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EDITORIAL NOTE

Theoria 11 has perforce to be short as our money is.

Since this is the first time we have had two numbers in one year, some of our contributors were taken by surprise and would prefer to take up their controversies in our next issue.

Meanwhile, we hope that readers who are provoked by judgments expressed in these pages will continue to send their criticisms for our correspondence column.

THE EDITORS

PAUL CLAUDEL, POÈTE CHRÉTIEN

par M-L. TRICAUD

II

APRÈS *Partage de Midi*, le poète souffrant et douloureux, semble chercher en Dieu la consolation à ses peines. La rencontre d'Ysé a lieu en 1901. En 1905 il se marie, mais dans toute sa correspondance nous trouvons l'écho de cette souffrance: 'Au cours de ces quatre années (1901-1905) j'ai bu vraiment un bouillon épouvantable d'où c'est un vrai miracle que j'ai pu sortir. J'étais resté trop seul pendant ces dix années, et le mot de Pascal est toujours vrai, 'Qui veut faire l'ange fait la bête'. Si son oeuvre garde encore l'empreinte douloureuse d'une plaie mal fermée, elle n'en arrive pas moins à une sérénité de plus en plus totale qui n'ira qu'en augmentant jusqu'au' *Soulier de Satin*.

'J'ai travaillé à ce livre pendant cinq ans, nous dit Claudel, C'est le résumé de toute mon oeuvre poétique et dramatique. J'y développe la vie d'un conquistador de la Renaissance. Je considére la Renaissance comme l'une des périodes les plus glorieuses du catholicisme, celle où l'évangile termina ses conquêtes dans l'espace et dans le temps, et où attaquée dans un petit coin, l'Eglise défend avec l'Univers, où les humanistes retrouvent l'antiquité, pendant que Vasco de Gama retrouve l'Asie, que C. Colomb voit un monde nouveau jaillir pour lui du fond des eaux, que Copernic ouvre la Bible du Ciel, que Don Juan d'Autriche refoule l'Islam, et que Michel-Ange élève la coupole de St. Pierre. Le Soulier de satin c'est '*Tête d'Or*' sous une autre forme. Cela résume *Tête d'or* et '*Partage de Midi*'. C'est même la conclusion de *Partage de Midi*.

Voilà un drame à la mesure de Claudel. La scène est l'Univers, le temps illimité, les actions multiples. Comme nous sommes loin des trois unités classiques, et comme la Renaissance nous paraît bien choisie, époque où l'esprit s'ouvre, où les terres se découvrent, où le ciel même dévoile ses mystères. L'Univers entier semble se donner à l'homme pour être exploité et compris. Quelle tentation pour notre poète d'essayer de gagner cet univers à Dieu.

Que'est-ce-que *Le Soulier de Satin?* et pourquoi occupe-t-il une place aussi importante dans la vie et l'oeuvre de Claudel? Ce dernier nous donne lui-même la réponse. *Le Soulier de Satin* résume *Tête d'Or* et *Partage de Midi*. Comme *Tête d'Or* c'est l'odyssée d'un homme à la conquête du monde. Comme *Partage de Midi* c'est la

rencontre de l'homme et de la femme. C'est l'amour qui jaillit de cette rencontre, c'est la réponse aux problèmes pósés par l'amour et le mariage. Avec le *Soulier de Satin* Claudel atteint sans doute l'apogée de son art dramatique, de l'art dramatique en général. C'est pour lui le drame total. Ce qui va donc compter sera la signification historique, mystique et prophétique de l'oeuvre. Il ne nous est pas possible de raconter, ni même de résumer *Le Soulier de Satin*. Les personnages sont si nombreux, les actions si diverses, la poésie si sublime, qu'il nous faudrait le citer tout entier. Nous nous contenterons d'en exprimer l'essentiel.

Les deux personnages au coeur du drame sont certainement don Rodrigue, et dona Prouhèze. C'est de leurs lèvres que sort la philosophie ou plus exactement la croyance de P. Claudel. Là encore nous trouvons l'idée qui semble hanter le poète à cette époque; celle de la possession. L'homme s'efforce de posséder le monde, et à défaut la femme. Comme l'un et l'autre lui échappent il découvre à travers eux la seule possession tangible et necessaire: celle de Dieu.

Rodrique comme *Tête d'Or*, comme le jeune Claudel, est ivre de possession. L'Univers est à peine suffisant. Son époque l'y porte, c'est celle où le monde inexploré ouvre ses portes à l'homme, où la mer l'emporte vers ces îles lointaines et pleines de promesses, en quête de gloire, d'aventures, de richesses. C'est celle de C. Colomb. L'on comprend combien ce dernier a pu tenter Claudel. Rodrigue appartient à la même famille. L'Espagne est alors riche, elle étend sa domination sur l'Afrique aussi bien que sur l'Amérique. La mer, cette mer qui exerce sur le poète une attraction si grande n'est qu'un lien entre ces possessions. C'est sur son vaste théâtre que se jouera une partie du *Soulier de Satin*. Rodrigue partira donc en Afrique d'abord, sur la côte du Maroc où l'Espagne avait alors établi ses présides. Là blessé, il est soigné par dona Prouhèze. La 'Merveille', dont rien, ni l'absence ni la souffrance ne pourront jamais le séparer. 'Dona Merveille' s'éprendra elle aussi au point de ne penser à autre chose. Le problème de l'amour restera donc au centre même du drame: Attraction de deux êtres séparés et interdits. Comme Ysé, Prouhèze est mariée. Pourquoi Dieu a-t-il donc dirigé ces deux êtres l'un vers l'autre? La réponse nous est donnée dés le tout dèbut du drame par un père jésuite, frère de Rodrigue, sur le point de mourir, attaché au mât d'un bateau sur la mer déchaînée. Cette prière du Jésuite semble contenir tout le sens du *Soulier de Satin* Rodrigue altéré de la soif de posséder a quitté le service de Dieu (Il devait être Jésuite) a connu l'amour et le désir. Mais alors, puisse cet amour et ce désir lui faire sentir le vide de ce qu'il recherche et le conduire à Dieu.

Le Père Jésuite : Mon Dieu je Vous prie pour mon frère Rodrigue. Vous le voyez d'abord qui s'était engagé sur mes pas sous l'étendard qui porte Votre monogramme, et maintenant sans doute parce-qu'il a quitté Votre

noviciat, il se figure qu'il Vous tourne le dos.
Son affaire à ce qu'il imagine n'étant pas d'attendre mais de conquérir et de posséder.
Ce qu'il peut comme s'il n'y avait rien qui ne Vous appartint et comme s'il pouvait être ailleurs que là où vous êtes.
Mais Seigneur il n'est pas si facile de Vous échapper, et s'il ne va pas à Vous par ce qu'il a de clair, qu'il y aille par ce qu'il a d'obscur, et par ce qu'il a de direct, qu'il y aille par ce qu'il a d'indirect et par ce qu'il a de simple
Qu'il y aille par ce qu'il a en lui de nombreux, et de laborieux et d'entremêlé. Et s'il désire le mal, que ce soit un tel mal qu'il ne soit compatible qu'avec le Bien,
Et s'il désire le désordre, un tel désordre qu'il implique l'ébranlement et la fissure de ces murailles autour de lui qui lui barraient le salut . . .
Et déjà Vous lui avec appris le désir, mais il ne se doute pas encore de ce que c'est que d'être désiré
Apprenez lui que Vous n'êtes pas le seul à pouvoir être absent.
Liez le par le poids de cet autre être sans lui si beau qui l'appelle à travers l'intervalle.
Faites de lui un homme blessé parcequ'une fois en cette vie il a vu la figure d'un ange.
Remplissez ces amants d'un tel désir qu'il implique à l'exclusion de leur présence dans le hasard journalier
L'intégrité primitive et leur essence même telle que Dieu les a conçus autrefois dans un rapport inextinguible.
Et ce qu'il essaya de dire misérablement sur la terre, je suis là pour le traduire dans le Ciel".

L'homme a besoin de la femme, mais alors que dans *Partage de Midi*, l'homme se livre tout entier à son désir, dans le *Soulier de satin* il domine ce désir et au delà trouve Dieu. Est-ce à dire que ce chemin se poursuit sans luttes. Certes non. La passion de Prouhèze pour Rodrigue égale celle d'Ysé pour Mesa; Toute aussi charnelle, toute aussi entière, mais au delà du corps il y a l'âme. Toute passion si charnelle soit-elle s'adresse avant tout à l'âme sans celà l'être aimé cesserait d'être unique. Si donc l'homme rencontre sur sa route l'être unique dont il ne peut se détacher c'est que de toute éternité l'existence de cet être a été voulu par Dieu, et par conséquent l'amour et la femme entrent dans le plan providentiel de Dieu. C'est ainsi que s'exprime Rodrigue en parlant de Prouhèze:

'Déjà elle contenait cette joie qui m'appartient et que je suis en route pour lui redemander.

Déjà elle me regardait avec ce visage qui détruit la mort.
Car qu'est-ce-qu'on appelle mourir, sinon cesser d'être nécèssaire?
Quand est-ce qu'elle a pu se passer de moi? Quand est-ce que je cesserai d'être sans quoi elle n'aurait pu être elle-même?
Tu demandes la joie qu'elle m'apporte? Ah si tu savais les mots qu'elle me dit pendant que je dors.
Ces mots qu'elle ne sait pas qu'elle me dit, et je n'ai qu'à fermer les yeux pour les entendre . . .
. . . Et crois tu donc que ce soit son corps seul qui soit capable d'allumer dans le mien un tel désir?
Ce que j'aime,
Ce n'est point ce qu'il y a en elle de trouble et de mêlè et d'incertain que je lui demande, ce qu'il y a d'inerte et de meutre et de pèrissable,
C'est ce qui est la cause d'elle-même.
C'est l'être tout nu, la vie pure,
C'est cet amour aussi fort que moi sous mon dèsir comme une grande flamme crue, comme un rire dans ma face.
Ce n'est point son corps chéri jamais qui réussirait à me contenter.'

Mais Prouhèze est mariée. Autant Ysé et Mesa de *Partage de Midi* se trouvent jetés dans les bras l'un de l'autre, autant Rodrigue et Prouhèze sont séparés. L'absence est peut-être la grande caractéristique de cet amour, et les beaux passages de lyrisme amoureux sont en réalités des monologues ou des dialogues adressés à des confidents à la maniére du thèâtre classique. Dona Prouhèze ne sera pas à Rodrigue car le mariage est sacré ainsi que le dit son mari Don Pélage, expliquant combien il comprend la souffrance et l'amour de Prouhèze pour Rodrigue.

Don Pélage: 'Croyez vous que je n'aie pas l'âme assez grande pour l'affranchir, s'il eût dépendu de moi sans crime?
Oui, mais ce que Dieu a joint, l'homme ne peut le séparer.
Ce n'est pas l'amour qui fait le mariage mais le consentement.
Ni l'enfant que je n'ai pas eu, ni le bien de la société, mais le consentement en présence de Dieu dans la foi.
Jusqu'à la fin de moi-même, jusqu'à la dernière parcelle de ce consentement que deux êtres sont capables de se donner l'un à l'autre.
Bon gré mal gré,
Cela qu'elle m'a donné, je ne pourrais le lui prendre, quand je le voudrais'.

Il n'est pas en mesure de la libérer, car comme il l'indique le mariage est un lien indissoluble, et il s'exprime en ces termes a Prouhèze elle-même:

> 'Vous ne pouvez donner à un autre ce que vous avez remis une fois pour toutes
> A Dieu de qui j'ai recu mandat en ce qui concerne votre personne.
> . . . Ce que vous lui remettrez, ce n'est plus vous-même,
> Ce n'est plus l'enfant de Dieu, ce n'est plus la créature de Dieu.
> A la place du salut vous ne pouvez lui donner que le plaisir.
> Ce n'est plus vous-même, cette chose à la place qui est l'oeuvre de vous-même, cette idole de chair vivante.
> Vous ne lui suffirez pas. Vous ne pouvez lui donner que des choses limitées.'

Que fera Prouhèze? Quelle réponse sera la sienne à cet amour défendu? L'acceptation d'abord, l'acceptation dans son âme

Don Balthazar: "Qu'est-ce donc qui vous appelle vers ce cavalier ?
Dona Prouhèze: Sa voix
> Sa voix, je ne cesse de l'entendre
> . . . Ah si vous voulez m'empêcher d'aller à lui
> Alors du moins liez moi, ne me laissez pas cette cruelle liberté.
> Mettez moi dans un cachot profond derrière des barres de fer.
> Mais quel cachot serait capable de me retenir quand celui même de mon corps menace de se déchirer?
> Hèlas il n'est que trop solide et quand mon maître m'appelle, il ne suffit que trop à retenir cette âme, qui contre tout droit est à lui,
> Mon âme qu'il appelle et qui lui appartient".

Mais à l'amour succédera le sacrifice et l'acceptation des lois immuables de Dieu. Ce ne sera pas sans luttes, sans souffrances, qui finalement scelleront la victoire du bien sur le mal. C'est toute la prière de Prouhèze qu'il nous faudrait citer, qui donne le vrai sens final du poème.

Dona Prouhèze: 'Jamais je ne pourrai plus cesser d'être sans lui, et jamais il ne pourra plus cesser d'être sans moi. Je sais qu'il ne m'épousera que sur la croix et nos âmes l'une à l'autre dans la mort et dans la nuit hors de tout motif humain.
> Si je ne puis être son paradis, du moins je puis être sa croix. Pour que son âme avec son corps y soit écartelée je vaux bien ces deux morceaux de

bois qui se traversent
Puisque je ne puis lui donner le Ciel, du moins l'arracher à la terre
Quand je le tiendrai par tous les bouts de son corps et par toute la texture de sa chair et de sa personne par le moyen de ces clous en moi profondément enfoncés
Quand il n'y aura aucun moyen de s'échapper, quand il sera fixé à moi pour toujours dans cet impossible hymen,
Quand il n'y aura plus moyen de s'arracher à ce cric de ma chair puissante, et à ce vide impitoyable, quand je lui aurai prouvé son néant avec le mien, quand il n'y aura plus dans son néant de secret que le mien ne soit capable de vérifier.
C'est alors que je le donnerai à Dieu découvert et déchiré pour qu'il le remplisse dans un coup de tonnerre, c'est alors que j'aurai un époux et que je tiendrai un dieu entre mes bras.
Mon Dieu je verrai sa joie, je le verrai avec Vous, et c'est moi qui en serai la cause.
Il a demandé Dieu à une femme et elle était capable de le lui donner, car il n'y a rien au ciel et sur la terre que l'amour ne soit capable de donner'.

Et Rodrigue de reprendre

'Ce paradis que Dieu ne m'a pas ouvert et que tes bras pour moi ont refait un court moment, ah femme tu ne me le donnes que pour me communiquer que j'en suis exclu.
Chacun de tes baisers me donne un paradis dont je sais qu'il m'est interdit.
O femme tu l'as découverte, cette place que tu ne pouvais en moi atteindre que les yeux fermés. La voilà donc au fond de moi cette blessure que tu ne pouvais me faire que les yeux fermés.
C'est toi qui m'ouvre le paradis et c'est toi qui m'empêche d'y rester'.

L'homme est-il donc un éternel réprouvé? Non. En dehors de la possession totale, deux êtres peuvent répondre à l'appel de Dieu et être nécessaires l'un à l'autre.

Dona Prouhèze: 'D'autres ont eu un époux bien-aimé, une maison, des enfants chéris.
Don Rodrigue: Rien de tout cela n'était pour nous
Dona Prouhèze: Rien de tout cela n'était pour nous. Mais Rodrigue a créé un monde, et c'est moi qui ai créé Rodrigue'.

Cependant ils ne seront jamais l'un à l'autre.

Don Rodrigue: 'Je vois reluire à ta main ce détestable anneau
. . . L' anneau de ton mariage avec Ochiali,
L'anneau de ton mariage avec Pélage
Dona Prouhèze: L'anneau de mon mariage avec Dieu'.

La conclusion du *Soulier de satin* nous paraît donc très explicite. L'homme ne peut toucher à ce que la loi divine défend. Force lui est de s'abandonner à la volonté de Dieu et de vivre selon ses lois malgré la souffrance et malgré les luttes, l'humanité dépendant de la grâce de Dieu.

A partir de ce moment là cette grâce semble avoir visité et aidé le poète. Marié, père, diplomate, il nous paraît concentrer ses efforts de plus en plus à la recherche de Dieu, et sa poèsie devient l'expression de la gloire de Dieu qu'il trouve partout, le monde n'étant là que pour attester sa puissance, et l'homme pour le glorifier. La poésie sera donc une prière, tout dans l'Univers n'existant que pour rendre grâces à Dieu. Cette conception divine du monde apparaît déjà dans les grands drames du doute: *Tête d'or*, *La Ville*. Le monde est une harmonie. C'est une symphonie qui exige un prestigieux chef d'orchestre. Coeuvre, le poète dans la *Ville* exprime cette symphonie.

'O Besme si cette feuille devient jaune,
Ce n'est point parce que la terre occupe telle position sur son orbite, ce n'est point parce que les canaux obstrués se flétrissent,
Et ce n'est point non plus pour que, tombant, elle abrite et nourisse au pied de l'arbre les graines et les insectes.
Elle jaunit pour fournir saintement à la feuille voisine qui est rouge l'accord de la note nécessaire.
Et toutes choses sont présentes, et entre le futur et entre le passé il n'y a suite que sur un même plan.
Et si tu demandes à quoi je sers, tu commets un désordre, tu confonds les catégories.
A quoi sert la couleur de tes cheveux?
A quoi sert l'orchidée qui est au coeur de la forêt vierge, le safir que nul mineur ne fera sortir de sa gangue?
Inconnu des hommes, l'Etre qui nous a crées et nous conserve en nous considérant
Nous connaît, et nous contribuons secrétement à sa gloire'.

Mais à vrai dire la Croyance totale en cette conception chrétienne de l'Univers, se fait jour chez le poète relativement tard, en tout cas après les expériences douloureuses de *Partage de Midi* et du *Soulier de Satin*. Lorsque sa foi s'affermit apparaît de plus en plus l'idée que l'Univers a un sens et que ce sens est Dieu.

Dans une conférence qu'il fit en 1927, Claudel dit entre autres choses: 'Le christianisme a apporté dans le monde le sens. Puisque nous savons que le monde n'est pas l'effet du hasard, nous savons qu'il y a un sens. Il nous parle de son créateur, il nous conduit vers

LUI par beaucoup de voies merveilleuses'. et plus tard 'Le monde cesse d'être un vocabulaire éparpillé, il est devenu un poème'. La poésie n'est donc que le langage humain exprimant ce poème divin. La poète trouvera dans la nature, dans l'Univers, dans la vie, l'expression même de Dieu, en totalité et jusque dans les moindres détails:

> 'La terre tient au ciel, le corps tient à l'esprit, toutes les choses qu'il a créées ensemble communiquent, toutes à la fois sont nécessaires l'une à l'autre.'

Tout objet, si humble soit-il a été créé et voulu par Dieu, et là nous rejoignons Pascal: 'Vous ne pouvez comprendre une pâquerette dans l'herbe si vous ne comprenez pas le soleil parmi les étoiles'.

Dans *L'Annonce faite à Marie* jouée pour la première fois en 1912, Violaine et son père Anne Vercors, ne peuvent proférer une parole sans glorifier Dieu:

A. Vercors: 'Dieu soit loué qui m'a comblé de ses bienfaits. Voici trente ans que je tiens ce fief sacré de mon père, et que Dieu pleut sur mes sillons,
Et depuis dix ans il n'est pas une heure de mon travail qu'il n'ait quatre fois payé et une fois encore'.

Violaine ne parle pas autrement:

'Sachez ce que vous faites en me prenant pour femme.
Laissez moi vous parler bien humblement Seigneur Jacques
Qui allez recevoir mon âme et mon corps en commande des mains de Dieu qui les ont faites . . .
Et témoin n'est à notre mariage aucun homme mais ce Seigneur dont nous serons seuls le fief
Qui est le Tout Puissant, le Dieu des armées
Est ce n'est point le soleil de juillet qui nous éclaire mais la lumière même de sa Face'.

Le poète arrive à la sérénité, une sérénité que l'on ne trouve que dans l'acceptation de Dieu et de ses commandements, la vie n'ayant qu'un but: La mort et la naissance à une autre vie.

A. Vercors: 'Est-ce que le but de la vie est de vivre? est-ce que les pieds des enfants de Dieu sont attachés a cette terre misérable?
Il n'est pas de vivre mais de mourir! Et non point de charpenter la croix, mais d'y monter et de donner ce que nous avons en riant!
Là est la joie, là est la liberté, là la grâce, là la jeunesse éternelle . . .
De quel prix est le monde après de la vie? Et de quel prix la vie sinon pour s'en servir et pour la donner?

Et pourquoi se tourmenter quand il est si simple
d'obéir et que l'ordre est là?'

Comme l'on est loin des doutes, de la révolte et de la croyance au néant de *Tête d'Or!* C'est ainsi que le poète au cours de cette vie qui mène à la mort et à Dieu rencontre la paix qui ne le quittera plus jusqu'à la fin de sa vie.

Cette paix, cette croyance de plus en plus forte en une vie future, nous la trouvons si fermement implantée, que le poète n'hésite pas à nous représenter symboliquement un ciel où la reine Isabelle d'Espagne attend son ami C. Colomb.

'Comment entrerai-je au ciel sans mon ami C. Colomb'.

Autre femme nécessaire à l'homme, elle a aidé C. Colomb le découvreur de terres, l'explorateur d'un monde nouveau pour le donner a Dieu.

Il est impossible de citer les innombrables poèmes où il n'est question que de cette soumission à la volonté divine, de cette glorification de tout l'Univers, qui atteignent les plus hauts sommets bibliques.

Mais ce monde, si beau soit-il, n'est rien sans l'homme. Dans l'esprit de la *Genèse* l'homme est le maître et le roi de la terre et des animaux. Sans lui la création est vaine:

'Toute la créature sans moi est vaine, c'est moi qui lui confère son sens, toute chose en moi devient éternelle en la notion que j'en ai, c'est moi qui la consacre et qui la sanctifie.'

* * *

S'il nous était possible de résumer, autant qu'on puisse résumer l'oeuvre d'un poète tel que P. Claudel, nous dirions qu'elle exprime à notre avis la marche d'un homme de l'obscurité à la lumière, de la négation à l'acceptation, du doute à la certitude. Toutes les expériences humaines que l'homme en tant qu'être déchu, mais touché par la grâce, peut rencontrer sur sa route, Claudel semble les avoir connues et exprimées. Ses personnages, comme il le dit lui-même ne sont pas des 'saints' mais des hommes essentiellement seuls, et perdus, sans le secours de la grâce divine.

C'est l'octroi de cette grâce qui nous touche dans ses poèmes et qui explique plus que tout, la sérénité, la confiance et la paix auxquelles soit arrivé le poète, et qu'il a essayé de faire partager à ceux qui l'ont connu.

Nous terminerons cette étude par la magnifique *Priere pour le Dimanche Matin* qui, après la série de doutes, de fautes, et de souffrances que nous venons de relater, exprime plus que tout, la foi totale du poète en Dieu.

PRIÈRE POUR LE DIMANCHE MATIN

'Amen! Au nom du Père et du Fils et du Saint Esprit! Je suis prêt, c'est moi!
Mon Dieu, je suis ressuscité et je suis encore avec Toi!

Je dormais et j'étais couché ainsi qu'un mort dans la nuit.
Dieu dit: Que la lumière soit! et je me suis réveillé comme on pousse un cri!

J'ai surgi et je me suis réveillé, je suis debout et je commence avec le jour qui commence!
Mon père qui m'avez engendré avant l'Aurore, je me place dans Votre Présence.

Mon coeur est libre et ma bouche est nette, mon corps et mon esprit sont à jeun.
Je suis absous de tous mes péchés que j'ai confessés un par un.

L'anneau nuptial est à mon doigt et ma face est nettoyée.
Je suis comme un être innocent dans la grâce que Vous m'avez octroyée.

Que Vous demander, qui ne pouvez me donner ce qui n'est pas à Vous!
Cette pièce d'or marquée du nom de César et cette parole en qui je plaise à tous.

Mais je vais avoir le soleil même, j'ouvre les bras à votre dimension.
Je regarde au plus haut du ciel un point d'or comme au jour de votre Ascension.

J'accepte ce monde tel qu'il est et je n'ai rien à y changer.
Seigneur, donnez-moi seulement Vous-même et c'est assez.

Superposez aux Six jours le Septième que Vous Vous êtes réservé.
Ah, ce n'est point Samedi, c'est Dimanche, et le coup de la première messe va sonner!

Lucifer brille tout seul au milieu de l'Orient désert et nouveau.
Le coq chante et Marie-Madeleine se hâte vers le tombeau.

Diamant de l'air qui éclôt! naissance du jour réel!
Vous arrivez à la fin, matin de mes noces éternelles!

Le temps est court et le soleil sera levé dans un moment.
C'est pourquoi, ce que nous avons à faire, faisons-le incessamment.

Comme le prêtre grave et prompt qui se recueille et s'habille pour le Saint Sacrifice,
Armons-nous sans hâte ni délai pour cette part qui est de notre office.

Comme un homme qui vient d'être fait, comme une invention toute neuve et intacte,
Toute puissance en moi a son objet et toute prière est un acte.

Dieu qui êtes Un seul en Trois Personnes, Relation sur qui le Christ est en croix,
Verbe en qui tout est parole, ce que Vous dites, je le crois.

Vous êtes la Parole donnée et clouée de clous de fer.
Le Titre en qui j'ai mis mon Espoir, je le fais de mes deux bras ouverts!

Je suis le doigt sur Votre plaie, je suis la main à Votre coeur même.
Vous qui êtes le Tout-Puissant, Vous ne pouvez empêcher que je Vous aime.

Que le rite prompt s'accomplisse en qui je communique à Votre éternité.
Rien n'est trop court pour cet instant de Dieu en nous qui ne peut être divisé.

Gardons ce serment entre nous! scellez-moi de peur que je ne me dissipe.
Humanité de Dieu sur ma langue, consignez mon coeur et mon principe.

En ce Septième Jour que Vous fîtes, Seigneur,
Quel est Votre repos, si ce n'est dans mon coeur?'

THE GREAT ILLUSION

by C. WEBB

ONE OF THE great illusions which is powerful enough to have deceived successive generations of mankind is the belief that man himself by careful planning has it within his power to order the future in the way he desires. At least as far back as Classical times, men were drawing up plans which, when implemented, were intended to transform society; and succeeding generations of men have continued to do so. Very rarely have their blueprints produced results which have even approximated to what was intended or desired.

Yet in South Africa today the illusion persists; and it is a dangerous illusion, for ours is a society in crisis. The blueprints which are being drawn up in South Africa today are not blueprints for the improvement of this or that detail of the social order. They are invariably blueprints for the complete reorganisation of the existing order in all its aspects: social, economic, political, even religious. They are blueprints for a bloodless revolution: for the salvation of South Africa by one mighty effort of planned and peaceful change.

Such massive programmes are, as I have suggested, not unusual in history. They do not appear when the society, or those who are dominant in the society, make adjustments in time to accommodate change; but they do appear when change has been resisted. Then a revolutionary situation is created, escape from which seems possible only through vast, comprehensive programmes of controlled reorganisation.

This is the predicament in South Africa. The situation is a revolutionary one, and men are no longer concerned with this or that small improvement, this or that readjustment to accommodate change. It seems that it is too late for this type of action; the situation is too critical for small adjustments to do any good. The way out seems to lie in planning on the grand scale: in plans for the radical transformation of our society—through segregration of the races, through political reconstruction on ethnic lines, through total integration. The examples can be multiplied, but it matters little to list them all.

What does matter is the illusion that any of these plans, if put into effect, will provide a lasting solution. Men can effectively influence the historical process in tiny fragments only, in small

actions and deeds, and even then the result is rarely exactly what they had in mind. It is unnecessary to draw on the past for examples. Eastern Europe today is, for the historian, a laboratory case of an attempt to transform society according to a blueprint. The results speak for themselves: they are not happy, and they are not what the blueprinters, let alone Marx, had in mind.

Very few South Africans take note of the implications for themselves. They continue to be convinced that plans for apartheid, for constitutional reform, for the creation of a multi-racial society, for the creation of a Bantustan, if implemented, would somehow resolve the country's major problem. It is the great illusion of a society in crisis.

On the evidence of history, one blueprint for the transformation of society is likely to prove as disappointing as the next. However comprehensive and consistent the plans may be, there is no evidence that the historical process will allow itself to be shackled by logic and moulded into men-made patterns. Almost inevitably, the plans become perverted.

During the past ten years we have witnessed some of the difficulties involved in attempting to implement a blueprint such as the Apartheid programme. We have also witnessed some of the perversions of the plan which have resulted from these difficulties. Many people see disastrous consequences flowing from the attempt at its total implementation. But, on historical grounds, there is no reason for assuming that the implementation of any of the alternative plans would prove more successful. Even assuming they produced happier immediate consequences, they would all still be equally subject to perversion, and would all be likely to produce their own new problems.

An attempted implementation of a programme for a fully enfranchised multi-racial society might, for example, result in untold new problems. Political enfranchisement is not necessarily a panacea that cures social and political ills. A parliamentary democracy provides no lasting guarantee of the rights and liberties of the individual. The very reverse is true: the only guarantee of the continued functioning of a parliamentary democracy is that those who are enfranchised respect the rights and liberties of others and hold certain values which are a product of slow growth and long usage. There is no guarantee that if an unqualified franchise were granted, these values would continue to be respected.

Democracy is the most easily corruptible of all systems of government, and no amount of entrenching of clauses or provision of constitutional safeguards can guarantee the continued functioning of a democratic system, if those who exercise power do not understand the nature of the trust placed in their hands. Those who see the solution to South Africa's problems in the rapidest possible extension of the franchise might do well to heed the words of the great Cambridge historian, Professor Herbert Butterfield, who, in his *Christianity and History*, writes:

> 'We do not go far enough in considering . . . how precarious our civilised systems will always be . . . The virtues of western society in modern times are in reality the product of much education, tradition and discipline; they needed centuries of patient cultivation. Even without great criminality in anybody—merely by forgetting certain safeguards—we could lose the tolerances and urbanities, the respect for human life and personality, which are in reality the late blossoms of a highly developed civilisation.'

These are words which hardly need illustration. Hitler's Germany is still fresh enough in most memories to be a constant reminder of 'how precarious our civilised systems will always be'. The radical reorganisation of Germany after the first World War failed to produce a better society. So, in many respects, did the radical reorganisation of France during the Great Revolution. The attempt of Robespierre and Saint Just in 1793 and 1794 to inaugurate a Reign of Virtue resulted only in the intensification of the horrors of a Reign of Terror; and the subsequent history of France has been one of continuing revolutionary violence and political malaise. In the contemporary world, it remains to be seen whether the experiment of Ghana will be a success; it remains to be seen what the fate of Indonesia, even of India, will be. A grafted alien political system is not guaranteed to bring blessings to 'once-subject colonial peoples'.

South Africa's problem in its irreducible form is not a problem of radical reorganisation; it is a problem of individual human relations. It is true that all the blueprints, all the large-scale plans, aim to improve these relations; segregation programmes by eliminating areas of contact and consequent potential friction between the races; liberal programmes by eliminating inequalities; extreme African nationalist programmes by eliminating the Europeans.

Yet most of these and many other blueprints for a happier society suffer from a common defect. It is the defect of most Utopian plans; the present good of society is to be sacrificed for what is believed will be its future good.

This is the other aspect of the great illusion: the belief that the present welfare of men is of less importance than the building of a great future. And this is precisely the point at which these plans for the transformation of society go awry; for it is the reactions of those human beings who are being disregarded in the interests of the future which are most likely to wreck the plans or distort them beyond recognition and so exacerbate the crisis.

None of this implies that planning and reorganisation are a waste of effort and that men should therefore abandon action and passively submit to the irresistible workings of a purblind Fate. Planning and reorganisation may bring about improvements in society. Few would today claim that the planning and reorganisation which produced the post-war Welfare State in Britain was all wasted effort. On the other hand, equally few would claim that the plans for the Welfare

State worked out exactly as they were intended to, solved all the existing social problems, and produced no new ones. That is the first point: no blueprint can produce a lasting solution to society's problems. At best it will produce small improvements, and even those improvements will, in many cases, not be the ones that were intended or anticipated. The second point is that the more radical a blueprint is (the more drastic the upheaval which is contemplated), the less likely it is to produce happy consequences, for its implementation will inevitably involve a large-scale sacrifice of existing human interests.

In the last resort, it is the individual in his own immediate environment who determines the course of history. When the historian grapples with the problems of process and change in history, he at last arrives at the irreducible: the individual human personality itself. He treads dangerously if, like the Marxists, he attempts to go beyond that, for it is the personality in its reaction to specific elements in its environment which makes history.

This is perhaps the greatest lesson that South Africans have to learn from the past. They, as individuals, are in their relations with others the starting-point of historical change and of a solution to the racial crisis. Like generations of men before them, they are deceiving themselves if they think that a lasting solution to society's problems can come from any source other than themselves. The great illusion is the illusion that the refashioning of the political or economic 'superstructure' is an adequate substitute for the individual's adjustment of his own relations with others in the society in which he lives.

This may sound like a cry for the impossible; for the spiritual regeneration of society. It is not intended as such. It is intended simply as a warning against a dangerous type of optimism, the victims of which believe a rapid solution to South Africa's racial problem to be possible through radical reorganisation. It is a warning that no rapid solution is possible; that the race problem will continue, and that crises, perhaps tragic upheavals, will occur until accommodation has been reached on the level of individual relations —in fact, until race has ceased to be a distinction between people. Only then will there be no race problem. It is a warning, in other words, that history will run a course largely independent of men-made schemes, but dependent on human relations.

None of what I have said precludes political action. It does not preclude supporting one party and its programme in preference to another; it does not preclude opposing by every possible means a policy and a party which, in their disregard of human interests, have clearly proved themselves undesirable; it does not even preclude the drawing up of a blueprint for a better society, provided its limitations are understood. These are all types of action which may be effective for improvements in society. My warning is simply against the illusion that any of these things in themselves can be completely effective for lasting good. It is a warning against the

illusion that a cause or a programme has greater value than respect for human life and personality.

The poet Blake was expressing an idea which the evidence of history confirms, when in *Jerusalem* he wrote:

> 'He who would do good . . . must do it in minute particulars. General good is the plea of the scoundrel, hypocrite and flatterer.'

THE LADYBIRD

by N. DENNY

The *Ladybird*, written just after *The Captain's Doll*, was published in 1923 (together with the latter tale and *The Fox*) in a book called in America *The Captain's Doll*, and in England *The Ladybird*. When the book containing these stories came out in 1923, Lawrence told Middleton Murry in a letter*: 'I think in the long run perhaps *The Ladybird* has more the quick of a new thing than the other two stories'. Artists are notoriously bad as critics of their own work, and Lawrence is no exception. *The Ladybird* is, on the whole, a failure, and one cannot envisage anybody of intelligence and discernment preferring it above *The Fox* and *The Captain's Doll*, both brilliant tales. *The Ladybird* can be immediately associated with those other relative failures of Lawrence's, *Aaron's Rod* and *The Plumed Serpent*, with its quasi-mystical-poetic-prophetic incantation. Like most of Lawrence's other work, it contains elements of arresting merit and value, but as an organic and aesthetic whole it falls lamentably short of acceptability.

The tale is set in England, in the closing year of the war and the first year of the armistice. The theme is the familiar one of a woman fascinated by a man outside her normal sphere, with its concommitant examination of 'white' ('adoration') love and 'dark' love—of the 'real' and the 'unreal' in life (according to the Laurentian point of view), of living from the 'head' as opposed to living from the deep 'well-springs of our being'.

In an essay of Lawrence's called *Nobody Loves* Me†, written a few years after *The Ladybird*, he describes a certain 'little lady' who bewails the loss of her 'cosmic consciousness' and 'love of humanity'. Her shallow, fundamentally sterile theosophy and 'humanitarianism' are frighteningly exposed for us as the utter negation of real life that they are. It is 'living from the head' with a vengeance, thoroughly egoistic and a pathetic parody of what life should be. In another essay, *Insouciance*‡, a further aspect of the same negation is examined —the 'caring' of people about Fascism, Communism, 'the plight of the Indian', unmarried mothers, 'our Youth', etc., and the divorce from actual life that this brings.

> 'They care! They are simply eaten up with caring. They are so busy caring about Fascism or Leagues of Nations or whether France is right or whether Marriage is threatened, that they never know where they are. They certainly

* Letters, p. 569. † Published in *Phoenix*. ‡ *Phoenix*.

> never live on the spot where they are. They inhabit abstract space, the desert void of politics, principles, right and wrong, and so forth. They are doomed to be abstract. Talking to them is like trying to have a human relationship with the letter *x* in algebra.
>
> There simply is a deadly breach between actual living and this abstract caring. What is actual living? It is a question mostly of direct contact.'

These people who live according to high, self-satisfying 'ideals', 'caring' for this and that, live 'from their heads'; they have denied life and substituted for it something cold, intellectual and abstract. *The Ladybird* is largely concerned with this same rarefied, intellectual approach to life as opposed to the 'dark', 'contactual' one.

The central characters of the tale are the Count Dionys Psanek (representative—one might more correctly say 'the symbol'—of valid, *real* life), Basil Apsley (representative of sterile 'ideas' and 'ideals'), and his wife Lady Daphne (brought up to 'live from the head', but deeply and instinctively rebellious, and caught suspended between the two men). The main drama is played out among these three, the *leitmotif* being the localization, conflict and resolution in Daphne of the opposing forces represented by Dionys and Basil—but unfortunately all at a level which is extremely rarefied and difficult to believe in. The theme has its support in a sub-theme where the conflicting forces are also localized in Daphne's mother and father—Lady Beveridge and the Earl—respectively representative, once more, of 'mind'-living and valid living from the essential self. Many critics have seen in Lady Beveridge a portrait of Lady Cynthia Asquith, whom the Lawrences got to know quite well. The picture of the woman—Edwardian aristocrat bewildered by an old order collapsing around her, philanthropic, 'doing good' and loving the enemy despite the death of her sons in France, a power in the House of Lords and the Cabinet—has been seen as cruel and unnecessary. Suffice it to say that Lawrence's 'portraits from life' are seldom more than superficially like the originals, and that in *The Ladybird*, Lady Beveridge, despite the satire and the irony of the condemnation of what she stands for, is never maliciously treated—in fact the picture of her is remarkable for its restraint and 'tenderness': she is a human being and as such entitled to respect and what Dr Leavis aptly describes as 'reverence'. The tale opens:

> 'How many swords had Lady Beveridge in her pierced heart! Yet there always seemed to be room for another. Since she had determined that her heart of pity and kindness should never die. If it had not been for this determination she herself might have died of sheer agony, in the years 1916 and 1917, when her boys were killed, and her brother, and death seemed to be mowing with wide swaths through her family. But let us forget.
>
> Lady Beveridge loved humanity, and come what might, she would continue to love it'.

The gentleness of tone in the first paragraph conditions our attitude to Lady Beveridge for the duration of the tale, without, however, immunising us from revulsion at what she represents. The first sentence of the second paragraph really introduces the story. Lady Beveridge is representative of the abstract 'good' and 'caring' that Lawrence attacks so vehemently in many of his essays. In the winter of 1917 she is 'stricken' with grief, but characteristically, her 'love of humanity' refuses to allow her to remain prostrate long.

> 'She remembered how many others were lying in agony. So she rose, trembling, frail, to pay a visit to the hospital where lay the enemy sick and wounded, near London. Countess Beveridge was still a privileged woman. Society was beginning to jeer at this little, worn bird of an out-of-date righteousness and aesthetic. But they dared not think ill of her.'

We continue to notice the tenderness with which she is treated, without being tempted to condone her lifeless 'humanitarian' 'ideals'. There is irony in her resolution, because her 'love of humanity' is responsible for her meeting someone representative of the very antithesis of everything she stands for, and introducing him as a disruptive force into her family. At the hospital she meets a pre-war family acquaintance, Dionys. The significance of his being an *enemy* soon emerges—it serves to emphasize the hostility he represents to Lady Beveridge's world and way of life: he is the arch-enemy, not of England, but of the negatory, life-*denying* 'life' she typifies. Dionys is near death, badly wounded.

> 'His black eyes opened: large, black, unseeing eyes, with curved black lashes. He was a small man, small as a boy, and his face was too was rather small. But all the lines were fine, as if they had been fired with a keen male energy.'

The 'darkness' about the man, and the 'unseeing' quality of his eyes, together with the 'keen male energy' in him are sufficient for us to suspect that something lies dormant and weakened in the man that promises to be profoundly disturbing to the way of life Lady Beveridge represents. He is from the outset clearly symbolic of the Laurentian Man, 'dark', living from the 'blood'. Lady Beveridge is suitably distressed at finding the old acquaintance so sorely wounded. She goes home and tells her daughter Daphne of the encounter, and it is significant again that what she best remembers of the man is the quality of 'darkness' about him. She tells Daphne of his dark eyes ('so black') and his nearness to death. 'There is something remote and in a sad way heroic in his dark face. Something primitive.' The description subconsciously piques Daphne's attention and stirs something deep within her. For the Lady Daphne is 'sick' and unfulfilled. She is tall and blonde (a marked and obvious contrast to Dionys), 'one of the beauties'—a *Tatler* sort of girl—but 'sorrow, pain, thwarted passion had done her great damage'. 'Her husband was missing in the East. Her baby had been born dead. Her darling

brothers were dead. And she was ill, always ill.' Her inner, clamouring self is rebellious of the life of 'philanthropy' and 'humanitarianism' foisted on her as 'correct' and ideal by her mother. She is only 'shamefully' aware of this and regards it as a despicable weakness in herself.

> 'The little pathetic mother, so wonderful in her way, was not really to be pitied for all her sorrow. Her life was in her sorrows, and her efforts on behalf of the sorrows of others. But Daphne was not born for grief and philanthropy. With her splendid frame, and her lovely, long strong legs, she was Artemis or Atalanta rather than Daphne. There was a certain width of brow and even of chin that spoke a strong, reckless nature, and the curious slant of her eyes told of a wild energy dammed up inside her.'

It is this 'damming up' that is responsible for her 'illness', this deliberate crushing down as 'shameful' the vigorous, clear force of *life* within her. At this point too references to both her father and her husband are introduced as symbols of the conflict raging inside her and sapping all her strength and energy (the medical trueness of this last is striking, when we remember Lawrence's ignorance of 'new' psychology). Her father possesses the same 'wild energy' as is kennelled so restlessly in his daughter; he is from a 'desperate' and 'reckless' race—a 'dare-devil', a hot-blooded, passionate man, who has lived a life of inner 'shame', 'disgrace' and self-condemnation because of it, despised by his 'humanitarian' wife. Counterbalanced against him and his qualities in Daphne, is Basil.

> 'Daphne had married an adorable husband: truly an adorable husband. Whereas she needed a dare-devil. But in her *mind* she hated all dare-devils: she had been brought up by her mother to admire only the good.'

Remembering *The Captain's Doll*, the appellation 'adorable' is condemnation enough. Basil is 'white', full of 'ideals', loving and living from the *mind* which Lady Beveridge so much respects and expects her daughter to respect.The conflict in Lady Daphne lies precisely between her father and her husband—between 'hot blood' and 'mind'. 'In her *mind* she hated all dare-devils', but deep within herself her mind is violently contradicted and opposed: hence her 'vitality'-sapping 'sickness.'

> 'So, her reckless, anti-philanthropic passion could find no outlet—and *should* find no outlet, she thought. So her own blood turned against her, beat on her own nerves, and destroyed her. It was nothing but frustration and anger which made her ill. . . . Anger reddened her eyes and shattered her nerves. And yet her whole will was fixed in her adoption of her mother's creed, and in condemnanation of her handsome, proud, brutal father, who made so much misery in the family. Yes, her will was fixed in the determination that life should be gentle and good and

> benevolent. Whereas her blood was reckless, the blood of dare-devils. Her will was the stronger of the two. But her blood had its revenge on her. So it is with strong natures today: shattered from the inside.'

In five or six pages the pattern for the drama has been laid. On the one hand 'mind', 'ideals', 'will', conflicting on the other with 'heart', 'blood' and 'dare-devils', the violent hostility localized in Daphne. On the one hand Dionys and the Earl, on the other Lady Beveridge and Basil, and caught, suffering, between, the Lady Daphne.

Daphne has been interested by her mother in the Count Dionys, and takes to phoning the hospital daily to enquire after his condition. Her husband has been missing in the Middle East and when she hears news of his being a prisoner and wounded, she impulsively decides (prompted once more, ironically, by 'humanitarian' motives) to visit the Count. Daphne is at once intrigued and fascinated by the man. He has been growing steadily stronger. His fierce masculinity calls from the start to something deep within her, and the 'mystery' and dark 'magic' in him merely reinforce the deep emotional appeal. She finds herself returning again and again to visit him. 'She never forgot him for long. He seemed to come into her mind suddenly, as if by sorcery.' (We remember the 'magic' in Hepburn that so 'bewitched' Hannele.) Dionys seems to exert some strong power over her, to fill her with a fearful kind of exultation. His dark inscrutability and compelling black eyes have almost a hypnotising effect on her. He divines at once the cause of her 'sickness' without saying anything about it, but Daphne feels he has summed her up at a glance and knows the true nature of her malady and all the secrets of her essential self. As time goes by Dionys grows stronger yet, and is eventually allowed up from his bed. Despite his smallness, his masculinity and inner power have a profound effect on Daphne when she meets him in the garden of the hospital, on his feet for the first time. There is a vigorous, male strength about him, an animal power, 'dark' and mysterious, that turns Daphne's bones to water and calls forth a frightening response deep within her. His compelling 'power' over her is immensely disturbing; Daphne's emotions at last roused, are in a storm, and she cannot begin to comprehend them. Despite herself, alarmed now instinctively at the possible consequences, she continues to visit him. During the course of these visits Dionys attempts to expound his 'philosophy' to her—a weird and 'mystical' jumble of death-wish, Cabalistic inversion and the 'nobility' of anger. It amounts to quasi-mystical rhetoric of a very puerile kind and were better left out entirely by Lawrence, but beneath it all lies a hard core of truth and further affirmation of the (Laurentian) *real* as opposed to the fake and the illusory in life. When Dionys climbs off his mystico-poetic high horse and speaks of love he is more believable and significant.

> '"Everything finds its mate," he said. "The ermine and the pole-cat and the buzzard. One thinks so often that only the dove and the nightingale and the stag with his

> antlers have gentle mates. But the pole-cat and the ice-bears of the north have their mates. And a white she-bear lies with her cubs under a rock as a snake lies hidden, and the male bear slowly swims back from the sea, like a clot of snow or a shadow of a white cloud passing on the speckled sea. I have seen her too, and I did not shoot her nor him when he landed with fish in his mouth, wading wet and slow and yellow-white over the black stones."'

This is still not very good, but much better than the tangled 'philosophy'.

Speeches like the above, however, cumulatively have a marked effect on Daphne. She falls even further beneath Dionys's spell. But by this stage the story really begins to break down, and it breaks down when power and emphasis start shifting unjustifiably to the Lawrence-like little man. Unintentionally, he is made to appear so much to us like a nasty little Casanova subtly going about his seduction with perfect cunning—how many women have woken up after the long hypnotism of 'intellectual' discourse, 'philosophy', and pandering to their 'intelligence' and 'wisdom', to find themselves successfully and cynically seduced? One cannot help feeling the same kind of thing about Dionys. The preamble, the gambits, are so familiar, despite their 'poetic' trappings.

However, Daphne *does* fall more and more beneath the little Bohemian's spell, drinking up all his declamatory outpourings. But Dionys, rather suddenly, has become unreal for us, and with him the story. From the solid, familiar earth, suddenly the tale has been translated to a misty, Delphian plane, and with this shift, the story and the characters begin to lose the deep significance they formerly had for us. The lapse is unfortunate. Dionys, at first a living man, becomes a quasi-mystic figure—almost, as said before, pure symbol. The trouble is, of course, that Lawrence allows *himself* to intrude here, and uses Dionys as a vehicle for his own 'philosophy.'

Dionys, in the midst of this philosophizing explains to Daphne that he is a subject of the sun, a sun-worshipper, and goes on to analyse the sun.

> '". . . . the yellowness of sunshine—light itself—that is only the glancing aside of the real original fire. You know that is true. There would be no light if there was no refraction, no bits of dust and stuff to turn the dark fire into visibility. You know that's a fact. And that being so, even the sun is dark. It is only his jacket of dust that makes him visible. You know that too. And the true sunbeams coming towards us flow darkly, a moving darkness of the genuine fire. The sun is dark, the sunshine flowing to us is dark. And light is only the inside-turning away of the sun's directness that was coming to us."'

It is a pretty image—'the dark sun'—but the conclusion led up to—the inside-outness of reality ('We've got the world inside out. The true living world of fire is dark, throbbing, darker than blood.

Our luminous world that we go by is only the reverse of this')—is nothing more than Cabalistic mental acrobatics, going back, ultimately, at least as far as the Manichaens. We know what Lawrence is trying to say (he has said it all so much better elsewhere), but the *tone* of the present elaboration is all wrong.

The discourse continues, to include beauty.

> '"Now listen. The same with love. This white love that we have is the same. It is only the reverse, the whited sepulchre of the true love. True love is dark, a throbbing together in darkness, like the wild-cat in the night, when the green screen opens and her eyes are on the darkness."
>
> "No, I don't see that," she said in a slow, changing voice.
>
> "You and your beauty—that is only the inside-out of you. The real you is the wild-cat invisible in the night, with red fire perhaps coming out of its wide, dark eyes. Your beauty is your whited sepulchre."'

More and more beneath his spell, Daphne finds his remarks on beauty very unsettling. Her vanity concerning her own beauty is an important element in her make-up. Instinctively, she feels the truth of his words, and deep within her the new enlightenment finds a ready response. The woman in her knows her beauty is irrelevant, but consciously Daphne clings to the illusion. Dionys's significance to her is such that she is torn between conflicting impulses now, in all aspects of her life. A crisis, we feel, is imminent and inevitable.

The effect of all her talk with Dionys is profoundly disturbing to Daphne. To add to her difficulties, her husband will soon be coming home and Basil represents the antithesis of everything Dionys stands for. Daphne is in the grip of a powerful emotional conflict, which for the moment localises itself in the attitude of both men to her beauty. Shying instinctively from the threat she knows deep down Dionys represents, Daphne's unconscious over-simplifies the issue.

> 'He said her beauty was her whited sepulchre. Even that, she knew what he meant. The invisibility of her he wanted to love. But ah, her pearl-like beauty was so dear to her, and it was so famous in the world.
>
> He said her white love was like moonshine, harmful, the reverse of love. He meant Basil, of course. Basil always said that she was the moon. But then Basil loved her for that. The ecstacy of it! She shivered, thinking of her husband. But it had also made her nerve-worn, her husband's love. Ah, nerve-worn.
>
> What then would the Count's love be like? Something so secret and different. She would not be lovely and a queen to him. He hated her loveliness. The wild-cat has its mate. The little wild-cat that he was. Ah!'

The pattern is familiar, and we can appreciate the working-out of the drama—the woman hood-winked by 'white', invalid love, suddenly finding the real and the transfiguring in 'dark' love. And a measure of Lawrence's skill can be seen in the interest we

still feel in Daphne's conflict, in its profound reality and significance to us, despite the present unbelievableness of Dionys. Daphne, afraid of the changes submission to Dionys's world will bring, begins to fall back almost with relief on the familiar world of Basil. She cannot give way to the 'relaxation' that the Count demands of her; she prefers her 'adorable', adoring husband. For her 'mind' wins in the conflict and she elects to abide by her husband. She hears news of Basil's release and starts building dreams of what their experience as lovers will be like on his return.

> 'Ah, new and terrible his love would be, pure and intensified by the awful fire of suffering. A new lover—a new bridegroom—a new, super-natural wedding-night. She shivered in anticipation, waiting for her husband.'

His home-coming is a profound disappointment, however. Basil is more worshipping and adoring than ever, still (significantly) preserving his 'moon' imagery as far as Daphne is concerned. She is his 'moon-mother of the world', his 'Aphrodite', his 'Venus of the foam'. He kisses her feet in complete subjection—the 'white' lover on his knees before his 'queen', his 'goddess'.

> '"I knew you were divine, you were the one—Cybele—Isis. I knew I was your slave. I knew. It has all been just a long initiation. I had to learn how to worship you . . . It isn't love, it is worship. Love between me and you will be a sacrament, Daphne. That's what I had to learn. You are beyond me. A mystery to me. My God, how great it all is. How marvellous!" '

For the moment this is all that Daphne could desire—'she was thrilled deep down to her soul', and she revels in this adoration. *This* is the *real* in love, and she prepares to bask in its magic and purifying radiance.

> 'She really felt that she could glow white and fill the Universe like the moon, like Astarte, like Isis, like Venus. The grandeur of her own pale power. The man religiously worshipped her, not merely amorously. She was ready for him—for the sacrement of his supreme worship.

The irony in 'moon', 'pale', 'white', 'worship' is obvious—'white' love deluding itself. As is expected, all Daphne's high hopes come crashing down—'white' love can never be truly satisfying. Her 'illness' and 'nerve-wornness' return and she feels a compelling desire to 'relax.' We remember the strange significance of this last to March in *The Fox*:

> 'That fierce power of being alone, even with your lover, the fierce power of the woman *in excelsis*—alas, she could not keep it. . . . She relaxed, she lost her glory, and became fretful . . . she ached with nerves, and could not eat.'

The failure of her relations with Basil is a bitter disappointment, and understandably, the haunting thought of Dionys comes stealing back into her mind to disturb her further. She speaks to Basil of him and

Basil suggests they go and visit the prisoner. The meeting of the two men proves interesting, to them both, and serves as the vehicle for further philosophizing. The strange 'closeness' of most of Lawrence's 'rivals' obtains once more between the men. The conflicting and opposing ways of thought and life are localised in both men, and there find expression. Basil's is of course, the large 'cosmic consciousness' and 'universal love' deception:

> '"It seems to me there is really only one supreme contact, the contact of love. Mind you, the love may take on an infinite variety of forms. And in my opinion, no form of love is wrong, so long as it is love, and you yourself *honour* what you are doing. Love has an extraordinary variety of forms! And that is all that there is in life, it seems to me." '

Dionys cannot accept this—the philosophy is bound up with 'adoration' and 'white' love, never really attaining true love at all. When taxed concerning *his* view, his answer has a disturbing effect on Daphne:

> '"Obedience, submission, faith, belief, responsibility, power," he said slowly, picking out the words slowly, as if searching for what he wanted, and never quite finding it. He looked with his quiet dark eyes into her eyes. It was curious, she disliked his words intensely, but she liked him. On the other hand, she believed absolutely what her husband said, yet her physical sympathy was against him.'

We remember the 'obedience' of Hannele demanded by Hepburn. The men are diametrically opposed, representative of what they respectively stand for—'mind' and 'blood' in opposition again. Dionys goes on to argue the need for hierarchical values, to expound the Laurentian 'ideal' or Utopia based on the Platonic plan, all of which is inimical to the 'humanitarian', 'all-loving' Basil with his belief in the 'Brotherhood of Man'. Nevertheless, a kind of bond grows between the men, somewhat to Daphne's chagrin, and Dionys is invited to spend a few weeks with Basil and Daphne after his release as a prisoner, and before he returns to Germany. The visit isn't a great success as a distance seems to have sprung up between the men—another lapse, it seems to me, as it is neither adequately explained nor charged with any real significance. In the evenings the Count retires early, and croons old folk-songs to himself in his room. Daphne hears him one night and is almost mesmerised by the strange quality of the singing. The conflict raging within her is a harrowing one. Her marriage with Basil has failed and all her deep and essential being cries out to Dionys. She fights the impulse, though, until the Count's singing begins to break down her resistance. She takes to sneaking out into the corridor at night to listen to the weird singing, sleeping afterwards like one 'bewitched', strangely relaxed, light and free. One night the singing changes:

> 'Then began the most terrible song of all. It began with a rather dreary, slow, horrible sound, like death. And then

> suddenly came a real call—fluty, and a kind of whistling and a strange whirr at the changes, most imperative, and utterly inhuman. Daphne rose to her feet. And at the same moment up rose the whistling throb of a summons out of the death moan.'

She goes into Dionys's darkened room. The darkness is stressed. The girl more or less gives herself to the Count. But as a woman, it appears, Dionys does not want her: he is too mysitcal for anything as concrete as 'animal' love, and comes to another arrangement. He is not surprised to find the girl capitulating to him, but to him it is in the nature of a disciple finally seeing the light. And that is the major problem with the story—it deserts human problems for the doctrinaire. Daphne, the woman, is abandoned, and substituted for her is the convert to a cause. Even so, we can believe in the story thus far, if we leave out the singing. Daphne's relationship with Basil *is* a mistake and a travesty of what such a relationship should be, and in so far as Dionys is a human being at all he is representative of everything Daphne *should* have and secretly hungers for in a man. That she should inevitably 'polarise' herself to Dionys and away from her husband is believable and true, but the *trappings*, Dionys the man, and now the conclusion and resolution of the tale are so preposterous and so contrived—in a *nouvelle*—that any of the undoubted elements of greatness in the tale cannot overcome them. Witness Dionys's solution to the problem:

> '"Listen," he said to her softly. "Now you are mine. In the dark you are mine. And when you die you are mine. But in the day you are not mine, because I have no power in the day. In the night, in the dark, and in death, you are mine. And that is for ever. No matter if I must leave you. I shall come again from time to time. In the dark you are mine. But in the day I cannot claim you. I have no power in the day, and no place. So remember. When the darkness comes I shall always be in the darkness of you. And as long as I live, from time to time I shall come to find you, when I am able to, when I am not a prisoner. But I shall have to go away soon. So don't forget—you are the night wife of the ladybird, while you live and even when you die."'

(The Ladybird is the Count's family crest, something he claims goes back to ancient Egypt, the sacred scarab, sun-worship and so on, and in that lies its significance as a symbol—the 'dark powers' and 'mystery' and 'aristocracy' of the pharoahs.)

Daphne accepts the Count's arrangement without question. She ceases to have sexual intercourse with Basil, who conveniently 'understands' and falls in with her wishes. Dionys leaves for Bohemia. And so the tale ends.

It is difficult to account for the failure of the story. It starts with such promise, the strands carefully in place, any trace of the doctrinaire conspicuous by its absence, the characters carefully presented

and developed. Before Daphne commences visiting the invalid Dionys everything is under control, all the threads confidently in the author's hands. The characterization could hardly be bettered—the conflict localized in Daphne; Dionys and Basil representative of the opposing forces; the forces echoed and reinforced in Lady Beveridge and the Earl—and the Ladybird symbol there to unify all. But the tale falls down as soon as the focus is shifted from Daphne to Dionys. Clearly, Lawrence was swept away by the character. In allowing Dionys to become the oracle-like mouthpiece for his own doctrine, to become not a living and convincing *character* but a textbook, a gramophone, he lets the whole drama break down. We cannot believe in anyone as fundamentally alive as Daphne being seduced in any sense by this pompous, preposterous little man. He is not real at all, in fact as much the abstract 'mind' as poor Basil. He never really lives. All he can do is *talk*—with such knowing conviction, and prophet-like self-complacency and urgency. Had the tale been allowed to proceed within disciplined limits it would not have turned out such a fiasco. The ending is worthy, but for the studied portentousness of tone, of some of the poorer things one can find in the ladies' magazines. For what is the resolution of a love-triangle conflict by the intruder's contentment to be the 'spiritual' lover and not to break up the marriage but the contrived ending of popular 'romance'? The major weakness of the tale, is the very (Laurentian) 'inside-outness' of Dionys himself. Allegedly the representative of the Laurentian Man, and the *real*, in the end he becomes the very de-personalized and abstract nullity Lawrence so violently abhors. Who of Lawrence's characters is so far removed from reality, real life and real love? Who lives more completely from the *mind*? The tale is two types of story in one. It begins as down-to-earth and realistic, but half-way through Lawrence allows it to shift to almost a mythical plane, to the almost purely symbolic. And this kind of thing can rarely be done with impunity. In spite of the mystico-poetic incantation the reader cannot but continue to accept the tale on the realistic level, and on this level *The Ladybird* breaks down. The human problem contained in the Daphne-Basil relationship is inexplicably abandoned. Dionys's Hollywood solution is no solution at all. The tale contains no real resolution of the problems it sets out to examine. On the matter-of-fact level Dionys has served to localize and expose the causes of Daphne's sickness, and to give expression to the uncomprehended tangle of emotions in her. But instead of his helping her to resolve her problems, he leaves her suspended in mid-air, tied still to her ineffectual and unsatisfying husband, with mere romantic dreams to console her. She is 'spiritually' his, his 'night-wife', and with this she must be content. Astonishingly, we are expected to accept Basil's concurrence with Daphne's fidelity to Dionys. He 'understands' and also is content. In fact, everybody is content with the new arrangement—except the reader. *The Ladybird* fails—unhappily, for it contains the elements of a very fine *nouvelle*. But the inexcusable intrusion of the author, the preoccupation with the

doctrinaire at the expense of valid human problems, proved an insuperable obstacle. Once Lawrence became personally involved, over-engaged in Dionys, the story was bound to fail.

THE GENERATION THAT GOT LOST STAYING AT HOME

A Letter to Jimmy Porter*

by F. H. LANGMAN

Dear Jimmy,

I know that some intelligent people think you are wonderful, or at least interesting. They think that there is something in you, if they can't say quite what. So if I speak my mind about you, they can speak theirs about me, and we might get somewhere. I don't believe in you, Jimmy. Oh, I don't say that you aren't real. You do exist, on the stage, in the papers, in the flesh. I mean that you aren't what you set up to be, what you think you are. I don't believe in your 'blistering honesty'. You persuaded that nice Mr Osborne and he made you a hero, but then he was very young.

I'm told that you're significant, Jimmy: the spokesman of a new lost generation. Yours is the generation that got lost by staying at home. There are no more causes to fight for, you say. I could show you a number. But you won't find them exploring by the seat of your pants in an easy chair on Sunday afternoons. You're bored because you won't get up. You want the world to crawl to you on its knees with a cause. Jimmy Galahad Porter, the recumbent knight of the parlour, waiting in vain for a beautiful damsel to rush in and complain of dragons. The fact is, you don't want to do anything. You want to stay home and be bored and torture your wife. The only battle you do fight you fight by proxy, and in a war that ended three years ago. Alison's parents opposed you, but she married you. You won. But you can't get over it. They didn't like you—you! So you'll take it out on her, for the rest of her life. You'd like to break her, to get even with her parents. You are driven to crush out of her the last traces of her upbringing. Why? What do you hope to prove: that you despise her parents? Or that you hate all you can never have, never be?

You're so sensitive, Jimmy. You suffer so much and so long. Do you keep a diary, I wonder, to note down the duration of your anguish? You know it so well, and the others had better not forget it. Twelve months of watching this and eleven hours of watching that. Nobody feels as keenly as you do the pain of life, the pain of love. But you'll make them feel it, won't you, even if you have to invent the

* The hero of John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger*

pain for them. You felt bad about that old woman's dying, but Alison didn't care how bad you felt. She didn't even send any flowers. (Flowers, Jimmy? Oh, how can you be so bloody wet?) The cruel, stupid, selfish girl, she was thinking of her own troubles, she was thinking of her unborn child, when she should have thought of you, eh? Your heart so full you felt ill and all. But she was suitably punished, she lost her baby, she was given that to teach her to suffer as you know how to suffer. Well and good. Only do not say that you suffer for the death of the child, Jimmy. Do not say you know what she feels because it was your child, too. Give it up, old boy. You never gave a thought to that child as a child. You wanted its death so that Alison could be hurt. You did not want its life or its joy. You had no kindly or creative or loving thoughts about it. You had nothing to give it, Jimmy. You had nothing to give. You only want pretexts to display your sensitivity. You can't even give Alison her own grief without claiming a share. And when after all this she grovels back to you and says you were right and agrees that her baby should have died, that's when for the first time you really should kick her in the teeth, for the obscenity of that surrender. But not you, Jimmy. You lap it up. You love every moment of that triumph. Except that it did not happen. In reality she left you flat, and you like to imagine her craven return. It cheers you up.

You won't mind me, though, Jim. I can't spoil your popularity. Problem adolescents are all the rage in your Sunday newspapers, forever bleating about their rights but with nothing to say about their duties: I didn't ask to be born. Nobody understands me, nobody loves me. Nobody loves me *enough.*

F. H. LANGMAN.

Editorial Postscript: We trust Mr. Langman won't mind our adding a p.s. to his letter, Jimmy, to the effect that we hope you'll send it on to the rest of your circle. Your circle? They're wraith-like compared with you, those other Angry Young Men, made out of Samuel Beckett's typescript or John Brain's, yet they do belong to your circle. John Brain's hero in *Room at the Top* is every bit as angry as you are. Well, perhaps not so much angry, as petulant—but also about the injustice of being non-U. It's true he lives in the Welfare State, but what good is that when Other People belong to rich or upper-class families, and look down on him, or when he suspects that they may? It's hardly *his* fault, therefore, if he scrambles to the top by trampling on his true love's happiness and causing her suicide. It's not really his fault—it's a sort of tragic error, like Oedipus' or Othello's—tragic, not contemptible! As for Didi and Gogo in Mr. Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*—those poor chaps, of whom one had stinking feet, and the other stinking breath—so comic!—well, they're not exactly angry, because they haven't got enough energy to be anything so positive—but at least we can be angry for them. Poor fellows! The *cruelty* of being born! In this world the only possible thing to do is to hang yourself, only that's not possible either, because

the only rope you can lay hands on, without bestirring yourself to look for some, is rotten!

Didi and Gogo probably wouldn't be able to rouse themselves enough out of their dreary waiting for Godot to do it, but we recommend you and the John Brain young man to read a poem from *Pansies* by D. H. Lawrence. It is called *Worm Either Way* and applies to you both:

'If you live along with all the other people
and are just like them, and conform, and are nice
you're just a worm—
and if you live with all the other people
and you don't like them and won't be like them and won't conform
then you're just a worm that has turned,
in either case, a worm.
The conforming worm stays just inside the skin
respectably unseen; and cheerfully gnaws away at the heart of life,
making it all rotten inside.

The unconforming worm—that is, the worm that has turned—
gnaws just the same, gnawing the substance out of life,
but he insists on gnawing a little hole in the social epidermis
and poking his head out and waving himself
and saying "Look at me, I am *not* respectable,
I do all the things the bourgeois daren't do,
I booze and fornicate and use foul language and despise your honest man".
But why should the worm that has turned protest so much?
The bonnie bonnie bourgeois goes a-whoring up back streets
just the same.
The busy busy bourgeois imbibes his little share
just the same
if not more.
The pretty pretty bourgeois pinks his language just as pink
if not pinker
and in private boasts his exploits even louder, if you ask me,
than the other.
While as to honesty, oh look where the money lies!

So I can't see where the worm that has turned puts anything over
the worm that is too cunning to turn.
On the contrary, he merely gives himself away.
The turned worm shouts: I bravely booze!
The other shouts: Have one with me!
The turned worm boasts: I copulate!
the unturned says: You look it.
You're a d— b— b— p— bb—, says the worm that's turned.
Quite! says the other. Cuckoo!

The Editors.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

by P. Harvey

It is difficult to believe that the many critics who have put themselves to the trouble of writing about *Much Ado About Nothing* have not understood the play. And yet I have never seen any good statement of what Shakespeare is doing here. The critics who are immediately available to the young and timid reader (who goes to them for help or reassurance) are still the Great Chams of the nineteenth century, people like Chambers, Bradley, Saintsbury and Quiller-Couch. And it seems to me that all these people are quite wrong. For this reason there is perhaps some excuse for my writing this.

Much Ado About Nothing is not a play of light-hearted carelessness 'hey-nonnying' itself into oblivion as 'Q', in the introduction to the play in the Cambridge edition would have us believe. It is not a play about Beatrice and Benedick, in that order (the result of the regrettable ability of a series of great English actresses, among them notably Ellen Terry, to project themselves beyond the footlights to the exclusion of everything else.) Nor does its double story point the 'tear beneath the smile' falsification of the nature of life. It is not a comedy (that label has caused endless worry) in the sense that *The Importance of Being Earnest* is a comedy. It apparently never entered Shakespeare's head that art had nothing to do with morality. And here I think is the source of all the misunderstanding of the nineteenth century critics I have mentioned. This is Saintbury's comment from the *Cambridge History of English Literature*:

'But Shakespeare added Benedick and Beatrice; he added Dogberry and Verges, and he made the whole thing into one of the most remarkable instances of the kind of tragi-comedy where no actual tragedy is permitted, but where it is only just avoided, and where tragic motives are allowed to work freely. The play is of extraordinary merit, and Shakespeare has only left one loose stitch—a stitch which he might have picked up with very little trouble—in the entirely unexplained, and very nearly inexplicable, behaviour of Margaret, who, being certainly not a traitress and as certainly not a fool, first lends herself to a proceeding obviously prejudicial to her mistress and then holds her tongue about it. Except in this point, the play works with perfect ease of action; and, if one does not envy Hero her husband, and does grudge her very much to him, that is no uncommon case . . .'

What this shows (it is typical) is that fundamental notion that art, the theatre in particular, is one gorgeous entertainment, like the

ballet, which gentlemen devote their lives to in an elegant appreciative way. One savours a Shakespeare play like a good wine. And the play has about the same relation to life as the wine. It is the sign of a distinguishing palate to see some flaws (they should be slight) in an otherwise magnificent year. But art is *not* that. Shakespeare's plays are not that.

Everyone who sees or reads this play notices that there are two sorts of people in it: on the one hand Benedick, Beatrice, Dogberry and Verges, and on the other Claudio, Hero and Don John. All the people of these two kinds are involved in two love stories, and the stories are very different in their quality. Beatrice and Benedick's is a believable-in story of two people who fall in love and marry, but Claudio and Hero's is an odd story full of coincidences, things that don't fit and aren't explained. It is a most unbelievable-in story of two people who fall in love and very nearly do not marry. These two stories are so expertly bound together, people who take part in one are so closely involved in the other, that the idly curious critic is beguiled into thinking that Shakespeare really did not mean the difference. And although he is obviously an expert craftsman in his interweaving of the plots, he is also incompetent in choosing intractable material and not recognising it, or if he did, not discarding it. The wine is undoubtedly from a vintage year and shows only that slight acid in the aftertaste which is reminiscent of vinegar.

This play is *Much Ado About Nothing* and that in itself tells us what Shakespeare thought about the stories and all the pother of the fourth and fifth acts in particular. If the title is not sufficient warning the opening scene tells us what world we are in. The messenger who brings the news of the victorious war (what sort of war was this!) is no ordinary messenger, and his bandying about of words is enough to make us sit upright in our seats. As we hear more and more it becomes clearer and clearer that Shakespeare is using language in many different ways, to which he means the listening ear to respond. The messenger is elegantly circumlocutory. Beatrice and Benedick speak prose which is in essence the sharp apprehension of, and delight in, the rich meanings of words. (This is often a sign of the young, alert, vigorous mind.) Don Pedro varies between the prose of Beatrice and Benedick and a verse language spoken by Claudio and Hero. It is obvious that this language is strained, inadequate to express any but the most general thoughts and feelings in standard and conventional phrases. The reductio ad absurdum of this language Balthazar speaks in his pretentious, disclaiming modesty, when he is asked to sing. So much so, that the knightly Don Pedro is provoked to comment on it. Balthazar and his song then, is Claudio and Hero carried to extremes. He sings with a fashionable falsity. There is a sort of weary deadness in his word-play which never is in Benedick's nor Beatrice's. Dogberry and Verges speak yet another language, as I shall show.

All this tells us that Shakespeare is laughing at the popular dream world. The inheritance (which is ours too) of chivalric notions taken

from the habits of knights and ladies in the mediaeval romance, their concern with honour and reputation, their insistence upon maiden chastity, and their wholly out-moded methods of thought which make responses to situations conventional and inadequate. Claudio, Hero, Don John and their attendants belong to this dream. They are empty shadows moving to a set pattern. Their story is unbelievable because they are. Anyone who envies Claudio his Hero cannot tell the shadow from the substance.

Don Pedro is the Prince, the liege-lord, in whose retinue follow Claudio and Benedick, and between them there exist all the chivalric ties. He is sensible when he may be without losing his position, and sides with Claudio when the morals of a romance decide that he should. He woos for Claudio because a knight fallen in love-longing cannot hope ever to approach the goddess-like virgin who has caused his woe, with carnal ideas. Claudio is jealous because he must endure misery and the dictates of love are above all ordinary things like human faith and trust. (See Act II. Sc. I. Line 209.) Claudio and Benedick have new-come from the wars because all good knights have resounding reputations polished up in wars. (This is apparently the one thing about a knight that will make a woman look down on him from her pedestal in pity.) Love is an off-duty occupation quite as important as reputation.

But Benedick is no shadow. He is a man of flesh and blood. And he speaks quite differently from the characters of romance. Shakespeare's genius puts Benedick (and Beatrice) into the dream world to light up with the blaze of their vitality the dark corners of illusion and show the shadows for what they are. (It is the opposite of Jane Austen's method in *Northanger Abbey*, and a much more difficult task. That men persist in reading the play as though it were *Northanger Abbey* is not Shakespeare's fault.) Benedick is involved in the plot of Claudio and Hero, and by his presence shows it up for what it is. There are two sorts of loves set against each other here: the romantic, conventional, false ideal of love of the romances, and the love of humans for each other.

The sort of language Benedick brings with him into the plot, the sorts of things he talks about, women, marriage, marital infidelity, adultery, cuckoldry, creates the whole actual world of returned soldiers to whom war has apparently been merely a period of enforced continence. The hot prick in the blood of desire is there. One has the sense of a seething animal world which the out-moded code of chivalry is unfit to control. He forces the characters of the romance, by his presence, into some sort of life, and while he is on the stage they speak like him and share his existence. When he leaves them they fall back again into the mannered speech and action of their parts.

But the play is not only this. The business of playing a part as the people in a romance do, is linked by Shakespeare to the whole idea of the mask, the desire to be, or the playing at being, some-one one is not, the misunderstanding from that of oneself, and the coming to

self-knowledge in the eyes of another. And this is the purpose of the story of Benedick and Beatrice.

Like Claudio and Hero, Benedick and Beatrice have already met, and they, before we see them, have apparently reacted violently to each other. But they mistake the nature of this passion and get very near to thinking it hatred. The Masked Ball is a picture in visual and formal terms of this misconception of humans one of another; most of the time it is a joke although it can do damage. Benedick and Beatrice have to be deceived by Don Pedro into the truth. Ironically, they are made aware that the response each feels to the other is love, by a trick. Half the fun of this play is in Benedick's first stumbling attempts at self-analysis, and the final realization of the truth of what he is and feels in the love of Beatrice. Beatrice, like all the women in the Masked Ball, mistakes a fast and unfeelingly shrewish wit for a merry humour and good spirits. She learns what she feels for Benedick, and the mask of the sharp tongue, which has protected her from knowledge of herself, is dropped. She learns that wit does not lie in being rude about a man's face and person. (Benedick's wit always does Beatrice justice in declaring her fair, though possessed of a fury.)

All the dramatic complications of these stories (the plot) turn about the person of Don John. He is of all hollow men surely the hollowest. He is all outside, a melancholic straight from a book of definition. I cannot think of him wearing anything but black, and he is long and lean. His reason for being a villian is that as he is a melancholic it would be out of character for him to be jolly like everyone else. He has some trumpery excuse about hating his brother, but as he never does *him* any harm, it is obviously not important. I find Don John very funny. His language, the embodiment in words of his languid posing, is wonderfully weary, wonderfully standard. He hasn't even energy enough to think up his own villainy and has an underling to do this for him. The richness of Shakespeare's comic invention in this play is fantastic. Borachio, the underling, just happens to have been pretending to be a perfumer when he overheard Don Pedro's undertaking to woo Hero for Claudio. He just happens to have wormed his way into Margaret's affections last time the company were in Messina. He just happens to be a much brighter villain than his master. He also just happens to ruin everything by spilling the knowledge of his activities abroad in the streets, to the distorting ears of the watch. Shakespeare, as Saintsbury says, could so easily have made a different story of it. But why should he when he did not want to? Don John and Borachio could not do anything but bungle, and it is necessary that they should. Before the denunciation scene, which is therefore robbed of any powerful emotional effect on us which, if we persist in mishearing, it might have, we know that justice, in however odd a guise, will be done.

If Don John and Borachio belong to the world of Romance, Dogberry and Verges are of the earth. And they connect the two stories and their two qualities. They have so completely misunderstood

themselves that the very language they use, the terms by which they know themselves, are permanently deranged. And they have only the most rudimentary idea of the romantic world in which they find themselves. Romances are essentially concerned with abstractions, ideal notions, like honour, trust, faith, nobility, mercy.These officers of the law have only the remotest hint of what an abstraction like justice is. (And yet in their stumbling way they aspire to those ideas which men have developed in more sensitive and intelligent areas of their relationships with each other. They are not content to speak themselves. In denying themselves they speak a no-man's language.) Dogberry and Verges are the other side of the coin of Claudio and Hero. They are the real world full of the misapprehension of the ideal, Claudio and Hero are an ideal world without life. Benedick and Beatrice are the finer human balance of the two. When the balance is not kept, when men do not know themselves, their thoughts, words and actions end not in tragedy but in *Much Ado About Nothing*. Shakespeare's purpose here, is the purpose of all serious writers, a moral one.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Editors,
THEORIA.

Dear Sirs,

Mr Cope, in his article *Language and the World View* (*Theoria* 9), says that

> '. . . the problem [of the exact nature of thought and the exact nature of its relation to speech] is now being approached from a different angle, with the accent on the relationship between language and culture, for thought is to such a large extent conditioned by culture, that this study, the study of metalinguistics, may shed a little light.'

I must ask to be allowed, through your correspondence columns, to request a more specific prospectus, a more systematic and rigorous account of the procedures that Mr Cope advocates. For his implicit promise is, despite the modest hesitancy of the expression, a large one; and Mr Cope's examples from Zulu seem to me disappointingly to demonstrate, not so much that 'there is a close correlation between language structure and the world view', as that the adumbrated science of determining the nature of this correlation must rest on shaky foundations.

Mr Cope's first example relates the abundance of Zulu terms for cattle with the importance of cattle in Zulu culture; his second quotes a number of English words for 'horse', but stops short of the deduction that the horse is far more important than the cow in English culture. The two examples may have a certain degree of validity, but are misleading in so far as they suggest that one could deduce statements about a culture by a mathematical process from numerical data about a language. One mediaeval English poem uses some twenty different words for 'man', an apparent abundance of distinctions that might be plausibly related to mediaeval distinctions of rank; but before drawing our conclusions we must allow for a poetic convention that often required, for alliterative effect, a number of absolute synonyms for words of common occurrence; and when we have discounted these, as representing no real distinctions of meaning, we are left with hardly any distinguishing terms that cannot be rendered in modern English.

The number of words a language uses to distinguish species within a genus cannot be assumed to be in direct proportion to the importance attached to the genus. One must first consider, for example,

whether the language in question has a general tendency to distinguish between related things by using unrelated words, rather than by using different adjectives with a single general term; and whether the conventions of speaking or writing in the language tend to multiply undifferentiated synonyms (e.g. in the interests of 'elegant variation' in some Romance languages).

Conversely, the Zulu use of the same word for 'blue' and 'green' (parallelled in the Welsh 'glâs') need not indicate, as we might be led to suppose, a deficiency of colour-perception among Zulus; have they perhaps another way of distinguishing, at need, between the two colours? When Mr Cope quotes a fragment of Zulu poetry that cannot be translated into English, one may feel that the English language is the one that is deficient, in its lack of a term that could express the quality—it now begins to haunt me and to crave expression—that green and blue have in common. Disputes about whether a given object is green or blue cause much unnecessary discord among English-speaking people. The new science must acquire objective criteria of linguistic deficiency; this is a fundamental requirement that I hardly hope to see fulfilled.

The oriental philosopher who periodically tested his pupils' progress by applying a lighted candle to their arms and asking them to comment on the process is said to have received three different replies, depending on the degree of philosophic detachment attained by the victims: 'You burned me', 'You burned my arm', and 'You burned an arm'. Would the metalinguist infer from language structures that the English attain Standards I and II with equal facility, while the Zulu (who says 'I am going to be cut, the hair') belongs in Standard I? If so, the Frenchman who says 'Je me suis coupé les cheveux' sticks in Standard I too—unless one takes his unsupported word for it that 'me' is the indirect object and not the direct, in which case he goes straight up to Standard III.

The Englishman says 'I am' and 'he is', and thus (in common with most Europeans) refuses to recognize a common state of *being* in himself and his fellow-men. The Afrikaner says 'ek is' and 'hy is': an awareness of the common lot of mankind—at least in so far as the state of *being* is concerned—is implicit in the language in which he thinks. Meanwhile the Portuguese, with the two verbs 'ser' and 'estar', makes habitually the distinction between essence and accident that we have to learn laboriously and express circuitously.

Are these representative of the kind of conclusions to be drawn by metalinguists? Such relations between language and the 'world-view' are of a kind that might conceivably be made convincing and illuminating in the context of an achieved work of art; but not, it seems to me, in a scientific context. The relation that Mr Cope suggests between language and landscape in Zululand and Basutoland is surely not radically different from these.

Mr Cope says,

> 'Gender survives as a grammatical device, and the underlying semantic implication has to a large extent lost its significance; unlike the grammatical category of number which strongly maintains its semantic correlation. The study of metalinguistics is more concerned with those aspects of language structure which are still living semantically, as it is the study of these aspects that yields the most significant information concerning the world view of the culture; . . .'

but how are the forms that are 'still living semantically' to be distinguished except by testing their relation to the 'world view' determined by other means? A science that proposes to apply to its data a criterion of relevance so conveniently circular, and can reject (as 'semantically dead') any data that do not fit an independently established conclusion, can hardly be expected to make new contributions to knowledge.

I am grateful to Mr Cope for certain pieces of curious information —for example, that Zulu, like Welsh, uses initial inflections or mutations to baffle the beginner with a dictionary. But where he goes beyond the presentation of such facts, I can only accept his conclusions in so far as his intimate knowledge of the languages he speaks of commands a certain respect for his intuitive judgements. The case for a science of metalinguistics does not seem to me to have been made.

R. T. JONES.

P.S.—Surely it is unusual, in English, for the sun (as distinct from the effects of its warmth and light) to be called 'beautiful', since it is generally not possible to look at it? And I cannot imagine the sun rising 'in russet mantle clad', except perhaps in a London smog (Shakespeare wrote: 'But look, the *morn*, in russet mantle clad . . .'—which is not at all the same thing).

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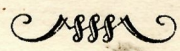

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