching of the church and an appreciation not of events which took place in prehistoric times before churches were ever dreamt of but of the purely spiritual aspect of life. In pressing for a return to the church, he coined the phrase I have quoted and added: “Beautiful as cut-flowers may be they are severed from their sustaining roots”—the sustaining roots according to him, being the spiritual teachings of the church. The interesting points to note here are, firstly, that in both his subjects, philosophy and religion, we are confined to a mere 5,000 years of human growth and development, and, secondly, that the sustaining roots are not purely spiritual, as he implied,

but may be traced in actual fact and can only be fully appreciated by the inclusion of archæological exploration in any attempt that may be made to assess their nature and value. The mere faith of the church in universality has never succeeded in bringing together men of various colours and creeds as a family fully conscious of its common origin despite the fact that it has never ceased to preach that this is the correct or true way—and I have grave doubts that it will ever do so while it confines its teachings to a mere few thousand years of human history and ignores the facts of prehistory. Here, indeed, is an opportunity for light from a contribution which can only be made by the furtherance of the archaeological exploration of our sustaining roots. In some of its basic teachings the church has literally severed man from these roots and placed him on a pedestal which obscures them.

Before I leave the church and what I suspect is one of the fundamental weaknesses of its teaching and outlook, I would like to add that with Professor Fleure I have frequently wondered whether our classical education with its notorious neglect of Eastern thought “has not contributed to views about ‘the lesser breeds without the law’ and whether even some of the types of religious training among us may have a share of the blame.”

As the mind of the prehistorian must be completely free from prejudice, I would also like to remind you as South Africans, who live in what has aptly been termed an anthropologist’s paradise, of the eloquent plea made by the Rt. Hon. Dr. J. H. Hofmeyr in his Chancellor’s Address on the occasion of the 1946 Summer Graduation Ceremony of the University of the Witwatersrand: “If it is true,” he said, “that the battle of freedom is a continuing battle, there are few lands in respect of which it is more true than of South Africa. There is no need for me to remind you how far short we still fall of true freedom, if we take account of our population as a whole, and apply the measuring rod of the four freedoms. I want rather to stress the necessity of our adding to those freedoms a fifth—the freedom from prejudice. For the chief cause of our large measure of failure to realise the ideal of freedom in our land is the strength of prejudice—race prejudice and colour prejudice—in our midst. Surely it is a mockery for us to talk of ourselves as a free people, to acclaim ourselves as the inheritors of a tradition of freedom, while we are as a nation to so large an extent the slaves of prejudice, while we allow our sense of dislike of the colour of some of our fellow South Africans to stand in the way of dealing fairly with them. . . .

The plain truth, whether we like it or not, is that the dominant mentality in South Africa is a Herrenvolk mentality—the essential feature of our race problems is to be found in that fact. The true solution of those problems must be sought in the changing of that mentality—Freedom from Prejudice—that is not least of the freedoms for which we must fight. We are paying a heavy price for our subservience to it today. Part of that price is material—undoubtedly we are the poorer as a nation because of our unwillingness to make full use of all our human resources. Part of it is being paid in the form of loss of international esteem and goodwill. We cannot hide our prejudice away in a cupboard from inspection by others. More and more the searchlight of the nations is being directed at us. More and more South Africa is suffering because its policies and dominant attitudes of mind do not measure up to what are coming to be accepted internationally as standards of values. But our chief loss is a moral loss. As long as we continue to apply a dual standard in South Africa, to determine our attitudes towards, and our relationships with, European and non-European on different ethical bases, to assign to Christian doctrine a significance which varies with the colour of men's skins, we shall suffer as a nation from what Plato would have called the lie in the soul—and the curse of the Iscariot may yet be our fate for our betrayal of the Christian doctrine which we profess."

His Excellency, Dr. Najī al Asil, who led the Iraqi delegation to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Conference, held in London recently, said something at that conference which should warm our hearts: "Through our recent work in the Department of Antiquities in Iraq . . . I was one of those who were very much impressed with the great possibilities of archaeological research, as a creative factor in broadening the horizon of human consciousness by establishing links of understanding with the noble endeavours of man in the very distant past . . . Through a philosophic spirit of approach that discerns the unit which is hidden in diversity, through the broad sympathetic and intelligent outlook which by comprehending the beginning of things human, arrives at the understanding of the complexities of the modern mind with all its bewildering, dazzling brightness and unfathomable darkness, one may reasonably hope to create an atmosphere for the correct understanding of human nature."

"In this age of atomic energy," he said on the same occasion, "in this age of atomic energy, casting its spell upon the minds of man with its unknown possibilities for good or for evil,

one might perhaps feel happier in the contemplation of the constructive spirit of those early pioneers of human civilisation.

“What a triumph in human progress it was when the first sickle was invented. So primitive, so simple it is to our eyes, and yet what ingenuity it was to stick together so many pieces of flint in a curved piece of wood and hold them together with bitumen and to reap with it the first corn that was cultivated by the hand of man. . . . And again to feel and to try to understand the beginning of human worship of the Deity in that very distant horizon of human consciousness when man’s universe was nothing but his small settlement and the great sky above with the sun and the moon and the bewitching stars beyond, and to visualise him seeking to grasp the first rays of light from the great unknown beyond—and then to feel in sympathy with him whosoever it was in his noble endeavour to help in making the modern man what he is, should in my view, be the starting ground for the attempt of human understanding.”

In the certain knowledge that such thoughts are shared by men in many parts of the world we may go forward in confidence that the pursuit of archaeological exploration will lead us and many of those with whom we come into contact much nearer that human understanding and consciousness of kind of which we all stand in such need. Youthful as the subject is, it nevertheless harbours great secrets not only of human understanding but also of human happiness and goodwill. Archæologists may therefore go forward each adding his mite as he may, knowing that the more they add to the sum total of our knowledge of primitive man the closer do they bring us to a fuller appreciation of our common origin, our common heritage and our common brotherhood.

When the meaning of the subject becomes more clear its future will be more generally assured and its teaching, one may hope, more generally encouraged. Those who propagate its purpose are, I feel, participating in something bigger than they always realise and bring us closer to the roots which sustain us and so closer to intellectual fulfilment and spiritual ease.

C. VAN RIET LOWE.

The Anthropological Approach to the Study of Society

(An address inaugurating the chair of Social Anthropology, delivered in Durban on Sixteenth August, 1947).

THE SCOPE AND IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Primitive life is the primary field of Social Anthropology. And primitive life to most people conjures up visions of curious customs, savage superstitions and all the paraphernalia of ritualistic performances. The interest of the Social Anthropologist in these social phenomena is, however, of a different nature. Curious customs have meaning: they are not eccentricities of perverted minds. Superstitions cannot be dismissed as unaccountable beliefs; they are the faith by which some men live but to which *we* do not happen to subscribe. Fantastic rituals are unreal adjustments to the requirements of life only as long as we do not understand them. Moreover in studying primitive life Social Anthropologists do not confine themselves to these sensational aspects; they are concerned with describing and analysing the meaning of the whole of primitive culture; and by culture is meant, not refined tastes and manners, but that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. This is the same field as that covered by Sociology and, although the two sciences are generally dealt with in different textbooks and are popularly not brought into relation with one another, they are essentially the same and have the same ultimate objective—the understanding of man.

As savage and civilised men have the same inborn endowment, the study of Social Anthropology throws considerable light upon the meaning and functioning of modern society. But in South Africa its title to recognition rests upon the more obvious consideration that a knowledge of our non-European populations is a prerequisite to the solution of our colour problems. There is no need in this age to urge the importance of scientific enquiry; and equally it should be superfluous to advance any justification for the application of science to the problems of guiding and

governing our non-European peoples. But it is necessary to emphasise the immense province and the great importance of Social Anthropology in this sub-continent of Africa. It is one thing to guide and govern an aboriginal people from over the seas ; it is quite another to do so at close range when, in addition, difficult problems of adjustment, of reconciling conflicting ways of life, and of providing adequate scope to the aspirations of divergent races, inevitably arise. Providence has thrust unique opportunities upon us ; our destiny, we sometimes assume, is to be leading lights in Africa ; but if the only light that is in us comes from the accident of our skin colour, we shall fail to illuminate the darkness. We should be foolish to rely on such accidents rather than Social Anthropology to provide the illumination.

An understanding of the qualities of the human materials that we have to handle is not achieved by intuition but only by sustained study of the institutions, interests and values of their culture. The investigation should range over the whole field of their traditional usages, but it should include in addition the forces that condition their lives today, their responses to the impact of western civilisation and the new stimuli, adaptive processes and frustrations resulting from culture contact. This study has its applied aspects, since the knowledge acquired from investigating the functioning of native institutions is not irrelevant to problems of native administration. The medical training which gives a man knowledge of the structure and functioning of the human body is recognised as entitling him to diagnose diseases and prescribe remedies. An anthropological training designed to acquaint a man with the structure and functioning of native culture should equally entitle him to diagnose social evils and to be consulted as regards remedies. Indeed in the South African context the interactions between non-Europeans and their administrators are so all pervasive that everyone should have some of this training. Legislators, native commissioners, employers, welfare workers, doctors, personnel managers, not to mention harassed housewives and circumspect city-fathers, should hold a certificate in Social Anthropology ; I am not sure whether some such qualification should not be a prerequisite to registration as a voter. We cannot afford to entrust our greatest task to quacks and untrained novices. No one expects a layman to undertake a great mechanical engineering job ; and it should appear equally incongruous to let laymen loose upon the specialised social engineering that is involved in constructing a cultural edifice with the multi-racial materials of

our society. And it is particularly important that we should realise that we have unequalled advantages ; you may not believe in predestination, but you must admit that the concatenation of circumstances has given us a unique opportunity of making a great contribution to one of the major problems of this century. We are little more than a backwater in the world current of scientific achievement and power politics, but we are in midstream as far as racial problems are concerned. Our hope for salvation, our title to leadership in Africa, our place in world history will ultimately depend, not on our gold mines, but on the advantage we take of our golden opportunities of solving problems of culture contact.

THE PROBLEM OF CULTURAL CONTRASTS

These problems of culture contact arise from incompatibilities in the cultures, of which I propose giving you a few examples, to begin with from the Lobedu, Bantu subjects of a rain queen in the North-Eastern Transvaal, among whom my wife and I spent some years.

For the first year or two their lives were Greek to us : the sovereign is sacred, immune to the infirmities of men, and therefore can die only by her own hand ; belief in her rain-making magic gives her subjects an enviable sense of security against famines and foes, for it relieves their anxieties about their crops and deters enemies, unless they court the disaster of drought, from invading the country ; not only men but also women may have wives, and children often address women as their fathers, while everyone is expected to include among his wives at least one close relative ; pre-marital chastity is insisted upon among girls, but married women may have lovers ; parents indulge their children and are not allowed to withhold anything they want—the rod is spared yet the child is not spoiled ; no one wishes to be wealthy, but a man must have enough to show his liberality by giving beer drinks, and if he cannot he loses prestige ; people do not work for wages or other material rewards but in order to retain the goodwill of neighbours.

These are but a few features of their pattern of life which at first appeared to us to be strange ; but, believe it or not, we soon began to feel that their way of life was quite natural and indeed inevitable. Their reason may be mere rationalisation and their beliefs mere projections, but the rationalisations and projections do not often miscarry, and they give people confidence to undertake their daily tasks and to face the risks of the future.

The Lobedu are not an exceptional people. Much more

striking contrasts with ourselves may be found in other societies. A way of life which decrees that when a child is born the father should be confined, while the mother must go about her daily tasks in the usual manner, appears to us to run counter to biological facts ; but it is found among several peoples, including the Basques of Northern Spain. The most highly approved method among the Lobedu of dealing with the slayer of your child is to convert him from criminal to kinsman by marrying his daughter or sister ; but some of us will probably find it even more outrageous to conform to the Eskimo norm whereby a widow is expected to marry her husband's murderer. I doubt whether we can easily accommodate ourselves to a behaviour pattern, such as among the Hottentots, according to which brother and sister may not communicate or play with one another but in some societies brother and sister cannot even be brought up in the same village for fear of contacting one another ; on the other hand uterine brother and sister are in some other societies expected to marry each other. We can understand that in matrilineal tribes, where the domicile of a married couple is at the wife's village, the husband will have to act with circumspection and may even, as among some American Indians, be regarded as an intruder or a mere lodger of his mother-in-law, liable to be ejected at the slightest provocation. It is also intelligible that, where the marriage is patrilocal, the wife will have to mind her p's and q's and move warily under the eagle eye of her husband's relatives. But when we consider the Dobuan method of regulating relationships between husband and wife we feel that they are several removes away from what is natural and acceptable to us. Among these people the couple have to live alternate years in the villages of husband and wife, an admirable solution, you will say, to the problems of marital domicile, but in its results a grave warning to any would-be reformer of the defects of our society. Each year, with the backing of his group, each spouse among the Dobu commands the situation, while the spouse on alien soil plays a role of humiliation. The villagers find fault with everything he does and take the unusual liberty of calling him by his name ; his spouse likewise takes unusual liberties of another nature, concerning which he can obtain information only by bribing his own children ; anything untoward is attributed to his sorcery and, should either spouse fall ill, the couple have to go to the village of the ailing spouse for, if he dies, the survivor must be in the power of the village of the deceased. During the mourning period he must keep out of sight, is subject to strict supervision and thereafter held

prisoner until ransomed by his village. But when he goes, he goes forever; he may never re-enter the village and is permanently severed from contact with his own children.

Our marital relationships are clearly poor guides for an understanding of Dobuan arrangements. Nor will our values enable us to see the morality of a code according to which the first act of hospitality is to offer one's wife for the night to one's guest. There is nothing improper in sitting down to a meal at the same table as a relative-in-law among ourselves; but among the Buka, though they may sleep together, they are regarded as immoral if they eat together. The romantic lover is the hero of our film, but it is the epileptic who is the hero of the old Arab epic. The psychologist could no doubt tell us which of these conceptions of greatness is, as an ideal, more in accordance with the needs of human life. At all events material of this nature lends itself to speculation about man and the extremes to which he may be conditioned. And anthropologists should not be harshly judged because, in the hour of their thoughtless youth, they mistook an improper predilection to sensation for the proper study of man. That phase has passed. They are no longer gullible travellers, even if their accounts give the impression that the life goals of some societies are Lilliputian. There is also no doubt that S. Butler was wrong in supposing that nowhere cultures were to be found Erewhonian in their reversal of our values. There are patterns of thought as well as of behaviour which occasion no comment in their own setting but would be certifiable among ourselves; movements and motivations regarded as normal in some tribes suggest to us that the tribesmen are all habitually abnormal or at least not quite sober; and some cultures, like mesozoic monsters, appear to have excessively elaborated social excrescences.

EVOLUTIONARY INTERPRETATIONS

Quite naturally in an age in which all thought was coloured by evolutionary conceptions these strange customs and institutions were interpreted as reflections of stages in the evolution of culture, with European culture the pinnacle of man's achievement. That was a gratifying conclusion: it certainly helped colonial powers—needing justification for the exploitation of native peoples—to rationalise their conquests and evangelistic missions as necessary and right for the progress and enlightenment of the world. Social evolutionists had no doubt what the end product of cultural development was, but for tracing out the various stages in that development they felt that it was also

necessary to discover the origins, the initial germs, from which the growth had proceeded and the institutions had emerged. Origins were, however, lost in the oblivion of antiquity, and had to be reconstructed; and for this purpose evolutionists used an interpretative device called the doctrine of survivals. A vestige in an existing culture was presumed to be a survival from a previous culture in which, unlike in the existing culture, it was a functioning, not a vestigial, element. You may infer from certain vestigial muscles in man that he is descended from a tree-dwelling predecessor; similarly from culture survivals you may deduce what the early institutions were like.

Thus, present-day symbolical abductions connected with marriage were regarded as survivals of early bride-capture, and the sham battle, hidden bride, pretended theft, recriminations and wedding songs, remarkable (as among our tribes) for their insulting references to the other side, were all part of the argument to show that there once was a real battle and capture from the enemy. Similarly fire festivals, maypole dances, whitsuntide mummers were interpreted as survivals of meaningful practices of a pre-Christian era. Primitive kinship nomenclature, according to which a man designates as father not only his own father but also many other men, was explained as a relic of the bad old days when men mated promiscuously or in groups, so that paternity was uncertain and many men could be one's potential father. Indeed, the most prolific source of survival interpretation was this supposed promiscuity of primitives: it accounted for such present-day customs as the levirate and sororate, the avunculate in patrilineal societies, phallic worship, sacred harlotry, scandalous nuptial rites, rules of exogamy and incest; it vouched for the evolution from the matriarchate to the patriarchate; and, compounded with Freudian concepts, it interpreted the irrationalities of totem and taboo.

The quest for origins has, however, proved as fruitless as the quest for the Holy Grail and survival reconstructions of the past as unreliable as astrological forecasts of the future. Both origins and survival interpretations are not susceptible of empirical verification and that alone disqualifies them as methods of investigation or interpretation. Moreover, the mock abduction of the bride, to take an illustration, is not a surviving trace of early man's methods of acquiring a wife; it is a functioning custom reflecting tensions and resistances that exist today and that arise from the unwillingness of the bride's group to surrender one of its members. Even among ourselves, though kinship solidarity is weak and unimportant, the mother-in-law, whose

relations with her child your marriage has partly severed, harbours some resentment against you.

ANTECEDENTS OF THE CULTURE-PATTERN APPROACH

The evolutionary approach suffered many other setbacks, especially when a more detailed study of cultures began to reveal that the diffusion of culture had played a major role in culture-building. Instead of uniform, gradual and progressive unfolding as the result of the quasi-organic laws of growth, the accidents of history seemed suddenly to enrich a culture, and Anthropologists began to set themselves the task of discovering these accidents. Thus arose the historical or diffusionist approach which concerned itself with plotting out distributions of individual culture elements, such as a type of hut or a secret society, in order to enable them to deduce where the element had first appeared and how it had subsequently travelled. It was a fascinating task to follow the tracks the world over of various culture traits, such as virgin-birth, creation or ogre myths, the cultivation of maize, totemic practices, musical instruments. The reconstructions often rival reconstructions of the atomic and astronomical universes in ingenuity, and sometimes they are on a world scale, such as those of E. Smith, Perry and the German culture historians. But they have not contributed much to the understanding of man and the functioning of his culture. That is not to say that there is no virtue in studying the careers in time of cultures, for the past conditions the present and acculturation studies, concerned with the problems of culture change when different cultures clash with or encounter one another, have brought to light aspects of the behaviour of culture which would otherwise have been overlooked. And where diffusionists have not immersed themselves in plotting distributions, working out chronology and grandiose universal histories, they have started a trend of thought, reinforced later by a new school, which promises to take us a long way towards understanding culture. For in investigating the receptivity of a culture to a diffusing custom they discovered not only that the incorporating culture moulds the custom to its pattern but also that the custom may be entirely rejected as incongruous with that pattern. A study of the cultural pattern thus became imperative.

These studies of the culture pattern, however, received their main inspiration from the functionalists. The point stressed by all functionalists, whatever their differences, was the inter-relatedness of the elements of a culture. A custom or institution is therefore always part of a whole configuration and it has

meaning only in its cultural context ; it is closely interlocked with other customs and institutions of that culture ; and within its setting it has some definite work to do, some contribution to make to the maintenance of the cultural configuration. A cultural configuration, like western culture or the culture of the Sotho, is not a thing apart from man's needs : it is a response to these needs and arises out of them. Now, since we know man only as man-in-society, we strictly cannot speak of the needs of natural man, man as he would be if he were not conditioned by his upbringing and culture. It is, therefore, only the relation between man's culturally shaped needs and culture that we can investigate. This leads to a rather extraordinary result because each culture configuration turns out to be unique, non-comparable with any other. Each is a closed system like an intricate organism, in which the parts articulate with one another but each can do its work only in relation to the others and to the whole. There are consequently only intracultural interconnections and interdependencies, and it is not permissible to disarticulate a culture element, tear it like a limb from its socket, and fit it into another culture. As a method of studying the interrelation of culture traits and the integration of single cultures, functionalism provides the best programme, and we owe some of the most brilliant field studies to this approach. But, if their thesis is accepted, comparison of culture elements across the boundaries of the culture in which they function integratively is illegitimate. You cannot even compare a stick in one society with a stick in another, for though its form is the same it may in the one culture function as a walking stick, but as a magical wand in the other. Diversity of function, not identity of form, is significant for the understanding of culture. Atomisation or the breaking up of cultures into their component parts in order to make comparative or statistical studies of institutions in different societies can also not be justified.

If these conclusions are accepted, Social Anthropology is condemned to impotence because, in the absence of links between different cultures, laws of universal validity applicable to all societies must be ruled out. As long as the integration of a culture is a matter of mutual interlocking and working interdependence of behaviour patterns within a culture, with no focal point, no determinants outside the culture, the study of primitive society can have little bearing upon an understanding of our society. What is the way out of this impasse, for it is not to be presumed that so brilliant a group of field workers and thinkers did not seek exits from this blind alley ?

One outlet, associated with the name of Malinowski, was the escape through the doctrine of man's fundamental organic needs. These are supposed to be independent of culture and to inhere in the nature of man. Thus, in his stimulating analysis of law among the Trobrianders, Malinowski came to the conclusion that the function of law is to curb strong biological urges in the interests of the restraints that were necessary for the regulation of social life; and therein law differs from custom because custom does not run counter to such imperative impulses. To induce men to fulfil burdensome duties at variance with their interests and inclinations, legal sanctions are necessary; but force of habit and the pressure of tradition suffice to secure conformity to custom. The legal institutions, therefore, of the Trobrianders were comparable with the legal institutions of all other societies at this level, the level of man's fundamental organic needs. The disparate culture configurations are ultimately linked in the basic human impulses, and comparisons may be made of ultimate extra-cultural needs and urges. But a doctrine of the organic urges of man does not in itself provide a programme for studying cultures comparatively; and Malinowski did not allow his theories to obstruct his insight into and interpretation of the functional relations within a culture.

THE SEARCH FOR THE BASIS OF CULTURAL INTEGRATION

The study of cultures as configurations or holistic entities, such as the pattern studies of Mead and Benedict, was a further important advance. The integrated whole is not merely the sum of its parts but the result of a unique arrangement and the interrelation of the parts that has brought about the new entity. Within each culture there appears to come into being characteristic purposes or interests which are not necessarily shared by other types of societies. Each culture configuration appears, therefore, to be dominated by its own distinctive systems of values or interests, and these influence every part of the culture, orienting and organising the various institutions, the motivations of the carriers of the culture, the adoption and rejection of new elements. Some of the most stimulating and challenging analyses of cultures have been made from this angle of approach. But there is no agreement as to what the orientation is from: a dominant interest, some absorbing ambition, the attitude to man's ultimate destiny. There is also grave danger that the investigator will select only those elements which harmonise with his personal impressions and the characterisation of the culture that he has in mind, and efforts to eliminate the danger

of impressionism and an over-personalised approach have not yet been successful. In addition the available evidence suggests that extreme stressing of a single interest or value, though undoubtedly it does occur, is atypical of culture organisation. Many cultures, our Western and Bantu included, do not show an integration which is sharply focused upon a single attitude, value or interest. There appears to be a large number of such values and interests, for example, among the Lobedu: the pivotal royal instructions resting on a basic anxiety about subsistence and safety; the magical system arising from peculiar attitudes to disease; the cattle-linked social organisation centred in distinctive attitudes to family interrelationships. It is true that the royal institutions have a wider range and determine more institutions than does, say, the magical system, but it is impossible to interpret Lobedu culture on the assumption that everything is focused upon anxiety about subsistence and safety. The society is functionally integrated but the integration is a reflection of something else than a single dominant interest or value.

The search for the true basis of cultural integration has led in recent years to great emphasis upon psychological studies and interpretations, particularly of the relationship between personality and culture. Up to 1924 it was recognised that the psychological approach was a useful tool that might contribute to the understanding of culture, but the consensus of opinion was that psychology would not solve all sociological problems. Advances in psycho-analysis and abnormal psychology and the excellent opportunities, provided by primitive societies, of studying abnormal types in different cultural conditions stimulated many anthropologists to give more attention to the individual carriers of cultures. The needs, desires, and responses of individuals, it was felt, constituted the ultimate reality; the culture itself is a mere construct or abstraction, the creation of the individual; and, if the elements of a culture are integrated, their interrelatedness must be a reflection of the integration of the personalities of the carriers of the culture. These personalities are very diverse, but each culture produces a national character or a basic personality type, and it is this type which constitutes the basis of the cultural integration. If, therefore, the national character is dominated by a particular value or interest, the culture, which the carrier simultaneously creates, carries and is a creature of, will be of the type that is focussed upon a single interest or value and that has been pictured in studies of the pattern school. But just as this is atypical among basic personality

types so also it is atypical of the kind of integration found among cultures.

Tests were devised to study racial psychology, the range of variability in personality organisation, the incidence of psychoses and neuroses in relation to the culture pattern, and particular attention was given to the early conditioning of children or the growth pattern of the society. Studies in abnormal behaviour indicated that abnormality is not an absolute state but is relative to the standards of each society: whole culture patterns may often be considered abnormal from our point of view. Freudian mechanisms in primitive psychology, the status and role of abnormal individuals, the relationship of psychic stress and culture patterns, the distinction between the innately biological and the cultural, the relationship between the projective systems such as religion and myth on the one hand and the techniques of child-rearing in a society on the other—these and many similar problems were studied, often in co-operation with psychologists.

CULTURAL CONDITIONING AND CHILD-REARING TECHNIQUES

I cannot hope to deal with these intensely interesting new trends and the vast field that they open up both for the anthropologist and for the psychologist. But it will be instructive to consider some of the main lines along which progress is being made. Anthropologists have for some time realised that the emergence in man—during his evolution from the mammals—of certain biological traits made it possible for him to acquire a culture, and of crucial importance in this connection was his prolonged and helpless babyhood. This early inadequacy of man appears to place man at a hopeless disadvantage as compared with animals, but it has led to the most unsuspected results. It means that man, who is not born with ready-made responses or innate behaviour patterns, must rely upon learning, i.e., upon the transmission to him, of the adaptive patterns that we call culture, by those to whom the culture has ascribed this function, usually, of course, the parents. His early conditioning, which constitutes the growth pattern of his particular society, has been shown by psychological studies, carried on within the frame of our own society, to be of critical significance in shaping his personality. But it was assumed that certain features of our culture, which are shared by all of us and appear to be fundamental and deep-seated, were instinctive qualities of the human being. One illustration will suffice. According to Freudian interpretations a universal feature of the human family is the Oedipus complex, that is, the incestuous love of son for mother;

this, however, must be repressed and the frustration leads to antagonism to the father which must also be repressed and in that way the conception of the father as the hated sexual rival develops. Malinowski, however, showed that in a matrilineal society this is not inevitable. In that society the father is his son's playmate—the father is not even considered to have procreated his offspring—and has no disciplinary authority over the son; it is, in fact, the maternal uncle who takes the place of the father of our society. In this society there is certainly uncle hatred, but it cannot be interpreted as sexual rivalry, since it is merely rebellion against authority. The correlation is thus not the supposedly innate one between father and son as might appear from observation of our society alone. The Oedipus complex must be interpreted as a reaction to the type of family that one finds in our society: the father-son conflict is not innate; it develops out of cultural arrangements, not out of instinctive urges. And similarly other features of our culture which are so universal that we attribute them to man's innate endowment appear from an analysis of other cultures to be acquired and may be traced particularly to the techniques for the early care and control of the individual. Hence the importance of investigating these early techniques.

Knowledge of these child-rearing methods of different societies throws considerable light upon the sort of people that will be produced. The growth pattern of a society is important in a number of extremely subtle ways, since the early childhood experiences become the unconscious basis for the projective systems; and the projective systems, like religion, magic, myth, largely determine life goals and values. The projective systems provide compensations for frustrations, relieve anxieties, and institutionalise the type of wishful thinking that enables men to overcome their sense of impotence. They are the basis of institutions which constitute the so-called superstitions and irrationalities of primitive society. Therefore, in order to study societies comparatively, to relate institutions of different societies significantly, we must have recourse not so much to biological urges as to the basic personality type; and comparative work, which is crucial for an understanding of human nature, is thrown back upon these psychological investigations. This approach promises to be very fruitful also in the field of culture-contact studies. Receptivity to change is characteristic of certain types of personality; other types are much more conservative. That may be the reason why the Bantu are able to adapt themselves successfully to the impact of Western

civilisation, while Bushmen and many Oceanic societies have resisted realistic adjustment to the point of ultimate extinction. Of more immediate interest to us is the question whether the changes occurring in Bantu life are compatible with the traditional and still prevailing methods of bringing up children among them. How, e.g., do we explain that, in spite of education and evangelisation, very little impression has been made upon their magic, even in the urban centres. This projective system seems to survive despite fundamental changes in many aspects of their culture; indeed, it often uses the innovations and moulds them to its own pattern. A study of this resistance and many other extraordinary results of culture contact from the point of view of the basic personality type, the growth pattern and projective systems may yield valuable results; but such a study has not yet been attempted.

THE BANTU MEDICO-MAGICAL THOUGHT PATTERN

There are, however, aspects of the conflict of our own and Bantu culture patterns upon which we have some information. I propose examining one or two of these patterns in an attempt to indicate the general lines along which they should be handled in the contact situation. I take the pattern as it is, without trying to trace its origins in the personality type; and, in view of the increasing interest in the health of Africans, I select first the Bantu medico-magical pattern and consider it in outline in relation to our health services. My object is not to explain the pattern fully, but merely to show that it presents a problem to social medicine.

The medico-magical conceptions of the Lobedu provide them with a framework of explanatory principles. These appear to us at first sight to be irrational and to have no empirical basis; and as a result, in our handling of health and disease, we have tended in the past scornfully to contrast the rationality and science of our medical practices with the irrationality and magic of their methods. That has not had the salutary effects we have expected; indeed it should have been obvious that a prerequisite to rapid mass education is at least sufficient understanding of their basic conceptions to enable us to articulate the two divergent systems and thought patterns. This is, of course, not a plea that we should approve magic, but it is a plea for a better appreciation of their presuppositions and thought-pattern, and what underlies them, as the most effective basis from which to secure their willing co-operation and to effect the most useful

changes with a minimum of misunderstanding and a maximum of success.

Now, strange as it may seem, to the Lobedu their medico-magical conceptions are generalisations from scientific observation. They are based upon a most impressive body of knowledge of the properties of matter: Lobedu doctors are great experimentalists, and try to bring the actual and observable properties of matter into relation with the cause, as they diagnose it, of the disease. They sharply distinguish natural and supernatural causation, and their medical practices are classed by them under natural causation. To us they appear magical, but what appears to be magical to an observer judging causal relations in terms of his own pattern of observation, causation and verification is not necessarily magical if one has regard to the attitudes and procedures of the carriers of the culture. A Lobedu assumption which will, however, take us a long way towards understanding some of their reasoning connected with medicine is a conception that in all matter there inhere certain specific properties. At the same time we should realise that at the level of observation and verification of the Lobedu these properties cover a range which by our conceptions transcends the purely physical. Matter at this level has either self evidently, as a matter of immediate perception, or as an irresistible inference within the thought-pattern, not merely such properties as weight or colour, but also potencies of a non-physical order. These properties, when not directly perceived, are deduced from their reactions, but both the perception and the deduction are conditioned by a thought-pattern which is different from ours.

From our point of view the Lobedu doctor illegitimately ascribes, on the analogy of the great strength of the python, certain strengthening virtues to medicine made from its backbone; but, if challenged, he always attempts to prove the potency of his medicine from the actual observed facts and the reactions upon patients. The factors coming into play and producing these reactions are complex, but unless techniques exist in the society for discriminating between them it is impossible to show him the difference between properties inherent in matter and properties that are ascribed to matter and hence imaginary. That the eating of a lion's heart gives a man courage just as indubitably as the drinking of a certain sap causes intestinal upheavals is to him a fact of ordinary observation. Properties, whether actual or ascribed, all operate according to the same principles which assume mechanical cause and effect. The whole scheme is the product of rational thought, subject to the limita-

tions of the observation and verification available, and conditioned by a thought-structure that is alternative to our own. When reason exactly like ours operates with premises, inculcated by the cultural heritage as axiomatic and supported by the projections for which early childhood experiences provide a basis, the result may be very different from our conceptual patterns.

In this thought-pattern, as might be expected, the concept of heat takes a most prominent place. It constitutes a guiding principle in a kind of thermodynamics of material, mental, ritual and religious forces. Heat affects the potency of medicines, the physiology of persons, the mental repose of the Gods, and the welfare of the whole country; it causes as well as accompanies disease; it provides the conditions in which the criminal propensities of witches can operate. The ascription of these powers to heat—a generalisation empirically derived, in the Lobedu context, from the properties of matter—is intelligible against the cultural background, particularly the antithesis between heat and the main basis of a sense of security, namely the cooling, life-giving rain. Heat is not actual physical burning in this context, but the idea of its properties is suggested by physical heat. In medicine the generalisation plays a large role; many illnesses are caused by heat or cause the blood to be hot, and in all cases in which heat is generated the proper treatment is the administration of cooling medicines, that is, substances which have properties, real or ascribed, of counteracting the heat. The angry spirits have to be cooled and calmed by squirting water over their graves; cooling medicines are used to counteract that burning of the fingers that constrains witches to criminal acts; and so on. A great deal of medical ingenuity goes into the manufacture of powders and decoctions which, owing to the cooling properties of their ingredients, will counteract the heat.

There are many other similar medical generalisations, the pattern of which is, by our conceptions, magical. We may call them magic provided we do not imply that empirical inquiry is lacking, mechanical cause and effect disregarded and objective reality given no recognition. We may accept that the observational and verification techniques are inadequate. But for effective application of our concepts and the mass education that should run parallel with our measures for national health, the really important thing is an analysis and understanding of the processes involved. In applying health schemes it is always dangerous to ignore not merely the available facilities and materials and the psychological and sociological forces that condition their effectiveness but also the framework of know-

ledge and the thought-pattern in terms of which they assume meaning and become significant for their intended purposes. The problem is the same here as in introducing any new technique or measure. Only a positive and intelligent, co-operative response from the African will ensure that our efforts have the maximum effects. Such a response cannot be ensured unless our schemes are intelligible, do not arouse deep suspicions, and will not be circumvented. We often assume that imposition or presentation with the backing of the results achieved and the values inculcated by educative and propaganda agencies is sufficient. The persistence of magical conceptions despite decades of modern education and the direct attack of Christianity should warn us that our methods are inadequate.

It is not my purpose to suggest detailed procedures for handling these problems. But the main outlines should be clear. The thought-patterns of the two societies are different, yet the reasons for the difference, which are not to be found in some peculiar primitive mentality or the different inborn endowments, can be discovered and the articulation of the two patterns can thereafter be systematically undertaken. The old method of mechanical imposition or explanation in terms of an unknown thought-pattern has produced only friction, resentment, circumvention and opposition. And, since an intelligent application of remedies presupposes knowledge, a strong case can be made out for the inclusion in the curriculum of those concerned of a course in the general principles of medical anthropology, quite apart from the research that should be directed at elucidation of the genetic origins, the cultural context, the underlying values and projective systems, and other factors determining the Bantu medico-magical pattern. The anthropologist urges not that tradition should be permitted to hinder progress but that the measures taken shall be articulated to the arrangements of the society, harmonised with its rhythms and fitted to its patterns. It is little use ramming our social remedies down their differently conditioned alimentary systems; the foreign matter may be ingested but that does not mean that it is digested.

THE BANTU LEGAL PATTERN

A slight sketch of the conflict between Lobedu and Western legal systems will perhaps take my argument one step further. Law in our society gives us a sense of security; it stands guard over our titles to private property and ensures the fulfilment of our legal expectations. But our law as applied to the Lobedu, so far from safeguarding security, is conceived to be subversive of

society. This reversal of the role of law is, of course, an indication of the incommensurability of the two systems. It is a measure of their misunderstanding of our judicial arrangements, and not, as we might suppose, of their legal immaturity. Our palaces of justice, the arena of casuistic contests, are incompatible with their open-air homely courts of compromise. We judge between issues, they reconcile persons. Their methods are persuasion not coercion, adjustment by conciliation not justice according to strict law, friendly family discussion not hostile cross-examination. Often their procedures are repugnant to us; a man found guilty in one case may take a leading part in deciding the next; hearsay evidence is not excluded, since it may be "the creeper at which you tug to discover the real calabashes" (the hint that gives the clue to the real trouble between the parties); among us the criminal is outcasted and the offender driven to an outlaw life on the fringes of society, but among them, if he is willing to make restitution, he becomes an ordinary citizen, completely rehabilitated, untainted by any stigma.

It is easy from this brief characterisation to imagine their colossal suspicion of our judicial system. Immense in their majesty, their solemn procedure moving on inexorably like a ceremonial rite, our courts appear to them both awful and incomprehensible. Instead of the easiness and warmth that thaw hostility in their courts, there is our icy silence in the court and an atmosphere rarefied with sanctity which they dread to defile. Disconcerted when their rambling statements are cut short by the judicial command to ask questions; convinced that lawyers' fees are bribes with which judges are corrupted; baffled by the unintelligibility of our legal ceremonial; they see themselves as ritual victims at the bar and experience a dread comparably as they phrase it, with the dread of suddenly being assailed by witchcraft; but there is this difference: against witchcraft they can invoke magic and regain their sense of security, against the awful incomprehensibility of our courts they are powerless.

Should the dock prove a death trap to the innocent victim paralysed into incoherence, he resigns himself to the inscrutability of our law, or, if he is hardened, to free lodging in the Government's Hotels. Should the criminal be acquitted or inadequately punished, he becomes the luckless victim of a new tragedy. His enemies by a magical technique (*bu nielela*) render him subject to an obsessive compulsion to repeat his offence, to relapse into crime, so that he may once more re-enact his part as victim in our courts. *Hu nielela* is an attempt to cope with the insecurity resulting from what they conceive to be our arbitrary

and uninformed justice ; but it is also the shattering answer to the smugness with which we apply our self-evidently superior system. Under our justice, as they see it, criminals multiply and witches become more aggressive. The clemency we exercise to reform the offender presents itself as a challenge to which they respond by magically constraining him to crime. That is the tragedy of complacently assuming that our methods are universally applicable and *that*, if anything, should make us realise the sublime absurdity of solving their problem from our angles.

CONCLUSION

Studies of acculturation, hybridisation of cultures, cultural clashes and adjustments are increasingly engaging the attention of anthropologists ; they represent an important modern trend. Some anthropologists are mainly concerned with the implications of these studies for colonial administration ; others have concentrated upon the reasons for receptivity or resistance to innovations, the elucidation of the effects of cultural disorganisation upon the individual and formulation of generalisations about the nature and direction of culture change. What is most needed is a body of principles that will enable us to understand the psychology and sociology of culture change. So far only a few principles have emerged. We know that cultures are functional wholes, integrated entities, and that the introduction of a new element, even if it is a material thing like a plough, will have widespread repercussions in the incorporating culture, and these may ultimately nullify the initial gain to the culture. That in itself is, of course, significant, for it warns the would-be reformer that nothing can be mechanically added to a culture and that, before a change, however progressive and necessary for enlightenment, is made, thorough preliminary investigations are imperative of at least all those aspects, both of the culture and of its basic personality type, with which the innovation is likely to interact.

A study of Social Anthropology is a revelation in many ways : it produces a new outlook on life and a new attitude towards the arrangements, values and problems of our society ; it surprises us into re-examining our axiomatic truths ; and it makes us realise that there are other worlds with dispositions different from our own, but alternative rather than irrational. Primitive cultures may hold the key to an understanding of our society ; they provide comparisons and contrasts which enable us to see what otherwise is taken for granted or passed over without comment ; and they are to the social sciences what

laboratory techniques and predetermined test conditions are to the natural and physical sciences. We cannot vary the conditions at will, but the diversity of cultures presents us with a sufficient number of unconscious experimental data to explore the possibilities of human nature; and analysis of these data ensures objectivity in our interpretation of human behaviour and of our own culture. We see ourselves in perspective. Modern community studies inspired by the anthropological approach have, as in the Lynds' study of *Middletown*, made some remarkably suggestive contributions. Social Anthropology is the science that is perhaps best calculated to disclose the qualities of the human material which we subject to the stresses and strains of our social engineering, to show the limits within which men can be moulded and to discover ways of life that permit the individual the fullest self-expression and cause him the least frustrations. It has already profoundly influenced the outlook of the other social sciences and promises to illuminate them with a relativism that must eventually lead to as far-reaching results as relativism in the physical sciences.

J. D. KRIGE.



African Witchcraft and Anxiety Load

INTRODUCTION

This essay may be regarded as an extension of Professor Krige's on *The Social Function of Witchcraft*.¹ Although its approach is social-psychological rather than sociological, and although its illustrations refer to a Bantu ethnic group with a social system considerably different from that of the Lobedu, it will seek to confirm rather than contradict Professor Krige's main arguments. For instance, it will tend to support the notions that witchcraft has a function; that this function, furthermore, is to provide explanations of events, such as sickness and death, for which the African's tribal culture does not provide scientific explanations; and that witchcraft is to be found chiefly where stresses and strains occur in life.

In particular it is with the last of these postulates asserted or implied by Krige that this essay makes closest contact. It will put forward the theory that the psychological function of witchcraft is to resolve anxiety.² And, if there is any truth in the contention—to be advanced later—that anxiety and aggression are different denominations of the same coin, this will include Krige's view that "witchcraft and sorcery provide avenues of vicarious achievement to those who, because of their aggressive temperaments or disharmonious conditioning, find it impossible or extremely irksome to conform to the pattern of co-operativeness and reciprocity."³

There will be three main steps in the argument that the function of witchcraft is to resolve anxiety: first, an examination of theories regarding the causes of anxiety; second, a

¹*Theoria*, 1947, pp. 8—21.

²The writer cannot lay any claim to originality in regard to this hypothesis or to the theory of anxiety-load developed in connection with it. Readers familiar with the following sources will readily recognise the origin of most of his ideas: Willoughby, R. R., *Magic and cognate phenomena: an hypothesis*, in Murchison, C., ed. *Handbook of Social Psychology*; Horney, K., *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time*; Dollard, J., *Caste and Class in a Southern Town*.

³Krige, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

discussion of typical reactions to anxiety ; and third, a scrutiny of a particular Bantu witchcraft system to ascertain to what extent it comprises, or at least is sustained by, these reactions. By way of application, the essay will end with a review of the factors related to the very high incidence of witchcraft beliefs in modern African society.

CAUSES OF ANXIETY : INDIVIDUAL AND CULTURAL

If there is one thing about which modern psychology presents a united front, it is the theory of anxiety. Allowing for differences of terminology, we may draw similar, or at least comparable, material from a variety of schools of thought—ranging from reflexology at the one extreme through academic and applied psychology to psychiatry at the other.

For the purposes of this essay *anxiety* will be taken to mean an unpleasant subjective state of tension and distress, which may or may not be associated with objective physiological correlates such as sweating, tremors, accelerated heart-beat, etc. Sometimes this subjective state is experienced in relation to a given environmental object or situation ; sometimes it appears to have no such environmental associations, in which case it is said to be objectless or *free-floating*. Even when anxiety has an associated object, there is never any certainty whether the object specified by the anxious individual is really the cause of his anxiety or whether it is merely a rationalisation, or excuse, which he has secured for it. In fact, the criterion for distinguishing *fear* from anxiety is largely a cultural one : if an individual is afraid of something which his associates recognise as a fearful object, we speak of *fear* ; if, on the other hand, the individual has a purely private reason for fearing the object—a reason that his associates regard as inadequate for his correspondingly disproportionate reaction—we speak of *anxiety*.

The consensus of psychological opinion is that anxiety results from conflict. It springs from those situations in which the individual feels impelled to do two things at once. Two or more opposing drives within him, or two or more opposing stimuli that impinge on him from without, strive for supremacy and he feels helpless in their grasp. Everyday life is full of conflict-producing situations. Decisions have to be made between working and relaxing ; between this economic goal and that ; between facing *disappointments* and avoiding them ; and so on. It is doubtful, however, whether these various situations are all equal in their tendencies to produce anxiety. It seems to be those conflicts that involve the evaluation of the

individual—by himself or by society—that have the greatest anxiety-producing potentialities. It is no accident that the most appealing literature or drama is the type that capitalises the love-*vs.*-duty and fear-*vs.*-duty motifs. It is by presenting the reader or audience with these prototypes of anxiety-producing situations that this form of art most effectively gathers up from individual experience, and then proceeds to organise and direct, the subjective tensions which it is its function to resolve.

The view that childhood situations are pregnant with factors of adult neurosis dates from the Freudian beginnings of psychiatry. The more specific notion that it is anxiety that underlies most adult neuroses, and that this anxiety springs from the conflict situations of childhood, is one to be found in Freud's later writings, and one well developed by those of his successors whose clear sociological bearings qualify them more than any other of his erstwhile followers to be called "neo-Freudians." Horney, for instance, considers that anxiety is the motor that sets the neurotic process going and keeps it in motion; and she asserts that the neurotic's *basic anxiety* originates in the conflicts of childhood. It should not be forgotten, however, that in the process of socialisation, by which the child is equipped with behaviour-patterns that will ensure his survival in his particular physical and cultural environment, conflict is as inevitable as it is valuable in developing the resilience of his personality. It is only when conflict becomes intense that a predisposition to neurosis is laid down in the form of basic anxiety. The childhood situation most likely to generate basic anxiety is the one where the child, constantly being thwarted by the clumsy attempts of his parents to socialise him, becomes aggressive towards them, only to realise that expressing his hostility will endanger his survival by alienating their affection and support. Conflict situations of this kind, involving the repression of hostility for fear of the consequences of that hostility, are the typical causes of basic anxiety which henceforth forms a mental millstone round the individual's neck.

From this discussion it is not a far step to the assertion that it is immaterial whether we refer to this basic store of neurotic energy as repressed anxiety or repressed aggression: each seems to be easily converted into the other. To put it another way, anxious people are prone to lose control of their aggressive impulses—or even to seek reassurance by being aggressive (cf. Horney's contention that one of the neurotic's means of anxiety-control is to seek power, prestige and possession).

And aggressive people who sense that their aggression will endanger their survival are prone to become anxious.

If conflicting tendencies lead to states of tension in children, will they do so in animals? Results that have been obtained from experiments on the conditioning of reflexes suggest that the answer is in the affirmative. If you take a sheep and give it an electric shock on a certain part of its leg, it will bend its leg. If you ring a bell as you give it the shock it will still bend its leg. If you go on giving it these two simultaneous stimuli, bell and shock, for four or five trials, a time will come when the bending of the sheep's leg becomes conditioned to the ringing of the bell, i.e., the sheep will bend its leg when the bell alone rings—with the shocking coil switched off. Using this method it is possible to condition a sheep to bend its leg when you flash a circle of light on to a screen, and not to bend it when you flash an oval of light on to the same screen. Then if you adjust your projector so that by gradual stages the oval gets rounder and rounder, the sheep will, up to a point, still discriminate between these two geometrical figures. It will bend its leg to the circle but not to the oval even when the latter is almost the same shape as the former. But eventually discrimination breaks down, and what has been called *experimental neurosis* results: the sheep bleats, strains at the ropes that are tying it up and generally behaves in a manner you would associate with a human being suffering from extreme anxiety. You cannot, of course, say that the sheep is experiencing anxiety because you have no means of knowing what goes on in a sheep's mind. But its disturbed behaviour is reminiscent of human anxiety. It would appear that conflict in the sheep's nervous system between the tendency to bend its leg and not to bend it has resulted in tension, which, when it reaches a certain degree, brings about a general disorganisation of the animal's behaviour. The same is true for dogs and other animals. In fact, the classic experiment in this series was carried-out on a dog by one of the associates of the famous Russian physiologist, Pavlov.

So far we have been dealing with experiments and observations that suggest that anxiety springs from the conflict between two opposing drives within the individual or, two opposing stimuli that impinge on him from without. Now let us consider some of the cultural factors that give rise to anxiety in individuals. Just as we may expect individuals to differ in their respective funds of basic anxiety because each person's life history is unique, so may we expect societies to differ in the total amounts of anxiety, or *anxiety-loads*, as they are sometimes called, carried

by all the individuals belonging to them. There are three reasons for the differing anxiety-loads of various societies. First, every society differs in its methods of child-training: in some, discipline is harsh; in others, lenient—with the result that childhood conflict situations may be common or rare. Second, a society's physical environment, and the secondary cultural environment it has built up for surviving in it, may, to a lesser or greater extent, be a source of anxiety. Third, each society varies in the amount of conflict between the moral principles it recommends to its constituent individuals and the conduct that it impels them to carry out in practice.

Perhaps an example will make this clearer. Western society is under the burden of a high anxiety-load—one reflected by its toll of mental maladjustment, its social disorganisation, its fertility for emotionally-based propaganda and other indices that cannot be gone into here. The reasons for this high anxiety-load are fairly clear. First, its system of child-training, especially the traditional one, is rather harsh; second, the economic structure of its culture, characterised as it is by booms and slumps, is hardly conducive to mental stability; and third, its culture shows a great many conflicts in its "theoretical" and "practical" ideals, a fact that is closely related to the speed of its technological development. Consider two of these conflicting principles. First, there is the discrepancy between the moral principle of co-operation and the economic necessity for competition. On the one hand Christianity exhorts us to be unselfish and co-operative; on the other, the economic system in which we live gives its highest rewards to those who are not unselfish and co-operative. There are very few individuals who succeed in resolving satisfactorily the conflict ensuing from these opposing forces: the majority of us sit precariously on the fence, fearing to lose the friendship of those with whom we compete for careers or other economic rewards, and yet fearing, too, that if we don't compete we won't survive.

The second ideological source of conflict in Western culture is the discrepancy between its stimulating influences and the frustrations that inevitably follow them. For commercial reasons we are constantly being bombarded with propaganda urging us to raise our standard of living, yet our incomes seldom keep pace with the aspirations that are thus implanted in us. Or, to look at it another way, the spectacular careers of self-made men give us all secret hopes of being Fords or Nuffields, whereas in practice the proportion of such individuals as these in the general population is very small indeed.

A similar analysis might be made of the factors leading to the high anxiety-load of modern African society. But this will be left for the concluding section of this essay.

SOME REACTIONS TO ANXIETY

If we regard anxiety as a form of nervous energy that gets stored up as a result of individual maladjustment and cultural chaos, the next question is: how does this energy find an outlet? What are some of the typical reactions to conflict and anxiety? Two reactions have already been mentioned: first, the expression of hostility, perhaps in the form of extreme competitiveness; and second, the disorganisation of behaviour. Let us consider further the second of these. Discrimination experiments have shown that, in the case of animals, conflict leads to behaviour disturbances characterised by general disorganisation. Luria has convincingly shown that conflict has similar effects on human beings.¹ He has done this by studying the muscular and verbal reactions of individuals subjected to severe tensions, e.g., students awaiting their examinations, criminals awaiting their trials, subjects in whom conflicts had been "planted" under hypnosis, and neurotics.

Disorganisation of behaviour is not, however, the neurotic's only reaction to anxiety. When an individual is subjected to the unpleasant experience of acute anxiety, he may adopt various ways of escaping it. Three are worth mentioning. One is to deny that he is anxious—to bluff himself that he has no uneasiness. Some individuals are so successful in doing this that their anxiety takes the form of bodily symptoms only: they suffer from sweating, tremors, rapid heart-beat, etc., and have no subjective feelings of anxiety at all. Another method of escaping the unpleasant feeling of being anxious is to try to find a real reason for having anxiety. It has been mentioned that many individuals have what is known as free-floating anxiety: they are anxious and uneasy without knowing why. Their usual reaction is to look round and find, or invent, a reason for their anxiety; they'd feel such fools being anxious over nothing, so they rationalise their anxiety, i.e., hook it on to something that their fellow men will regard as an object worthy of their fear. In this way people get hypochondria, or they may show anxiety about unlikely happenings such as the loss of someone's love or the loss of their own intelligence. This tendency to rationalise anxiety, this craving for terror, is to be seen over and over again in witchcraft beliefs.

¹Luria, A. R., *The Nature of Human Conflicts*.

A third method of getting rid of anxiety is systematically to distract one's attention from it by concentrating on certain ideas or actions. People with this type of reaction suffer from obsessions, compulsions, doubts and scruples; and sometimes they are extremely tidy. They nearly always have a tendency to plan their lives down to the last detail. They surround themselves with self-made restrictions and rules, insisting on doing certain things, e.g., getting dressed, in an exact order. They are usually very trying people to get on with, because if you upset the neurotic rituals to which their lives are set, they develop anxiety attacks, sometimes turning their anxiety into hostile channels.

This type of reaction, the use of rituals to keep anxiety at bay, is so important in the magical beliefs underlying witchcraft that we should not drop our discussion of it yet. First, let us note some anthropological opinions. Malinowski contends that man generally resorts to magic when his technology has failed him in his attempts to control his environment. "Man engaged in a series of practical activities comes to a gap; the hunter is disappointed by his quarry, the sailor misses propitious winds. . . . Yet his desire grips him only the more strongly; his anxiety, his fears and hopes induce a tension in his organism which drives him to some sort of activity. . . . Passive inaction, the only thing dictated by reason, is the last thing in which he can acquiesce. His nervous system and his whole organism drive him to some substitute activity."¹ Magic, according to this view, consists of an institutionalised series of substitute actions. Evans-Pritchard, examining this theory in the light of his Zande data, comes to the conclusion that the function of magic is: first, that of filling the gap left by man's lack of knowledge in pragmatic pursuits; and second, that of providing alternative means of expression for thwarted human desires.² Malinowski's theory that the "function of magic is to ritualise man's optimism",³ and that it thus occurs chiefly in those situations where there is an element of doubt or hazard, is exemplified in Western society in the case of soldiers, sailors and airmen who, all engaged in hazardous occupations, are proverbially more superstitious than the average.

To what extent does psychology support Malinowski's theory

¹Malinowski, B., *Magic, science and religion*, in Needham, J., ed. *Science, Religion and Reality*, p. 73.

²Evans-Pritchard, E. E., *The morphology and function of magic*, *American Anthropologist*, vol. 31, pp. 619—641.

³Malinowski, op. cit., p. 83.

of magic? Ovsiankina has demonstrated experimentally that "substitute actions" are a natural consequence of the thwarting of human desires, or at least human motor behaviour-patterns.¹ After having given a group of subjects various tasks to do, she staged a number of supposedly accidental interruptions, and carefully observed their reactions to these. She found that a very widespread reaction was to carry out symbolic verbal and muscular responses that represented the real tasks that the subjects had to stop doing because of the interruptions. These symbolic acts were not, of course, of a true magical character, but they were what might be termed the raw material of magic, which institutionalisation could convert into magic proper.

Why is the neurotic such a fool as to adopt such stupidly ineffective means of getting over his anxiety? Or why is primitive man such a fool as to use magic rituals that obviously can't be effective? Part of the answer to these unsympathetic questions is that anxiety disorganises behaviour. In other words, the intellectual processes are clouded by emotional conflict. From the physiological point of view this means that impulses from the older, more primitive parts of the brain invade the higher brain centres—the study of changing brain potentials, or brain waves, has actually shown that this is roughly what does take place during an emotional disturbance. In the case of magic, neurotic or primitive, the unintelligent, uncritical reaction of the individual may in part be attributed to the temporary dislocation of discriminatory brain processes by the anxiety causing the magic behaviour itself.

But this is not the whole answer. Another reason why the belief in magic is sustained is that it becomes institutionalised, or, to use Malinowski's term, becomes enshrined in its "current mythology".² Primitive man believes in the efficacy of magic for the same reason that Western man believes in his national history: his culture tells him it is the right and proper thing to do.

A number of types of reaction to anxiety have been mentioned in this section. Four of these will now be used to represent how reactions to anxiety find their expression in witchcraft beliefs. An attempt will now be made to show that witchcraft beliefs comprise, or at least are sustained by: magic rites and spells; the expression of hostility; the rationalising of free-floating anxiety; and the general disorganisation of behaviour.

¹Cited by Willoughby, *op. cit.*

²Malinowski, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

REACTIONS TO ANXIETY EXPRESSED IN WITCHCRAFT BELIEFS

The system of witchcraft beliefs in which we shall seek for these four type-reactions to anxiety is that of the Northern Rhodesian Chewa, a branch of the great Nyanja-speaking section of the East-Central Bantu. The Chewa are to be found in the Eastern Province of Northern Rhodesia, the Central Province of Nyasaland and the Tete District of Portuguese East Africa. Their witchcraft system¹ has a great deal in common with that of the adjoining Nyanja, or Lake, peoples of Nyasaland and also with that of the Nyasaland Yao. In addition, there are undoubtedly a number of elements common to the Chewa and Southern Bantu witchcraft systems. Probably the main features that distinguish Chewa from Southern Bantu beliefs are these: the Chewa place a great deal of emphasis on the belief that the witch kills so that he may eat the corpse of his victim; they also assert that the witch almost invariably kills the members of his own matrilineal descent group; and they attribute all the witch's powers to his having superior medicines, i.e., they do not appear to recognise influences he may have that are independent of the use of medicines.²

Now in what ways do Chewa witchcraft beliefs—or Bantu witchcraft beliefs in general, for that matter—show the operation of the four reactions to anxiety that have been mentioned? Let us start by asking what part magic rites and spells play in witchcraft. They are basic to it. If you don't believe in the efficacy of magic, you can't believe in witchcraft. Witchcraft is, in fact, a form of magic. It comprises destructive magic used for anti-social purposes. If, like the average Chewa, you believe that *mankhwala* is not merely medicine in its usual sense in English, but medicine with wonder-working properties—if you believe this, then obviously you can believe many other things as well. You can believe, for instance, that you can kill a man at a distance simply by taking the soil from his footprint and treating it with the appropriate *mankhwala*; or that by beating a grave with the root of a certain tree while

¹The phrases *system of witchcraft beliefs* and *witchcraft system* are used interchangeably in this essay. With the exception of a small number of Chewa who may believe themselves to be witches (the writer has not yet met one who would admit this), and who may therefore carry out certain rites and spells, witchcraft exists in the beliefs of the people. It should be mentioned, however, that the Chewa word *ufiti* includes the European concept of murder-by-poison in addition to the concept of sorcery (here referred to as witchcraft—see footnote ²).

²This last fact makes it questionable to translate the Chewa word *ufiti* as *witchcraft* and not *sorcery*.

calling out the deceased's childhood name, you can raise him from his grave, awaken him from the dead, torment him, kill him again and eat him—and whatever flesh you and your witch-companions don't eat at that particular meeting of the lodge you can make into a kind of biltong to be kept against a rainy, or rather a meatless, day. Or again, if you believe in the wonder-working powers of *mankhwala*, you can believe that by using the correct type of it in association with some simple verbal magic, you can climb aboard a flour-sifting basket, soar into the air and go flying four hundred miles across the Zambesi Valley to Southern Rhodesia to kill a hated labour-migrant brother or maternal uncle, returning to Chewa country the same night.

The second of the four reactions to anxiety mentioned is the expression of hostility. In considering this one we should not forget that anxiety and hostility often seem to be different denominations of the same coin. In what way does witchcraft give outlet to aggressive tendencies? Everyday experience points to the fact that if your aggressive tendencies are blocked in real life, you tend to give free rein to them in the world of make-believe. For instance, if at a committee meeting you have had to keep your temper, you spend most of your time on the way home thinking of what devastating remarks you might have made. In other words, what you could not express in the real world you express in the world of make-believe. Now if your culture presents you with a ready-made world of make-believe like witchcraft, you have ample means of working off your aggressive tendencies, or your anxiety. If you don't believe that you yourself are a witch, you can at least enjoy being one vicariously. You can sit and listen to stories far more hair-raising and sadistic, and presented with far more dramatic conviction, than the wildest pieces of celluloid make-believe with which Hollywood and the Rank organisation help Western man to give expression to his thwarted hostility and apprehension.

Another way in which aggressive tendencies are expressed in witchcraft is by a process of projection. This simply means that, instead of feeling aggressive towards someone else, you believe that they are being aggressive towards you. This way of looking at the expression of hostility puts it on the same basis as the third reaction to anxiety that was mentioned, viz., the rationalising of free-floating anxiety. If the conflict to which you have been subjected has left you with a big store of free-floating anxiety—anxiety looking for a reason to be tacked on

to—witchcraft beliefs give you plenty of scope. If your culture recognises witchcraft as one of its main lethal agencies, it is doubtful whether you'll turn to hypochondria or fears of loss of love for the rationalising of your anxiety. The craving for terror that your free-floating anxiety gives you is amply satisfied in a belief in witchcraft. Like the average Chewa you will spend a great deal of time, money and effort trying to procure and apply positive *mankhwala* in order to protect yourself, your loved ones and your property from the attacks of witches.

The last reaction to anxiety that may be considered to be basic to a belief in witchcraft is the general disorganisation of intelligent behaviour that it brings about. This reaction is one of the forces that sustain witchcraft beliefs among Africans just as it sustains racial myths and other political misconceptions among Europeans. Perhaps the best way in which to understand that anxiety is not only the force that motivates witchcraft beliefs but also the force that keeps them going is to appreciate how important anxiety is among the tools of the propagandist in our own society. Whether he wants to sell you a cake of soap, a quack medicine or a political creed, the propagandist nearly always uses the principle that he can make you believe anything if he makes you anxious enough, i.e., he recognises the disorganising effect anxiety has on intelligent thinking. If he wants you to buy his soap, he starts by frightening you with the possibility that you may have body odour. If he wants to sell you some harmful, or at the best, useless, pills, he starts by persuading you that the stiffness you have from yesterday's tennis is really kidney disease. And if he wants to catch your vote in the next election, he impresses on you the frightful intentions of the party he is opposing. Just as the anxiety-load of Western society is tapped by advertisers and politicians in their attempts to dupe the masses, so is the anxiety-load of modern African society allowed to discharge itself in making possible the uncritical acceptance of fantastic old wives' tales of *umthakatbi*, *muloi* and *mfiti*.

ANXIETY-LOAD AND WITCHCRAFT IN MODERN AFRICA

If these illustrations are sufficient to demonstrate that witchcraft beliefs are a cultural safety-valve for the discharge of anxiety, we may now attempt an explanation of their tremendous prevalence in modern Africa. The majority of field-workers agree that African witchcraft beliefs, far from having decreased with the advent of Western culture, have actually increased. It

is, of course, the intensity of witchcraft beliefs rather than their incidence that has increased. Incidence has probably kept at a steady 100 per cent. ; but the average African's preoccupation with witchcraft beliefs, and, on a more observable level, with defensive magic, has undoubtedly increased. Moreover, there is much to be said for the view that it is often the very individuals who, on the surface, have been most stimulated by Western influences who are least resistant to witchcraft beliefs. Chewa informants always asserted that the people most likely to be killed by witchcraft were those who had just returned from work at the labour centres ; and the latter always seemed to have an extreme fear of this. In the absence of statistical evidence to support the contention advanced here, it is worth noting native opinion on the subject. Chewa informants are almost unanimous in saying that there are more witches nowadays than there were before the Europeans came—because, they add knowingly, the Europeans have forbidden the *mwabvi* poison ordeal, which in the old days was regularly applied to whole village populations to keep the incidence of witches down !

If the contention is right that the African's preoccupation with witchcraft beliefs has increased rather than diminished with the advent of Western culture there is ample reason for this if we examine the effect on African anxiety-load of the collision of the two cultures. The untouched tribal culture of the African probably had a fairly low anxiety-load. This was because its principles of living were well harmonised with its actual way of life. There were no sharp contradictions between the rules of conduct that society laid down for the individual and the actual conduct that its socio-economic system impelled him to carry out. Of course, like any other culture, the old African one was not without anxiety-producing influences. The most important of these were : environmental hazards such as drought and pestilence ; political disturbances such as those initiated by branches of the Zulu ; and, in the more military tribes, standards of discipline of a rather Spartan nature. But what anxiety was generated was probably dealt with by the available anxiety-resolving institutions. In particular, magic and witchcraft performed, in a smaller way, the same tension-relieving functions that they perform today. And the ancestral cult with its associated rituals was a powerful anxiety-resolving institution. Among the Chewa as among many other Bantu peoples it provided an explanation for illness and misfortune and gave the individual a definite series of rituals to carry out in order to keep in favour with the spirits. Belief in the efficacy of

these rituals was not difficult to sustain, since failure to bring about the end to which they were directed could always be explained by some minor fault in performance. So long as the belief was unshaken the anxiety-resolving capacity of the institution was of a high order. Another means by which untouched Africans were able to work off a good deal of their anxiety was by converting it into hostility expressed towards other tribes.

When European culture came, two things happened: the sources of anxiety increased; and some of the institutional safety-valves for resolving it were destroyed or modified. Consider, first, how the sources of anxiety have increased. In modern African society the biggest source of conflict is what may be termed the stimulation-frustration sequence brought about by culture contact. The African is stimulated by the higher standards of living of the European, and becomes acquainted with the European's typical method of striving for those standards, namely, individual competitiveness. But his efforts to follow his newly acquired path to his newly acquired goals come into serious conflict with two counter-influences. First they clash with the co-operative ideology of Bantu culture. If he amasses wealth, tribal values demand that he share it with his fellow men, especially his relatives. European values, on the other hand exhort him to invest it safely for his own benefit, or the benefit of a very narrow circle of relatives, his conjugal family. His response to the pressure of tribal values takes the form of an extreme fear of witchcraft. Any Chewa who makes the slightest economic advance immediately draws in his horns or tries to hide his prosperity lest he should arouse the jealousy of witches. This may, of course, be accentuated among the Chewa who always seem to have believed that the witch invariably attacks his consanguine relatives; but this reaction among members of other African tribes seems very likely. That witchcraft is a serious obstacle to the development schemes one hears so much about in Africa nowadays is a fact that is probably not widely enough appreciated.

Second, the African's new aims and methods, which he has acquired from Europeans, are not in practice encouraged in the new social system in which he finds himself. Occupying a position at the base of the pyramid in the new caste society, with Europeans at the apex and Indians and Coloureds at intermediate levels,¹ the African finds that though Western

¹This caste system prevails wherever Chewa live or go to work, and tends to be quite as rigid in these areas as in the Union of South Africa.

culture as a whole stimulates him to make progress, the local modification of it, i.e., the caste pyramid, systematically thwarts him in such progress. To put it another way, two of the important sources of the anxiety-load of Western culture merge in subjecting the African to very great tension. The discrepancy between the principle of co-operation and the practice of competition, joins forces with the discrepancy between stimulation and frustration. And in the first of these simultaneous discords, conflict is emphasised by the African's co-operative origins; in the second, by his present caste position.

The second thing that happened with the advent of Western culture was that the African's institutional safety-valves for resolving anxiety were modified. For instance, his new position as a member of a conquered, lower caste prevented him from expressing direct aggression towards other groups, especially other groups in the caste pyramid. As Dollard¹ would put it, he became accommodated. Perhaps most important of all was the decay of the ancestral cult as an effective means of resolving anxiety. By a process of contagion, passing from Christians to pagans, the Chewa's faith in the old religion, though not entirely destroyed, has been seriously shaken. Other factors have worked in the same direction, e.g., the difficulties of performing the rituals properly at the labour centres. Though there may be some Chewa who have assimilated Christianity well enough for it to be an adequate functional substitute for the ancestral cult, the widespread and intense belief in witchcraft among Christians indicate that this incidence is very low. The loss of an important anxiety-resolving institution at a peak period of anxiety-load has simply made the African fall back more and more on witchcraft as a tension-reliever. It is significant that, whereas in the old days the main function of a Chewa diviner was to tell which of the ancestral spirits was causing someone's illness or misfortune, he now tends to diagnose witchcraft as a cause—rather than to say that the spirits are angry.²

It has been mentioned that of the anxiety-resolving institutions formerly open to the African, one, the expression of hostility towards out-groups, is now barred him by the caste system. There is, however, at least one of the European's tension-relievers that he has been permitted to take over: the belief in the power of patent medicine—a belief that is indistinguishable

¹Dollard, *op. cit.*

²Admittedly, however, this is related to the fact that the former method of detecting witches, the *mwabi* poison ordeal, has been banned by the Europeans.

from his faith in the wonder-working properties of his own *mankhwala*. The quack-medicine business is flourishing from the exploitation of Africans nowadays. All over the southern sub-continent they are following Europeans in buying—to an extent far beyond their earning capacity—the most absurd concoctions, in respect to the properties of which their proprietors put forward claims of a purely magical kind.

In this essay it has been contended that the function of African witchcraft is to resolve anxiety. Conflict has been put forward as the cause of anxiety ; and witchcraft as an institution catering for the individual's reactions to it. From this it has been argued that the African's increasing preoccupation with witchcraft beliefs may be correlated with the increasing conflicts arising from the modern culture-contact situation.

Finally, it should be noted that, though witchcraft may be regarded as an anxiety-resolving institution, it is by no means an economical one. It acts in a vicious circle, resolving anxiety but at the same time creating more of it—in the same way that a negative environmental force like drought or pestilence creates anxiety. In this way the cultural institution of witchcraft has much in common with the individual phenomenon of neurosis. Both comprise reactions to anxiety, but both are uneconomical reactions. Perhaps the witch-finding movements that have started in Nyasaland from time to time and swept across the adjoining territories¹ are the creaks and groans of an ill-adapted institution. But however uneconomically witchcraft performs its function it has a function nevertheless. Ill-adapted as it may be, it will cling limpet-like to modern African culture until its function falls away. The educator and the development officer in Africa have two important tasks ahead of them : the reduction of African anxiety-load ; and the discovery of an adequate functional substitute for witchcraft.

M. G. MARWICK.

¹One of these was at its height in 1934 and was recorded by Dr. A. I. Richards' who was then at work among the Bemba—see *A modern movement of witchfinders, Africa*, vol. VIII, 1935, pp. 448--461. Another started in the middle of 1947, and the writer hopes to publish a paper on it.

Economics and Society

Since their subject-matter is man-in-society, the lines of demarcation between the social sciences are by no means clear. Thus exception can be taken to any of the definitions which have been made of any of them, on the grounds either that they are too broad to be properly exclusive of any other of the sciences, or so narrow that they exclude subjects which should fall within a particular science's scope. Indeed, there is some justification for the tendency to think of social science in general as a comprehensive subject. Then while social scientists would investigate specific problems from specific aspects, none of them, whether social anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists, or economists, would claim to be other than social scientists with particular faculties or facilities.

But, at the same time, there are certain broad lines of demarcation such that particular problems or aspects of problems do fall clearly to one group or the other. When an eminent industrial psychologist once assured Professor Lionel Robbins that "if people only understood industrial psychology there would be no need for economics" Robbins, with "considerable interest, at once enquired his solution of a problem of foreign exchange which had been perplexing him, but to his great mortification no answer was forthcoming".¹

No one of the social sciences, however, has a field that is purely homogeneous. For each a whole range of special subjects arises. Thus in economics there are such special topics as industrial fluctuations, currency, labour problems and public finance, emphasising the problems of a particular genre, each calling for special study and possessing a vast literature. These topics in applied economics, however, are not more remote from other social sciences because they are specialised. Not only can none of them be isolated from the economy as a whole; in each the general social context is an integral and operative factor. The process of splitting up the field does not, unfortunately for the economist, simplify his problems into water-tight compartments. All the

¹*Nature and Significance of Economic Science*, fn. p. 32.

forces remain operative, even when only some of their effects are relevant, and only some of the relationships are scrutinised.

Indeed, there is a clearer distinction of each from the other social sciences in pure theory than there is any of their applied fields, arising largely because of the deductive character of most of the generalisations which constitute the body of so-called "laws" of each of the sciences. It is this which at once endangers the validity of the theory of any of the social sciences, and prescribes the border-line between them. Before we discuss the implications of this state of affairs, the problem involved will perhaps be somewhat clarified if we first, very briefly, sketch the basis on which economists have endeavoured to demarcate their own field.¹

It might be said of economists—but let other social scientists be careful before they gibe—that there are as many definitions of economics as there are economists.² These definitions, however, fall into two groups, which can be classified as those which define the economist by his function, and those which emphasise the subject-matter. Marshall can be taken as an example of the latter, Robbins for the former.

So Marshall: "Economics is a study of wealth, and on the other and more important side, a part of the study of man . . . It is that part of the social science of man's action in Society, which deals with his efforts to satisfy his wants, insofar as the efforts and wants are capable of being measured in terms of wealth or its general equivalent, i.e., money".³

And Robbins: "Economics is the science which studies human behaviour as a relationship between ends and means which have alternative uses".⁴

¹There is a lot to be said for Professor Jacob Viner's definition that "economics is what the economist does". Mill's views on this are to the point. He pointed out that the definition of a science has almost invariably followed, not preceded, the creation of the science. "Like the walls of a city it has normally been erected, not to be a receptacle for such edifices as might afterwards spring up, but to circumscribe an aggregate already in existence" (*Unsettled Questions of Political Economy*, p. 120). Nor are definitions indefinitely more apt to cover the field of a science than walls to contain a city's later growth.

²If this is promoted to the status of a "natural law", the corollary is that where an economist has not his own definition he cannot be classed as an economist at all.

³Alfred Marshall, *Principles of Economics*, bk., 1, chap. 1, sec., 1, and bk. 2, chap. 1, sec. 1.

⁴Lionel Robbins, *Nature and Significance of Economic Science*, p. 13.

The difference between these two approaches is clear. Marshall would tend to separate out certain activities as the proper sphere of the economist, and thus would call upon the economist to concentrate his efforts upon particular questions. There can indeed be little doubt that this is indeed what economists in practice do. Robbins, on the other hand, suggests that every human action has its economic aspect, and so calls upon economists to discover the economic element in every action and inter-action in human society.

Before deciding between these two definitions—for the relationship between economics and the other social sciences to some extent depends on which of the two we favour—a few words on the character of economic laws is necessary. Generally, they can be said to fall under three heads. There are, first, those generalisations which are claimed as true under all circumstances, and to be operative irrespective of the social institutions and relationships in any given society. There are, second, those generalisations which are limited in their applicability to a particular society and context, less absolute in their character than the former group, though possibly capable of more precise formulation and less subject to variation. These latter generalisations may usefully be sub-divided into two classes, those which are static and relevant to the extent to which the society in which they are operative tends to be stationary, and those which are dynamic in character, exercising an effect in the direction of changing a given society, or themselves influenced by the processes of change originating within a given society.¹

It is the generalisations of the first type which are the most difficult to distinguish as the purely economic, even if generalisations of the second and third types are made by

¹It must be remembered that economic laws are statements of tendencies, as their operation depends upon the coincidence of inter-acting forces, some of which are complementary and some contradictory. They can therefore be likened to the laws of most of the sciences, and, like the others, fall short of the paragon of them all, astronomy. The precise formulation of physical laws depends upon the statement of the conditions under which the laws are operating. Functioning in the world of conflicting forces, economic laws must be tentative. Sometimes the measurement of the forces is itself very difficult. Thus, while it can be guessed that an advertising campaign will reap results, how far will it be effective? Will women go "New Look" and to what extent and for how long for a given advertising outlay? Again, the relative strengths of coincidental forces may be hard to determine. Will the demand for a new good coincide with, precede, or post-date a new source of supply? Sometimes the variables involved are not independent so that A, incorporating B, may at one time appear the cause of B, and at another time it may be B, incorporating A, that seems to be the cause.

economists is a form not always acceptable to other social scientists, critical of the assumptions of human behaviour implicit in their formulation. The chief argument advanced against many of these general propositions is that economists in making them tend to argue from the behaviour of men in a particular society, or of some men in it, or from some of the actions and motives of some of the men in it, to all men in all societies, and so err.

It is indeed often argued that the economist may not apply his generalisations to societies other than the exchange economy of the modern world. It is claimed that there are such fundamental differences both in the valuations placed upon material things, and in the uses to which they are put, as shown, for example, in the different intensity of the desire to accumulate a surplus, and the different motives for which it is accumulated and uses to which it is put, in such societies as the Arapesh of New Guinea¹ or the early Bantu society of southern Africa, that economists cannot apply their doctrines at all to such societies.

Again, more cautiously and more laudably, the doctrine is put that even if economists *could* deal with such problems as these, they would be wise not to do so, lest they so extend their generalisations as to destroy their precision and usefulness, and end up with nothing more than such general and rather "pious" formulations of laws as might have come from any other social scientist.

It is obvious that the dogmatic *should not* initially depends upon the dogma *cannots*, so *cannot* will be taken first, and, if it is sustained, *should not* obviously follows.

It is impossible to conceive of man continuing to exist, whether in isolation or in a society, without production. To live at all, man must act on nature, so that nature in turn may through consumption react upon man. Even in the case of man in isolation, there is an economic problem, simple indeed in the extreme, but none the less real. "You can't have everything at once", as Alice put it, or "you can't have it without working for it", implies choice between the allocation of effort, and regarding the amount of effort.

With man in society, production, being socially organised, implies simultaneously the organisation of distribution and exchange as parts of the productive process, for production

¹*Co-operation and Competition among Primitive Peoples*, ed. Margaret Mead, Chap. One.

continues until it creates the means for consumption.¹ Indeed, consumption itself, usually conceived as an individual act as distinct from the social act of production, itself conditions and is conditioned by the form and the intensity of production. No matter how primitive the society, no matter to what extent it is a subsistence economy, economic forces play their part, and all forces have their economic aspect.

Perhaps a major reason why this is not understood is derived from the fact that the emergence of economics as a science began only to have any significance in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and in the exchange economy of democratic capitalist Western Europe. Previous to this era men were engaged in what Marshall called the "ordinary business of life". Scarce means were being allocated between alternative and competing ends. But beyond occasional and incidental references, men who "loved to wonder", like Aristotle, Plato, Descartes, Spinoza and Leibnitz, and many others, ignored the market-place.

The voyages of discovery broke down the isolation of the communities of the mediæval world, and technical improvements, particularly in transport, made possible an extension of the market and division of labour on a scale previously impossible. The increasing roundaboutness of production, the increased dependence of each individual, specialising, producer upon the products of others, together with the destruction of the system of medieval regulations which had defined the terms of production and of exchange, radically altered the situation. Previously the co-operation upon which even a highly competitive society ultimately depends had been defined. Now it was left to "accident", to the free play of forces with which Governments and others were encouraged not to interfere. It was not that economic forces had not been operative in the earlier era. They had, in every previous and other form of society. But the problems they raised were of a much less degree of complexity, and the process of distribution prior to consumption was simple and normally defined.

Changes fundamental in character and sweeping in magnitude induced a parallel change in interest.² The problems

¹cf. Clark, *The Distribution of Wealth*, chap. 1.

²This also happened during previous periods of change. Thus Varro showed interest in slave-pricing and slave policy during a crisis of Rome, and Sir Thomas More following upon the Black Death and Gresham during the influx of silver from the Spanish colonial possessions in Europe each recognised that economic processes influenced society and conduct.

of the era determined the subjects with which economists concerned themselves, and the character of the society largely shaped the assumptions and simplifications that they made. To the extent that their generalisations were valid only within the scope of such a society as they were dealing with, it is true that economics cannot be considered relevant to other days and ways. But not all their assumptions were of such a character, and many of the assumptions thought to be of such a character can be re-formulated in a form making them suitable for use in other fields than a western economy, and for better use even in their own field.

Such a concept is the "economic man". In the first place, it must be clearly realised that most economists have been fully aware that this concept is an abstraction. "Purchases for private use, even by people in business, are not always made on business principles; the feelings which come into play in the operation of getting, and in that of spending their income, are often extremely different. Either from indolence, or carelessness, or because people think it fine to pay and ask no questions, three-fourths of those who can afford it give much higher prices than necessary for the things they consume; while the poor often do the same from ignorance or defect of judgment, want of time for searching and making enquiry, and not infrequently from coercion, open or disguised . . . (But) the buyers must be supposed as studious to buy cheap, as the sellers to sell dear . . . supposing all parties to take care of their own interest."¹

The concept is thus only a simplifying hypothesis, a model for use in practice, which when contrasted with reality enables the economist to ascertain in what way actual events differ from those assumed, and actual human motivation from the assumed motivation of humans. But none the less, it has often been attacked as if it was a basic law, and economics has then been attacked as a science on the grounds that it leads to a distorted view of reality, or else that such distortion is of the very essence of economic methodology. Economists have sometimes lent force to this view by their own errors. But more important than the errors of the lesser has been the somewhat shamefaced attitude of the greater, who have failed to point out that they find the concept useful, and simultaneously to point out that it is derived from a broader and

¹*John Stuart Mill*, Ed. Ashley, 1940, book III, chap. 1, sec. 5, pp. 440-41.

much less assailable principle regarding human motivation and human conduct.

Thus Mill, recognising that not all men do in fact act in this way, assumed that "all parties take care of their own interest". In dealing with exchange, and the determination of prices, this implied that buyers bought cheap, and sellers sold dear. What Mill did not say was that this assumption was necessary for perfect competition. Once monopolistic competition or imperfections exist in any market it need no longer follow. The actual behaviour of buyers and sellers might be very different, and yet be based upon the assumption that "all parties take care of their own interest".

This will be clearer if we eliminate some of the more vulgar errors made about *homo oeconomicus*. It is by no means incumbent upon him that he should prefer certain things to others because they are morally better, or better for him from the point of view of health or survival, or necessities or anything else by some standard assumed and thrust upon him from the outside. He need not value thrift more highly than prodigality, or sermons above brothels, or bread before beer. Because a theologian or a doctor or an æsthete says he should value them more highly is not sufficient cause for us to say that he does. Their views may influence his choice, but, so far as the economist is concerned, he can choose as and why he likes.¹

Indeed, the economist does not have to assume that men are rational by any standard of rational at all. If men choose beer before bread, or put straw in their hair instead of making it into bricks, that to the economist is evidence of their preferences. It is not rational, *in one who desires to survive*, to throw oneself in front of a rapidly moving bus. It is not rational, when applied to selling and buying, for men to sell cheap and buy dear of deliberate choice, when we assume that *rational* means as it would in a society such as ours that men will try and maximise their gains as sellers and their satisfactions as buyers. But if men put other motives first, the economist need neither be upset nor feel that he has nothing to say. He must take men as they are, and then deduce from the facts those aspects of their behaviour which are relevant for his economic purpose.

A statement was once made to me to suggest that the economist distorted the basis on which people made their choices. "I think American cars are much better at their price than

¹Or as he is persuaded by advertising to do.

English cars for South African conditions. But I bought a British car because I preferred not to spend dollars."

It was felt, I think, that economists compared use-values with prices, and saw use-values or utilities purely in terms of what the competing goods were capable of doing. But the statement begged the question. What was in fact compared by the purchaser were the uses embodied for him in an American car (including the unpleasantness of spending dollars), with those embodied in the British, including the pleasure of contributing something to ease the British balance of payments. A commodity, particularly in the monopolistically competitive market where close substitutes, like cars, are competing, is not an identical and interchangeable thing. Each close substitute represents to the buyer a sum of utilities, including the smile of the salesman and the need for dollars, and the purchased at its price is the preferred.

A question was once put, too, to suggest that the economist tends to claim to himself the power to answer all questions. "How can a father put a money-value on the life of his child?" Now it is clear that the economist cannot answer this question in the case of every father of every child in every society. It obviously depends upon the circumstances. But the economist is entitled to point out that there have been fathers who cannibalised in their own families. There were fathers who have sold their children into slavery, prostitution or marriage, perhaps out of a brutal or calculating indifference to their welfare, perhaps out of the "highest" of motives, as to save them from starvation. There are fathers who impoverish themselves to restore their children to health, or to save them from death, or to give them a good education. Perhaps their motives in so doing would bring a blush to the cheeks of a pimp or an opium-peddler. To the economist, however, the motive does not matter, except insofar as it is needed to explain why the price was what it was, and unless there is any question of selling the child, the money price does not really arise. To estimate the price in an individual transaction is admittedly for the economist practically impossible. He would need considerable help from other social scientists before he even tried, for there are many phases of human conduct in which it is clear that economic factors—if "pure" economic factors ever exist—enter little as determinants of human motivation and conduct.

Economists do, however, claim that men balance alternatives and choose between them, and that they show by their conduct that they prefer some things to others. But he need not deduce

the conduct from presupposed assumptions of what men will prefer. He can work the other way round, see what people choose, and then define the chosen as the preferred alternative, deducing the preference from the choice, and the motive from the conduct.

It may be argued that this he ought not to do. Economists who have endeavoured, as did Stanley Jevons, to promote the law of diminishing utility to an excessive status have tended to suggest that the procedure is invalid. Thus Jevons: "It is *only* an identical proposition to affirm that the greatest of two pleasures, or what appears as such, sways the resulting action that alone determines which is the greater".¹

The statement is correct; the denigration of it suggests the conclusion is in some way less valid. But there seems no reason why we should not conclude from the actions of an individual what his motivation has been. Indeed, in this connection, Mrs. Joan Robinson, having affirmed that "the theory of marginal utility is the weakest link in the chain of the theory of value",² goes on to say that it does not very much matter, for we can say that so much of a good is demanded at such and such a price, which is observable, and deduce that less would be demanded under certain circumstances were the price higher, and that therefore men tend to prefer a good at a lower to a higher price, tend to buy more at a lower than a higher price, that diminishing utility therefore occurs with increasing stocks, and that the last unit bought tends to be valued at least as highly as the other goods which could have been bought instead. Instead, that is, of deducing the demand curve from the law of diminishing utility, she works the other way round, and deduces the general principle from observable data.

It is almost certainly true that men do not in fact choose with the precision which economists might wish of them—and for certain purposes might assume. It is probable that men, in allocating their incomes, are to a large extent tied by what is necessary to spend in terms of their social status. But it is what they do that matters, and what they do can be taken to represent their choice. If it was dictated by ignorance, or laziness or anything else, the economist can recognise that as a factor. If men prefer to support their wives and children to cutting their wives' throats and throwing the children off the top of the bus, again it can be assumed that it is because they preferred to do so. Indeed, the line of inertia and least resistance can be seen as

¹My italics. *Theory of Political Economy*, 4th ed., pp. 12 ff.

²*Economics of Imperfect Competition*, page 214.

possessing a charm of its own, so that men, knowing the alternative, still prefer to buy the dearer or sell the cheaper, such as is shown by employers who ignore economies possible in the hiring of their labour, or by the (unfortunately) increasingly rare concerns which prefer to satisfy their old customers to increasing their takings.

The matter will perhaps be made clear if we state it thus : Each individual, deliberately, blindly, or impulsively, adapts his conduct to the terms on which alternatives are offered to him by nature or by man. Then we can apply this principle "whether we are dealing with problems of exchange, or with the assigning of exchangeable things to their ultimate uses, or with the turning of personal and inalienable qualities and powers, in obedience to impulse or deliberate purpose, along the various alternative channels through which they may flow".¹

Enough has been said to show that economists do not need the concept of the economic man from which to work. They can observe the actions of human men with their highly complex and involved motivation, and thereafter deduce the principles governing that conduct. In so far as he provides in certain economic systems and societies a useful tool, the economic man may be used, as a deduction from observed behaviour, e.g., that men in our economy do try and maximise their gains, and so prefer to press sales to the margin of profitability, and do try and maximise their satisfactions, so that their purchasing does exemplify the principles of diminishing marginal utility. But it is man that economists must deal with, and man is not something divorced from the society in which he participates. Thus the "economic" man for any society must be appropriate to it, and despite the variety of societies, in each of them an appropriately "economic" man may be deduced. There are few activities which do not have an economic aspect, even a limited one, for goods, the things that satisfy human wants, are for the most part scarce relative to the uses to which they could be put, and pressure of population upon niggardly nature has made the ordinary business of life an important element in it. Furthermore, the economist needs to know man as he is. He is forced by the nature of things to make simplifying assumptions, but must necessarily be on his guard lest he assume from one society of which he is aware or from motives he can understand from his own experience that in another society the motivating forces are the same or operate with the same intensities.

To sum up the discussion. Whether we emphasise economics

¹Wicksteed, *Common-sense of Political Economy*, vol. 1, chap. 5.

as the study of mankind in the ordinary business of life, and treat wealth as what men in fact put a value on, or whether we define it as the science which studies human behaviour as a relationship between ends and means which have alternative uses, the whole gamut of human society must be covered by economists. Some of his laws are general in their application, express themselves as tendencies whatever the society in which they are operating. Others are more specific, in elucidating which the economist is justified in deducing simplifying assumptions suitable for their context, embodying principles of more general application. To insure that the economist is handling his subject matter correctly, these assumptions must be cognisant of the analyses and deductions of the other social sciences, for economics is not concerned with the ordinary business of life as conducted by abstractions, but as conducted by the human beings which make up society as it has been and is becoming. "The proper study of Mankind is *Man*", but "when I use the word it means exactly what I want it to mean" may be good advice for a Humpty Dumpty, but is a dangerous precept for a pedant.

The question "can or can't" has, I feel, been answered in favour of *can*, at least so far as the problem of consumption and choosing involved in consumption is concerned. Furthermore, in answering it, the problem involved for the economist has been re-formulated in a way which also, I think, answers the supplementary "should or shouldn't" in the affirmative, because the generalisations involved, so far from suffering in quality, have gained when re-formulated, so as to take stock of the differences in behaviour from society to society. To anyone engaged in the South African field, these questions are of particular importance, for some of our most difficult and fascinating economic and social problems arise precisely out of the contact between two communities in each of which a distinctive system of valuations and behaviour exists, but between which there are important differences, out of whose interaction still other valuations arise. The answer, indeed, is economists can and should.

G. E. STENT.

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