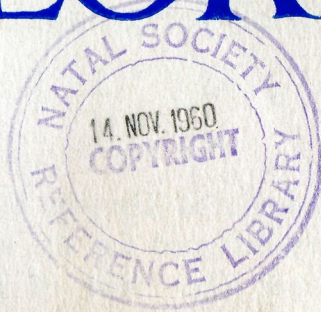


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THEORIA

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EDITORIAL COMMENT

Non-political as it is, *Theoria* 15 bears at least one mark of the unhappy situation in which our country finds itself at present. It was the 'Emergency' which (no doubt inadvertently) provided one of our contributors with the leisure to write a long article. We are happy to be able to publish a criticism of *Antony and Cleopatra* written by Mr D. R. C. Marsh during his sojourn in Pietermaritzburg gaol; and we hope it will serve as an example to others who may find themselves in the same box in course of time, of how to make a virtue of necessity and dispel pleasantly and fruitfully at least some of the tedium of their plight.

We are glad to have an article by Dr McConkey on Education, two articles, by Mr Carney and Mr Bicknell, on Classical Studies, and another Chaucer essay by Mr Whittock, completing his study of the Marriage Debate.

As usual argument is proceeding briskly in the Correspondence Column, to which we hope all readers will feel free to contribute.

Our next number, we hope, will include a symposium on the Population Problem.

THE EDITORS.

THE CONFLICT OF LOVE AND
RESPONSIBILITY IN *ANTONY AND*
CLEOPATRA

by

D. R. C. MARSH

(written in Pietermaritzburg Gaol, May, 1960)

I cannot think of any other play by Shakespeare in which the central theme is so boldly and so immediately established as in *Antony and Cleopatra*. Philo's first words establish one pole; twelve lines later the first exchange between Antony and Cleopatra establishes the other, and between these two poles arcs the tremendous current of passion and thought which is the play. At first, these two opposing views appear to be simply and clearly defined. Nothing could be more direct than Philo's first speech:

Nay, but this dotage of our general's
O'erflows the measure; those his goodly eyes,
That o'er the files and musters of the war
Have glow'd like plated Mars, now bend, now turn
The office and devotion of their view
Upon a tawny front; his captain's heart,
Which in the scuffles of great fights hath burst
The buckles on his breast, reneges all temper,
And is become the bellows and the fan
To cool a gipsy's lust. Look! where they come.
Take but good note, and you shall see in him
The triple pillar of the world transform'd
Into a strumpet's fool; behold and see. (I : i : 1)

This provides the one view, that of a degenerate and besotted Antony, casting aside his virtue, his manhood, his responsibilities ('The triple pillar of the world'), and receiving in return only sensual gratification, earning and deserving the mockery of the world. To be set against this is

Cleo. If it be love indeed, tell me how much?

Ant. There's beggary in the love that can be reckon'd.

Cleo. I'll set a bourn how far to be beloved

Ant. Then must thou needs find out new heaven, new earth.

(I : i : 14)

a formal yet tender exchange, which denies or ignores the world of responsibilities implied in Philo's speech, and claims instead a transcendental value for their love, which becomes the ultimate reality, the only value by which they can live.

The play which follows is exactly this clash between love and responsibility. It is not a new theme, but one of the great dilemmas of all men, here worked out with astonishing subtlety and complexity. If one looks back to the first speech of the play, one finds that even there, the two opposing values are both implied, the superb poetry knitting them so tightly together that the one is suggested at the same time that the other is stated.

Antony, in his public capacity, is a great soldier and a great general; he is compared by Philo to the God of War himself, but in a way that suggests that, if that is all that he is, he is something less than human. 'Plated Mars' suggests to me not only the armoured god, but also, because of its mechanical sound, the statue of the armoured god, with something ruthless and inhuman about it. But Antony is not an automaton, and there is an underlying realisation in the speech that it is his human qualities that have made him the great general that he is. It is his 'Captain's heart', impatient of all restraint, that gives him his courage, and that heart is also the seat of his love. Similarly, the words used to describe his ordering of the battle suggest in their religious connotation a very different sort of devotion, so that 'the office and devotion of their view' looks forward to the other great value by which he lives, his love. It is in phrases like 'tawny front', 'a gipsy's lust', and 'a strumpet's fool' that Philo's real condemnation of Antony is revealed, yet here Philo is not competent to judge. Love creates its own value in the object of that love, and that value, in turn, creates more love. In this respect the contradiction inherent in

. the bellows and the fan
To cool a gipsy's lust

is a revealing one, for it suggests the blowing up and heating of a furnace at least as strongly as it does the cooling process, and implies a recognition of the strength of Antony's passion. It is a great love because he is great-hearted, as is immediately demonstrated by his instinctive and generous answer to Cleopatra's question, the usual question of the lover, who wants to hear again the statement of the miracle of that love:

There's beggary in the love that can be reckon'd.

followed by the sweeping claim that their love sets aside all other considerations, transcends all other values, in building up a new reality, 'new heaven, new earth'. This too, is the traditional answer of the lover, though expressed here with unusual force, but it can never be a final answer, particularly not for these two lovers. The world intrudes, for this man is 'The triple pillar of the world' and this woman the Queen of Egypt. They are not like Romeo and

Juliet, for whom the world exists only as a background to their love, and for whom the difficulty of making a choice between the world and each other is never a real one, but a mature man and woman, with great responsibilities, on whom many others depend. They must try to reconcile the demands of love and duty, for to love, they must live. They fail, as all must in the end, but their failure is the play.

Antony attempts, in his dismissal of the messenger from Rome, to turn his back upon the world, but that is impossible, for the world is all around, as even Cleopatra's teasing of him, to confirm him in his resolve not to hear the messenger, serves to remind us. She gets the response from him that she is angling for, a testimony of his love for her, and perhaps that is all she wants, for after his

Let Rome in Tiber melt, and the wide arch
Of the rang'd Empire fall! Here is my space.
Kingdoms are clay; our dungy earth alike
Feeds beast as man; the nobleness of life
Is to do thus; when such a mutual pair
And such a twain can do't, in which I bind
On pain of punishment, the world to weet
We stand up peerless. (I : i : 33)

one can only echo her own response, 'Excellent falsehood'. Even in his denial of his responsibility to the 'wide arch/Of the rang'd Empire' and all that the arch image implies in stability and order for the world, Antony is conscious and proud of their own position in the world. To love as they do may well be the 'nobleness of life', this is one of the things that the play establishes, but the world cannot be daff'd aside so easily. What Antony is certain of is the strength of his love; he still has to learn that his responsibilities will not allow him to renounce them, and live.

The complexity of attitude established thus early is continued in the next scene. Cleopatra's court is gay, sensual and amoral, but there is a deeper note sounding through the gaiety. This is a play about love, as so many, I had almost said all, of Shakespeare's plays are, and here is yet another view of love: a game to be played for the pleasure it gives. But there are remarks that comment on the light-hearted certainty of Cleopatra's attendants, and on Antony's claim of certainty, which suggests that life is too complex to admit of any simple assurance about anything.

Charmian: Is this the man? Is't you sir, that know things?

Soothsayer: In nature's infinite book of secrecy
A little I can read. (I : ii : 9)

and perhaps it is not too fanciful to suggest that the ominous irony of Charmian's

E'en as the overflowing Nilus presageth Famine
(I : ii : 52)

touches the same string. Certainly Enobarbus's blunt comment

Mine and most of our fortunes tonight shall be
drunk to bed. (I : ii : 48)

reminds the reader that for those who follow the fortunes of Antony and Cleopatra this is not 'the nobleness of life' but a life of idleness and indulgence, which in the end, as we shall see, rots Enobarbus. Yet in a play in which, from one point of view, the cold and calculating caution of Caesar emerges victorious, it is as well to remember that Charmian's

O excellent, I love long life better than figs
(I : ii : 48)

suggests, however light-heartedly, that it is the quality rather than the duration of living that establishes the value of life.

Antony, who is trying to live in two worlds, has meantime, as Cleopatra says, been struck by 'a Roman thought', and decides to receive the news from Rome. She, who in her dealings with her lover very seldom starts an argument that she cannot be sure of winning, leaves him alone. In his honest and self-critical reception of the messenger's news, Antony shows another reason why it is not absurd that the play should seek to establish him, in Cleopatra's eyes, as the greatest man in the world. Making no attempt to excuse his idleness, he faces his choice:

These strong Egyptian fetters I must break
Or lose myself in dotage. (I : ii : 125)

It is the world and his own personal honour that calls most loudly at the moment. For all his self-criticism, though, his knowledge of himself is not complete. He can wryly pay the dead Fulvia her exact due, examine his own response to the news, even feel that in a sense he is under Cleopatra's spell, but he cannot yet realize how strongly he is bound to her, or to his life of idleness and sensual gratification, a bondage neatly pointed by the soldier Enobarbus's reply when called:

What's your pleasure, sir? (I : ii : 140)

Enobarbus's cynicism sees nothing to lament in Fulvia's death

. . . . the tears live in an onion that should water this
sorrow. (I : ii : 182)

but he can defend Cleopatra from Antony's rueful

She is cunning past man's thought (I : ii : 155)

for he sees that all her acting of parts and changes of mood are natural to her. Enobarbus affects to believe in nothing but himself, but he loves Antony, and when, having betrayed his trust, he learns that Antony's love for him can survive self-interest, he dies of a broken heart. It is Enobarbus, clear-sighted, anti-romantic, and in the end honest, who describes Cleopatra in the terms which, more than anything she does in the play, (Shakespeare was aware,

after all, of the difficulties of having her played by a boy) show why Antony loves her.

Antony is called back to Rome by his duty, and it is another indication of the mastery of this astonishing play that it is not an idealized duty that is presented. The Romans whom he goes to defend he describes as

. our slippery people
 whose love is never link'd to the deservert
 Till his deserts are past. (I : ii 198)

He is under no illusions. He goes partly to defend his own possessions, and partly because he has given his word to the other Triumvirs, who need his support against Pompey. Cleopatra knows that he must go, but she must tease him too, to prove to herself that her importance in his eyes has not been diminished. So, with her own personal and appealing mixture of affectation and quick emotion, she collapses before Antony can break the news of his intended departure, and then, recovering, taunts him with his lack of fidelity, first to Fulvia, now to her. In the context, her taunts serve as the vehicle for her declaration of love.

Nay pray you, seek no colour for your going
 But bid farewell and go; when you sue'd staying
 Then was the time for words; no going then,
 Eternity was in our lips and eyes,
 Bliss in our brows bent; none of our parts so poor
 But was a race of heaven; they are so still,
 Or thou, the greatest soldier of the world,
 Art turned the greatest liar. (I : iii : 32)

Here the rarity and self-sufficiency of their shared love is beautifully suggested in the suspension of time for the kissing lovers, while the reference to their lips and eyes suggests as well their solemn exchange of vows. She continues to taunt him, to remind him of their love, and for the pleasure of seeing him grow angry. But she knows that he must go, and when she has teased him enough, she shows, in poetry whose dignity and control conveys its sincerity, what emptiness and idleness his absence will mean for her, because her source of life will be gone.

'Tis sweating labour
 To bear such idleness so near the heart
 As Cleopatra this. But sir, forgive me;
 Since my becomings kill me when they do not
 Eye well to you; your honour calls you hence;
 Therefore be deaf to my unpitied folly,
 And all the gods go with you! Upon your sword
 Sit laurel victory! and smooth success
 Be strew'd before your feet! (I : iii : 93)

Throughout the play, Cleopatra will do anything, act any part, until what she strives to avoid is seen as inevitable, when she bears

it with real dignity. Antony, all thought of breaking from her bondage for the moment forgotten, leaves with an affirmation of their love.

Yet another view of this love is presented in the discussion which follows between Octavius and Lepidus. To Octavius it is lust, appetite, no more, and rather sanctimoniously he mourns for the man that Antony used to be. This speech is intended by him as a condemnation of Antony, but since Antony proves that he has not changed, the speech is turned to a tribute to him, convincing in its concretely-imagined physical detail.

Antony

Leave thy lascivious wassails, — When thou once
Wast beaten from Modena, where thou slew'st
Hirtius and Pansa, consuls, at thy heel
Did Famine follow, who thou fought'st against,
Though daintily brought up, with patience more
Than savages could suffer; thou didst drink
The stale of horses and the gilded puddle
Which beasts would cough at

. and all this —

It wounds thy honour that I speak it now —
Was borne so like a soldier, that thy cheek
So much as lank'd not.

(I : iv : 55)

Caesar is wrong. Antony still has this fortitude, this ability to bear suffering, this physical courage. It is only in his judgment that he is not the man he was, for he cannot decide what is the most important thing in his life, or reconcile the conflict between his love and his duty. Moreover, when one remembers some of the aspects of the man he was in *Julius Caesar*, what a friend of mine has called his 'gangster' characteristics, and the confidence and cold-blooded certainty with which he plunges his country into civil war, and then exploits the situation, one wonders whether his present state is really such a falling off. Caesar does not love him, for he sees him as a rival, but he is forced to recognise his quality.

Cleopatra does love him, and when he is away, can talk more freely of what he means to her, without any fear of making him over-confident. We are shown, too, just how accurate was her diagnosis of the emptiness of her life without him. This sort of idleness is as hard to bear as 'sweating labour'.

Cleo: Give me to drink mandragora.

Charmian: Why, Madam?

Cleo: That I might sleep out this great gap of time

My Antony is away. (I : v : 4)

She cannot help thinking of him, and yet to do so is, as she says, to feed herself 'With most delicious poison.' (I : v : 27) for all sorts of doubts creep in. She is growing old, she is no longer as beautiful as she was, yet she has been loved (even her image for the effect of

the sun on her skin is that of a lover: 'with Phoebus' amorous pinches black') and there is some consolation in that. The way in which Antony is constantly in her thoughts is shown in her greeting of her messenger from him.

How much art thou unlike Mark Antony. . . . (I : v : 35)

She is teased back into a good mood by her attendants, who reassure her of her attractiveness. The act closes with her doing all that she can to keep herself occupied, happily brushing aside the reminders of her former loves, in the certainty of her love for Antony.

My salad days,
When I was green in judgment, cold in blood
To say as I said then! But come, away;
Get me ink and paper:
He shall have every day a several greeting,
Or I'll unpeople Egypt. (I : v : 72)

Act II is mainly a Roman act. After Pompey, Menecrates and Menas have heard, with some trepidation, the news of Antony's intervention in the war, Scene ii shows the meeting of Antony and Caesar, with Lepidus weakly trying to smooth over the quarrel between them. Caesar is sharply reminded that Antony is still very much the man he was. In the discussion, Antony is prepared to go as far as his pride will let him, in an attempt to heal the breach between them, but even so, he cannot always quite conceal his contempt for Caesar,

. As for my wife,
I would you had her spirit in such another:
The third o' the world is yours, which with a snaffle
You may pace easy, but not such a wife. (II : ii : 65)

a comment which is also a rueful admission of his own inability to control Fulvia. It is when Caesar questions his honour directly that his strength is allowed to show, and then the menace is unmistakable.

Caesar: You have broken
The article of your oath, which you shall never
Have tongue to charge me with.

Lepid. Soft, Caesar.

Antony: No,
Lepidus, let him speak.
The honour's sacred which he talks on now,
Suppose that I lack'd it. But on, Caesar,
The article of my oath. (II : ii : 85)

This touch of steel is all that is needed: Caesar accepts the explanation, which in its arrogance can hardly be called an apology, and a sort of friendship is restored, at least for as long as Pompey is to remain a danger, as Enobarbus shrewdly points out. So completely is Antony now in control that when Agrippa hesitantly

suggests the marriage of Antony and Octavia as a way to prevent further discord, and Caesar tries to reassert himself by mocking at Antony's relationship with Cleopatra, he is silenced by one curt sentence.

I am not married Caesar; let me hear
Agrippa further speak. (II : ii : 129)

This is a marriage of policy, it is clear, and in it Antony seeks two things. It is decided on as an affair of state, but Antony also seems to hope that it will prove some assurance against being lured back to Egypt. He has slipped easily back into the habit of power, and he enjoys the way he takes command, in fact if not in form, of the expedition against Pompey. For the moment, as Antony moves with assurance in this other world of his, it seems as if the 'strong Egyptian fetters' are being struck off. This is not to be. The scene is followed immediately by Enobarbus's famous description of the first meeting of the lovers, when Cleopatra

pursed up his heart, upon the river Cydnus (II : ii : 194)

When one remembers that it is the cynical Enobarbus speaking, the tribute to her charm is overwhelming. And extraordinarily enough, the fact that her first appearance was so carefully arranged does nothing to lessen the freshness and vitality of the appeal she makes. The speech is sufficiently well-known to make lengthy quotation unnecessary, but it is worth noticing how the images of passion, of worth, of royalty, of sexual attraction and of delicacy and tenderness are all woven together, so that when the explicit comparison is made, 'outpicturing that Venus', it is accepted without question, just as has the comparison of Antony with Mars. They are god-like figures. The whole impression made by Enobarbus's description is of a beauty and a power of attraction too great to be resisted. Even the air

. but for vacancy
Had gone to gaze on Cleopatra too
And made a gap in nature. (II : ii : 225)

It should not be forgotten that this is not the end of Enobarbus's description, though this is the point at which quotation usually stops. It is her unpredictability just as much as her contrivance that gives her her charm; whatever she does becomes her. The play never shows anything to make one doubt the truth of Enobarbus's commendation

. I saw her once
Hop forty paces through the public street
And having lost her breath, she spoke, and panted
That she did make defect, perfection,
And breathless, power breathe forth. (II : ii : 238)

Then comes the summing up of why Antony loves her, because she has the variety and freshness of life itself:

Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale
 Her infinite variety; other women cloy
 The appetites they feed, but she makes hungry
 Where most she satisfies (II : ii : 242)

Set against this description, Antony's boyish sincerity with Octavia seems naïve, and doomed to failure.

. My Octavia
 Read not my blemishes in the world's report;
 I have not kept my square, but that to come
 Shall all be done by the rule. (II : iii : 4)

It needs only the soothsayer, himself a reminder of Egypt, to make some vague prognostications for Antony to believe them, in order to find an excuse for going back to Cleopatra.

I will to Egypt;
 And though I make this marriage for my peace
 I' the East my pleasure lies. (II : iii : 38)

News of Antony's marriage has by this time reached Cleopatra, who turns on the messenger in a fury, strikes him, threatens to blind him, and finally offers to kill him, only being restrained by Charmian, who protests that the man is innocent. Muttering darkly

Some innocents 'scape not the thunderbolt (II : iv : 77)

which is true, Cleopatra manages to calm herself enough to remember to ask what her rival is like. Her love for Antony, her concern for herself, and her jealousy are all mixed up together in an expression of the intensity of her passion and the impulsiveness of her life.

I faint. O Iras! Charmian! 'tis no matter.
 Go to the fellow, good Alexas; bid him
 Report the feature of Octavia, her years,
 Her inclination, let him not leave out
 The colour of her hair; bring me word quickly.
 Let him forever go — let him not — Charmian!
 Though he be painted one way like a Gorgon
 The other way's a Mars. Bid you Alexas
 Bring me word how tall she is. Pity me Charmian
 But do not speak to me. Lead me to my chamber.
 (II : v : 119)

There is something very appealing about the way she gives voice to thoughts that others would conceal. Impulsive she may be, but there is something so disarming in her honesty of impulse that it protects her from the charge of hypocrisy.

Back across the Mediterranean, a meeting has been arranged between Pompey and the Triumvirs, which ends in an unexpected settlement. The expected battle turns to a feasting, at which Enobarbus, relaxing in the company of men who are, like himself, professional soldiers, explains Antony's marriage in such brutally

frank terms that what he says must be accepted as the last word on why it must surely fail.

Enob. Octavia is of a holy, cold and still conversation.

Men. Who would not have his wife so?

Enob. Not he that himself is not so, which is Mark Antony. He will to his Egyptian dish again; then, shall the sighs of Octavia blow the fire up in Caesar, and, as I said before, that which is the strength of their amity shall prove the immediate author of their variance. Antony will use his affection where it is; he married but his occasion here. (II : vi : 139)

Soon Enobarbus's prediction is proved correct, and Antony is on his way back to Cleopatra. Pompey, his chance of absolute power missed because of his own sense of conventional honour, is done to death, while Lepidus, whose weakness provides yet another comment on love and fidelity, as the following exchange shows, is, for all his protestations of love, deposed by Caesar.

Agrippa. 'Tis a noble Lepidus.

Enobarbus. A very fine one. O! how he loves Caesar.

Agr. Nay, but how dearly he adores Mark Antony.

Enob. Caesar? Why, he's the Jupiter of men.

Agr. What's Antony? The god of Jupiter.

Enob. Spake you of Caesar? How! the non-pareil

.....
But he loves Caesar best; yet he loves Antony.

Hoo! hearts, tongues, figures, scribes, bards
poets, cannot

Think, speak, cast, write, sing, number; hoo!

His love to Antony. But as for Caesar,

Kneel down, kneel down, and wonder.

Agr. Both he loves (III : ii : 6)

His inability to decide where his love and his duty lie costs him his life, so his minor tragedy, too, mirrors the greater. It is now apparent that a clash between Antony and Caesar for the mastery of the world is inevitable. Poor Octavia is only a counter in this political game, for she is no rival for Cleopatra in Antony's heart, and she seems only to be used by her brother. She is cast aside, and so provides, as Enobarbus has predicted, the reason for the war. She, too, is caught up in the greater tragedy, and destroyed by it.

In the impending struggle, the balance of power appears to be almost equal, but there is one great disadvantage to Antony. Cleopatra insists on taking a part in the planning and fighting of the war, and Antony, because he loves her, can neither exclude her nor ignore her advice. It is Enobarbus again who bluntly points out the folly of this:

If we should serve with horse and mares together
 The horse were merely lost; the mares would bear
 A soldier and his horse. (III : vii : 7)

Love and war are opposed values, and cannot be combined, but Antony tries, with an odd mixture of professional soldiership and tenderness, to include Cleopatra in his councils of war.

Is it not strange Canidius
 That from Tarentum and Brundisium
 He could so quickly cut the Ionian sea,
 And take in Toryne? You have heard on't, sweet?
 (III : vii : 20)

As Enobarbus recognises, his desire to appear well in Cleopatra's eyes is affecting his judgment as a general. He accepts Caesar's dare to fight at sea, even though Caesar has not accepted his own challenge. In spite of all reason, even in the face of an appeal from one of his veteran soldiers, he will neither change his mind nor consider the possible consequences of his actions. He merely repeats, with a trace of shame-facedness, his decision

By sea, by sea. (III : vii : 40)

By sea the battle goes against him, and when it is lost, his reputation for invincibility is lost as well. His followers no longer have confidence in his generalship, and, anxious to be on the winning side, they flock to Caesar. The description of the sea-fight makes it clear that it is Cleopatra's timidity, and Antony's concern for her, that loses him the day.

Scarus. Gods and goddesses
 All the whole synod of them!
 Enob. What's thy passion?
 Scar. The greater cantle of the world is lost
 With very ignorance; we have kiss'd away
 Kingdoms and provinces. (III : viii : 14)

Now the implications of his choice between love and the world are becoming clear to Antony. He has already made that choice, almost involuntarily, in his decision to fight by sea, a decision made because his love for Cleopatra would not allow him to do otherwise. Now he has to find that love itself is not self-sufficient, that the world he has slighted will not be excluded. Canidius, seeing his defeat, deserts to the enemy, as do many of the kings in his train, the roll-call of whom had earlier made such a brave show. His love reveals itself for what it is, all-demanding. It will not even allow him to keep his pride as a soldier, the other great value by which he has lived. He must bear his shame.

Ant. Hark! the land bids me tread no more upon't.
 It is ashamed to bear me. Friends, come hither.
 I am so lated in the world that I
 Have lost my way for ever. (III : ix : 1)

This shame that he feels is so great that he is deaf and blind to Cleopatra's presence, for the sake of whose love he must bear it all. To have to yield to Caesar without being defeated by him seems almost unbearable, and all the fighting soldier's scorn for a man who has not fought comes out in

. He, at Philippi kept
 His sword e'en like a dancer, while I struck
 The lean and wrinkled Cassius; and 'twas I
 That the mad Brutus ended: he alone
 Dealt on lieutenantry, and no practice had
 In the brave squares of war: yet now — No matter.

(III : ix : 40)

When he does become aware of Cleopatra, it is a measure of his magnanimity that his bitterness with himself is not turned against her. Calling her formally by her title, as he is to do again, most movingly, later in the play, he tells her only that he loves her, and, knowing that, that she might have foreseen the consequences of her flight. Her tears make him again conscious of his love for her, and he reaffirms the value of that love for him. It is a value of which he is most conscious, for it has already exacted a high price from him.

Fall not a tear, I say; one of them rates
 All that is won and lost. Give me a kiss,
 Even this repays me.

(III : ix : 69)

In spite of his tenderness, there is a weariness of soul here that is most revealing. Just as Antony was the great soldier because of his great-heartedness, which also explains his capacity for loving greatly, so now, when he has been hurt in the other great quality of his life, his honour, he has lost something of his vitality and greatness as a lover. He has to retrieve his manhood by fighting again, and winning. After that, there are no more defeats, and in his love too, there is no wavering. He can be a man again, and remains so to the end.

Now Antony sends his schoolmaster to Caesar, to yield him the victory, and to ask to be allowed to live as a private citizen, but of course this request is refused. Antony can never be that, and Caesar, knowing his own power, answers with contempt. Knowing too, that the last humiliation for Antony would be Cleopatra's turning against him, he offers to reward her richly if she will deliver up Antony, dead or alive. Antony's honesty, and his trust in her, which remains fundamentally unshaken, make him tell her of this way to save herself:

Ant. The queen then shall have courtesy, so she
 Will yield us up?

Euph. He says so.

Ant. Let her know't.
To the boy Caesar send this grizzled head,
And he will fill thy wishes to the brim
With principalities.

Cleo. That head, my lord? (III : xi : 14)

Her simple reply, implying as it does all her love for him, and the tremendous value that he has for her, is all that is necessary. It is her statement of the love and trust that they share. In his anger at Caesar's insolence, Antony again challenges him to single combat, a piece of bravado that elicits from Enobarbus the sardonic comment:

Yes, like enough high-battled Caesar will
Unstate his happiness, and be staged to the show
Against a sworder! I see men's judgments are
A parcel of their fortunes, and things outward
Do draw the inward quality after them,
To suffer all alike. That he should dream,
Knowing all measures, the full Caesar will
Answer his emptiness! Caesar, thou hast subdu'd
His judgment too. (III : xi : 29)

This sort of anger, the anger of despair, is useless, for it has no inner strength to back it up. Enobarbus can see clearly that this sort of ranting is worthless, but he does not recognise the change in Antony when, with real pride, he regains control of the only thing that is left to him, the most important thing of all: himself.

Cleopatra's reception of Caesar's messenger presents some difficulties. Is she prepared to negotiate with Caesar? As I read the scene, it seems most unlikely. She is a woman, and must fight with a woman's weapons, for herself and the man she loves.

Thyr. He knows that you embrace not Antony
As you did love, but as you fear'd him.

Cleo. O!

Thyr. The scars upon your honour therefore, he
Does pity, as constrain'd blemishes
Not as deserv'd.

Cleo. He is a god, and knows
What is most right. Mine honour was not yield'd
But conquer'd merely. (III : xi : 56)

The grossness of the flattery here makes it impossible for what she says to be taken seriously. Here, as later, she is surely playing for time, which she realizes Antony desperately needs in order to find himself again. Returning, Antony finds Caesar's messenger kissing her hand, and, like Hamlet, is put into a 'towering passion'.

Ant. Favours, by Jove that thunders!
What art thou, fellow?

Cleo. Ah! dear, if I be so,
 From my cold heart let heaven engender hail,
 And poison it in the source; and the first stone
 Drop in my neck: as it determines, so
 Dissolve my life. The next Caesarion smite,
 Till by degrees the memory of my womb
 Together with my brave Egyptians all,
 By the discandying of this pelleted storm
 Lie graveless, till the flies and gnats of Nile
 Have buried them for prey!

Ant. I am satisfied. (III : xi : 153)

This is a speech that carries conviction because of the realization it contains of what a betrayal of her love would mean to her. Not only are there the cold and destructive associations of the hail, created by the coldness of her heart, there is also the idea that love, which is life to her, would be poisoned at its source, and that life would become impossible. Such an unfaithful heart could not sustain life, for everything by which she has lived would lose its reality. There is the repetition too, of an image already introduced in Antony's 'Authority melts from me of late', which is to become more and more insistent as the play moves to its close, that of 'discandying'. Applied to the hail, it suggests of course its melting, but there is a more fundamental reason why images suggesting a lack of substantiality and a loss of form should become more frequent, which will be discussed later.

Antony, reassured in his love, can fight again like a man, and not like a cornered wild beast. That he is far from confident of victory is shown by the undertone of finality in

Come
 Let's have one other gaudy night; call to me
 All my sad captains; fill our bowls once more
 Let's mock the midnight bell (III : xi : 181)

He knows that his great choice was made irrevocably when he returned to Egypt, but he determines to face the consequences. He is in command of himself again, and he can be both soldier and lover again, as Cleopatra recognises

. since my lord
 Is Antony again, I will be Cleopatra.

Ant. Do so, we'll speak to them, and tonight I'll force
 The wine peep through their scars. Come, my queen;
 There's sap in't yet. The next time I do fight
 I'll make death love me, for I will contend
 Even with his pestilent scythe. (III : xi : 185)

In this speech death and life are so subtly mingled as almost to defy comment, but what does emerge most strikingly is again the affirmation of the need to live to the full, to experience the mingled pleasure and pain of being alive, (the wine peeping

through the scars) regardless of the certain outcome. Words suggesting love and life, like 'force', 'sap', 'wine' and 'love', are balanced against 'scars', 'fight', 'death' and most forceful of all, 'pestilent scythe'. What Antony says in effect, is that he will live until he dies, which is the only sort of victory over death that any mortal can win. Here Enobarbus goes wrong. He cannot see the difference between this attitude, and that of despair, which made Antony dare Caesar to single combat. Because he will not admit to himself that he cares about anything, he cannot recognise that caring in Antony.

I see still

A diminution in our captain's brain

Restores his heart. When valour preys on reason,

It eats the sword it fights with. I will seek

Some way to leave him.

(III : xi : 196)

Antony's victory proves Enobarbus wrong. Antony wins his battle because he realizes that the demands of honour and of worldly success are not the same. He fights for his honour as a soldier, indifferent to success or failure so long as his honour can be redeemed. He can with honesty say

Tomorrow soldier,

By sea and land I'll fight: or I will live

Or bathe my dying honour in the blood

Shall make it live again.

(IV : ii : 4)

To love as he must, he must regain his honour, but in the tragic situation in which he finds himself, he can only keep his honour by dying for it, and love cannot survive death. So the play moves into its last two tremendous acts, with the end certain, but with the supreme value of their love for Antony and Cleopatra still to be established.

There follows the strange scene in which Antony's soldiers on guard hear music under the earth, which they decide signifies that

the god Hercules, whom Antony lov'd

Now leaves him.

(IV : iii : 13)

Besides providing an ominous foreshadowing of the final tragedy, this helps to establish the pattern for what is to follow for Antony, who must, like Hercules, wear the shirt of flame. From this point, everything deserts Antony; Enobarbus, his followers, his luck, even, he thinks, Cleopatra, till he must stand alone and face his ruin, and the end of his love, in the supposed death of Cleopatra. The images of 'discandying' recur more frequently. Though there is success in the battle, it is only temporary. Love demands everything, finally his life, and because that love is finally established as his life, he can pay the price. Now, after the defection of Enobarbus, it is Eros who becomes his closest companion, and the name takes on an increasingly symbolic value. He and Cleopatra put on Antony's armour, the squire and the 'armourer

of his heart'. So completely is Antony himself again that, in tones far removed from the blind fury and the self-pity of the previous day, he can contemplate with real pride but without boasting, his own worth as a soldier. 'Workman', the unlikely word which forms the climax of this speech, is a word quite devoid of military glamour, yet it suggests with great force his confidence, not that he will win, but that he will acquit himself well, for he knows that he is a master of his craft.

He that unbuckles this, till we do please
To daff't for our repose, shall hear a storm.
Thou fumblest Eros; and my queen's a squire
More tight at this than thou; dispatch. O love
That thou could'st see my wars today, and knew'st
The royal occupation, thou should'st see
A workman in't. (IV : iv : 12)

Cleopatra too, like Antony in his heart of hearts, knows the certain outcome:

He goes forth gallantly. That he and Caesar might
Determine this great war in single fight!
Then Antony, — but now, — Well, on. (IV : iv : 36)

Before battle is joined, Antony must hear the news of Enobarbus's desertion, one more reminder of the impossibility of isolating himself from the rest of the world, for as he now realizes, the fortunes of others are bound up with his own. With typical generosity — it is almost impossible when talking of Antony to avoid the continual use of the phrase "greatness of heart" — he orders Enobarbus's treasure to be sent after him.

Go Eros, send his treasure after; do it;
Detain no jot, I charge thee. Write to him —
I will subscribe — gentle adieus and greetings;
Say that I wish he never find more cause
To change a master. O! my fortunes have
Corrupted honest men. Dispatch. Enobarbus!
(IV : v : 12)

When Enobarbus receives this news, he, who has seen everything so clearly except this one thing, discovers that there is after all something in life more important than his own security. He has seen clearly that Antony's love is leading him to death: now he sees that to live without caring is death itself. He has tried to live without caring; he cannot, so he dies, and his death too provides a comment on his master's tragedy.

Caesar fights the battle, as one might expect, with calculation, keeping himself withdrawn, and putting the deserters from Antony's force in the van, to dishearten his opponents. His calculation does not work, for against the courage and generalship of the whole Antony, his men cannot stand. Now Antony has

re-established himself in his own eyes, and he is consequently worthy to love and be loved. His victorious greeting to Cleopatra conveys both his exhilaration in his triumph, and the way in which death and love are drawing together.

Ant. O thou day o' the world!
Chain mine arm'd neck; leap thou, attire and all
Through proof of harness to my heart, and there
Ride on the pants triumphing.

Cleo. Lord of lords,
O infinite virtue! cam'st thou smiling from
The world's great snare uncaught? (IV : viii : 13)

It is an almost magical deliverance, a miracle worked by love and courage, but even in the wonder at that deliverance there is the realization that it is not a permanent victory. The fleetingness of time and life is strongly suggested, and is taken up again in

. What girl! though grey
Do something mingle with our younger brown, yet ha' we
A brain that nourishes our nerves, and can
Get goal for goal of youth. (IV : viii : 19)

Here too, in spite of the triumph of the moment, the implicit suggestion is that the sands are running out. The next day's battle sees the surrender of Antony's fleet to the enemy, and the final ruin of his hopes.

It is uncertain whether or not he has been betrayed by Cleopatra, though her behaviour suggests most strongly that he has not, for one of her disposition would hardly risk staying with him after such an action. Cleopatra is, in any case, shrewd enough to realize that she can expect few favours from Caesar. For Antony, beaten here without a fight, everything is lost. He believes that Cleopatra has betrayed him, and this robs him of all heart. Dismissing his forces, he tastes, like Troilus, the bitterness of betrayal in love.

. Triple turn'd whore! 'tis thou
Hast sold me to this novice, and my heart
Makes only wars on thee. Bid them all fly:
I have done all. Bid them all fly; be gone. (IV : x : 26)

Again he doubts the reality of his love, and again, because this stable centre is lost, he loses all judgment. Yielding the victory to Caesar, he contemplates the revolution in his fortunes.

O sun! thy uprise shall I see no more;
Fortune and Antony part here; even here
Do we shake hands. All come to this? The hearts
That spaniel'd me at heels, to whom I gave
Their wishes, do discandy, melt their sweets
On blossoming Caesar; and this pine is bark'd
That overtopp'd them all. Betray'd I am.

O this false soul of Egypt! this grave charm,
 Whose eyes beck'd forth my wars, and call'd them home,
 Whose bosom was my crownet, my chief end,
 Like a right gipsy hath, at fast and loose,
 Beguil'd me to the very heart of loss.
 What, Eros! Eros!

(IV : x : 31)

This speech is so important that it deserves careful consideration. Everything seems lost, his position, his honour and his love. He resolves to end his life, because nothing holds its form in the world around him. The hearts that 'spaniel'd' him at heels, a wonderful image of the fawning courtiers, only held their form because of him; now that he is nothing, they 'discandy', turning what he now sees to be the cloying sweetness of their flattery upon the 'blossoming' Caesar. It should be noticed that these were the *hearts*, the seats of love and affection, to whom he gave their wishes, not only in the sense of granting their requests, but more fundamentally, in the sense of creating in them those wishes. What they wanted, they wanted because of him. This concept, of Antony as the fixed point of reference, the setter of standards, is later taken up by Cleopatra. Now it is the world that is dissolving around him, because he can find no fidelity or trust in it, leaving alone, towering over everything else. (The transition from the contempt he feels for the spaniel hearts, to the rugged forest imagery with which he describes himself is made with a minimum of dislocation by the word 'bark'd', common to both.) He sees that the strength of the pine, which has outlived its time, must give way before what he sees almost as the effeminacy of 'blossoming' Caesar. One can feel the resentment of the old at being pushed out by the young, but most of all, it is the betrayal of his love that destroys all reality of him. 'This grave charm', with its bitter pun on grave, has brought him to his death, and this is even more bitter to accept because Cleopatra provided the aim and purpose of his life. His wars were fought for her eyes, (and, he might have added, lost because of them). The only victor's crown that he sought was her love, his head between her breasts. If she is false, then his life has been a mockery, and he has been brought not only to the 'heart of loss', but his heart has been lost. His cry to Eros becomes as well as a call to his squire, a cry of bewilderment to love, that has brought him to the brink of destruction.

Cleopatra has to fly from his wrath, and to appease him, she decides to take Charmian's advice, and send word to him that she has killed herself. Antony, speaking to Eros, has now passed from the unreality of the world around him to the unreality of himself.

Ant. thou hast seen these signs,
 They are black vespers' pageants.
 Eros. Ay, my lord.

Ant. That which is now a horse, even with a thought
The rack dislimns, and makes it indistinct,
As water is in water.

Eros. It does, my lord.

Ant. My good knave Eros, now thy captain is
Even such a body: here I am Antony;
Yet cannot hold this visible shape, my knave.
I made these wars for Egypt; and the queen,
Whose heart I thought I had, for she had mine,
Which whil'st it was mine had annex'd unto it
A million more, now lost; she Eros, has
Pack'd cards with Caesar, and false play'd my glory
Unto an enemy's triumph.
Nay, weep not, gentle Eros; there is left us
Ourselves to end ourselves. (IV : xii : 7)

Again there is the ominous image of night closing in, and more significantly still, the suggestion of thought being the power that creates or destroys the world's reality for the individual. Antony's love has given form and meaning to the world; that gone, he can no longer believe in the reality of anything, even of himself. One course of action, however, always remains open to the individual. He can destroy himself. That destruction cannot be seen as a victory, though, if it is only an act of negation. If Antony were to kill himself now, the play would not be a tragedy.

Mardian brings in the news of Cleopatra's death, and now the great value in Antony's life is re-established, phoenix-like, in its own destruction. If she has killed herself, then their love has been real, but although the reality has been re-established, it has also been lost. He now no longer has anything to live for, but has something to die for. Yet despite the nobility of his action, one feels that a love one has to die for is a self-destructive value, and one is left with an impression of waste that is reinforced by the situation: the report of Cleopatra's death is a false one, so in a sense Antony dies needlessly. For him, though, the report of her death is the only reality upon which he can act, for the paths of love and honour have at last joined and lead in one direction.

Unarm Eros; the long day's task is done,

And we must sleep

. Off, pluck off;

The seven-fold shield of Ajax cannot keep
The battery from my heart. O! cleave my sides;
Heart, once be stronger than thy continent,
Crack thy frail case! Apace, Eros, apace,
No more a soldier; bruised pieces, go;
You have been nobly borne.

(IV : xii : 35)

The dignity of the man rings out in this courageous facing of the fate that has been steadily approaching for so long. The god of love too, may now unarm; there is nothing further he can do. In an

echo of the opening speech of the play, the heart, always too strong, must now kill the body. One side of his life has ended, the other is ending, and though he can look back with pride on his soldiery, it belongs to another world. All the strength and courage he has used in action in the world, implied in the 'bruised pieces', is to be put aside. Only by dying can he atone for doubting Cleopatra.

I will o'ertake thee, Cleopatra, and
 Weep for my pardon. So it must be, for now
 All length is torture; since the torch is out,
 Lie down, and stray no further. (IV : xii : 44)

All the light and warmth as well as any direction in his life are gone; only emptiness remains, for the last lines of the speech

. Stay for me:
 Where souls do couch on flowers, we'll hand in hand,
 And with our sprightly port make the ghosts gaze;
 Dido and her Aeneas shall want troops,
 And all the haunt be ours. (IV : xii : 50)

are surely an affirmation of the joy that their love has given, rather than any real hope of a reunion after death. Now Antony can take pride again in his honour and his love, and prove both by conquering himself.

Since Cleopatra died,
 I have lived in such dishonour, that the gods
 Detest my baseness. I that with sword
 Quarter'd the world, and o'er green Neptune's back
 With ships made cities, condemn myself to lack
 The courage of a woman; less noble mind
 Than she, which by her death our Caesar tells
 'I am conqueror of myself'. (IV : xii : 55)

Eros, to avoid having to kill his master, kills himself, which is just, for only Antony can conquer Antony. Dying, Antony hears the news that Cleopatra is not dead. Nothing in the whole play is more eloquent of the strength of his love than his refusal to reproach her, or even to waste what little time there is left to them in railing against the chance that has destroyed him. He asks only to be brought to where she is. Cleopatra in her turn, realizes that the world without Antony has neither life nor meaning.

O sun!
 Burn there great sphere thou movest in, darkling stand
 The varying star of the world. O Antony
 Antony Antony (IV : xiii : 9)

At this moment of tragedy she is not magically ennobled; she remains the woman she has always been. She refuses to open the doors of the monument where she has sought refuge, for she fears she will be taken. She is still enough of a woman to worry

about her rival, Octavia. Antony must be drawn up to her. What is most impressive about the scene, however, is that even at his moment of death they remain creatures of life, not crushed by death, but facing it almost gayly.

Cleo. Here's sport indeed! How heavy weighs my lord.
 Our strength is all gone into heaviness,
 That makes the weight. Had I great Juno's power
 The strong wing'd Mercury should fetch thee up
 And set thee by Jove's side. Yet come a little;
 Wishers were ever fools. O! come come come;
 And welcome, welcome! Die where thou hast liv'd;
 Quicken with kissing; had my lips that power
 Thus would I wear them out. (IV : xiii : 32)

They both know that it cannot be so, that he is dying, and that this is the end. His last words are not a statement of his love for her, for that is unnecessary, but advice, concern for her safety. He dies proving that he cares more about her than he does about anything else in the world. For her, his death seems the end of everything. She has loved him with all her heart, but he is dead. The standard of excellence for the whole world has gone.

Noblest of men, woo't die?
 Hast thou no care for me? Shall I abide
 In this dull world, which in thy absence is
 No better than a sty? O! see my women

[Antony dies

The crown o' the earth doth melt. My lord!
 O! wither'd is the garland of the war,
 The soldier's pole is fall'n; young boys and girls
 Are level now with men; the odds is gone
 And there is nothing left remarkable
 Beneath the visiting moon. (IV : xiii : 59)

His great spirit once removed, she feels there is no distinction or rank among what is left. (She dwells significantly on his royalty, just as he has acknowledged hers in his dying moments by calling her by her formal title, Egypt.) Life and vigour and beauty have all withered and passed away. He has set the standard for everything that is admirable: to the soldier he has been like the pole star, which suggests both the brightness of his glory and what Cleopatra feels is the impossibility of his death. The earth without him is a dull place, fitfully illuminated by the dim and varying light of the 'visiting moon'. Cleopatra is never more dignified than in this simple dignity of her grief as a woman.

Iras. Royal Egypt!
 Empress!

Charm. Peace, peace Iras!

Cleo. No more, but e'en a woman, and commanded
 By such poor passion as the maid that milks
 And does the meanest chares. It were for me
 To throw my sceptre at the injurious gods;
 To tell them that this world did equal theirs
 Till they had stol'n our jewel. All's but naught,
 Patience is sottish and impatience does
 Become a dog that's mad; then is it sin
 To rush into the secret house of death,
 Ere death dare come to us? (IV : xiii : 71)

Time no longer has any meaning, nor is there any choice between life and death for her, for life without Antony is death. She has reached a state of indifference, where there is neither patience nor impatience, in the sense of anger against what has happened. All that remains is to die.

Meanwhile, Caesar has received the news of Antony's death, and the flatterers around him make their comments.

Mec. His taints and honours
 Wag'd equal with him.
 Agr. A rarer spirit never
 Did steer humanity; but you, gods, will give us
 Some faults to make us men. Caesar is touch'd.
 (V : i : 30)

The importance of the event strikes some genuine tribute from them, but I would hesitate to take these opinions as the summary of the play's statement of Antony. Caesar himself is about to pronounce, after some excuses, his opinion of his dead rival, when word comes from Cleopatra. He sends her back a soft answer, hoping to capture her to grace his triumph in Rome, and then withdraws with his followers, to show them how little he has been to blame for the wars, how reasonable he has been in everything. Here finally, his coldness becomes utterly repellent.

Cleopatra, who is still temporizing, trying to bargain for her son, is surprised in her monument and taken prisoner. It is not in her nature to be resigned for long, and her spirit and fury here show that she has not changed. She is admittedly concerned with herself, she always has been, so this concern, vanity and spirit show that she is still the Cleopatra who won Antony's love. Now to Dolabella, she muses over her love for Antony. Was it real, or was it only a fantasy of her brain? The value by which she has lived has been destroyed. Does that mean that her life and her love have been wasted?

Cleo. I dream'd there was an Emperor Antony:
 O! such another sleep, that I might see
 But such another man.

Dol. If it might please ye, —

Cleo. His face was as the Heavens, and therein stuck
A sun and moon, which kept their course, and lighted
The little O, the earth.

Dol. Most sovereign creature, —

Cleo. His legs bestrid the ocean; his rear'd arm
Crested the world; his voice was propertyed
As all the tuned spheres, and that to friends;
But when he meant to quail and shake the orb,
He was as rattling thunder. For his bounty,
There was no winter in't, an autumn 'twas
That grew the more by reaping; his delights
Were dolphin-like, they show'd his back above
The element they liv'd in; in his livery
Walked crowns and crownets, realms and islands were
As plates dropp'd from his pocket.

Dol. Cleopatra, —

Cleo. Think you there was, or might be, such a man
As this I dream'd of?

Dol. Gentle madam, no.

Cleo. You lie, up to the hearing of the gods.
But, if there be, or ever were, one such,
It's past the size of dreaming; nature wants stuff
To vie strange forms with fancy; yet to imagine
An Antony were nature's piece 'gainst fancy,
Condemning shadows quite. (V : ii : 76)

This Colossus-like figure of Antony which her memory calls up cannot be recognised by Dolabella, who thinks that her mind is wandering. He cannot see that it is her statement of what her love has meant, coupled with a sharp realization of her loss. Antony is seen both as the master of the world, and as its finest achievement, as in

'his rear'd arm
Crested the world'

where 'crested' carries the meanings of showing above it, and providing the crest for it, its pinnacle of excellence. Compared with the importance he has had for her, the world is decreased to the status of a little O, without him it is nothing indeed. Dolabella, who appears to love her, gently tries to tell her that no such man could exist, but she indignantly denies it, and she is right: he has the value for her that her love confers upon him, and nobody but the lover can estimate the value of the beloved. She recognises the innate greatness of the man, and expresses it in images of godlike size and control, which bring out too the careless generosity of his nature. What he has meant to her is not fancy, but the only reality that her life has known.

In the scene with Caesar which follows, Cleopatra sees how empty his promises of friendship and protection are. Her mind is made up, and she has already made the arrangements which

will bring her means to die. Not only is she not deceived, she is even insulted that he should think her so inexperienced as to be hoodwinked by this sort of flattery. Charmian and Iras too, who know and love their mistress, so much so that they cannot live without her, realise that for all of them, life is at its end.

Cleo. He words me girls, he words me, that I should not
Be noble to myself, but, hark thee Charmian.

[Whispers

Iras. Finish good lady; the bright day is done
And we are for the dark. (V : ii : 190)

Here the simple contrast between the bright day of life and love, (Antony has called her 'O thou day of the world') and the dark finality of the grave, falls with chilling effect. The queen knows that all that remains is to decide whether to die in a way of her own choosing or endure a life of mockery, that will contaminate and degrade all that has gone before, and end in a dishonoured death. Charmian and Iras, who have a simple loyalty to their mistress, do not attempt to dissuade her, and Cleopatra too, for all her complexity and bewildering variety, has a simple integrity in her loyalty to her love. She puts on her robes, to play her last part, that of a dying queen, and if she deceives herself, and cannot quite face the final implications of death, who is to blame her? She does what has to be done, as bravely as she can, and, lest the play produce the wrong final impression, there are the words of the clown to remind the audience of the exact nature of her self-deception. At the moment when she must end her life, she remembers her hour of triumph, and goes, not to be reunited with Mark Antony after death, but to join him in oblivion, dressed as she was when she 'pursed up her heart, upon the river Cydnus'.

Show me, my women, like a queen; go fetch
My best attires; I am again for Cydnus
To meet Mark Antony. Sirrah Iras, go.
Now noble Charmian, we'll dispatch indeed;
And, when thou hast done this chare, I'll give thee leave
To play till doomsday. Bring our crown and all.
(V : ii : 225)

The clown now arrives with Cleopatra's chosen means of death, an easy death, for it seems as if she cannot bear to do violence to herself, or to mar the beauty that has brought her all that she has prized most in life. In dying she, like Antony, conquers herself, but that it is a defeat as well as a victory is brought out with great force in the exchange between her and the clown.

Cleo. Hast thou the pretty worm of Nilus there
That kills and pains not?

Clown. Truly I have him, but I would not be the party that
should desire you to touch him, for his biting is
immortal, those that do die of it seldom or never
recover. (V : ii : 242)

and later

Clown. You must think this, look you, that the worm will do his kind.

Cleo. Ay, ay, farewell.

Clown. Look you, the worm is not to be trusted but in the keeping of wise people, for indeed there is no goodness in the worm. (V : ii : 263)

and finally

I wish you joy of the worm. (V : ii : 280)

Nothing could show more clearly than this final emphasis that all this great love, nobility and courage ends in nothing. The physical horror of death is insisted on, in the ambiguity of 'the worm', the finality by the irony of 'immortal' and 'those that do die of it seldom or never recover'. There is indeed 'no goodness in the worm', and for Antony and Cleopatra to pretend that there is, is self-delusion. Yet what else can they do? They have no effective choice, for perhaps 'wise people' will always choose death in preference to a life that has lost all purpose.

Iras dies of a broken heart while taking leave of her mistress, which seems to be a reassurance to Cleopatra of the ease of dying, even though it is impossible to miss the irony of the image she uses to describe it. It is easy to die, and death may be desired, but death is not like 'a lover's pinch', for it is the prelude, not to the act that creates life, but to nothing. Cleopatra dies bravely and most movingly, but still the ironic emphasis is on the finality, the oblivion. One last flash of spirit shows, in which she wishes that she could 'hear thee call great Caesar ass' and then she goes to join the man she can call 'husband' for the first time. It is not new life at her breast, but death.

Cleo. Peace peace!

Dost thou not see my baby at my breast,
That sucks the nurse asleep?

Char. O, break; O, break!

Cleo. As sweet as balm, as soft as air, as gentle —
O Antony! — Nay, I will take thee too.
What should I stay —

(Dies)

Char. In this vile world? So, fare thee well.

Now boast thee Death, in thy possession lies
A lass unparalleled. Downy windows, close;
And golden Phoebus never be beheld
Of eyes again so royal! Your crown's awry;
I'll mend it, and then play.

(V : ii : 311)

So Cleopatra dies, and the last words spoken over her are what one imagines she would have wanted, a tribute to her beauty, and a tribute which is dignified by the word 'grace', which attaches to it a deeper value than mere physical attraction.

. she looks like sleep,
 As she would catch another Antony
 In her strong toil of grace. (V : ii : 347)

What then is one to say about this play? The conflict of love and duty has been worked out to its tragic conclusion, for love cannot exist without the lovers. I cannot believe that this is an anti-romantic play, in the sense that it allows no value to love, and that it shows a great and good man corrupted and destroyed by his physical passion for a worthless woman. Nor can I believe that it is a romantic play, that considers the world well lost for love. It does not, for love can only exist in the world. As always with Shakespeare, there is no simple answer that will satisfy a careful reading of the play. Antony and Cleopatra did not *solve* the problems posed by life, for the solution of the asp

With thy sharp teeth this knot intricate
 At once untie (V : ii : 306)

is no solution at all. They are defeated and destroyed by death, just as we all in our turn, must be defeated and destroyed. They are defeated more quickly because they care so intensely; is the answer, then, not to care? I cannot believe that, either. Enobarbus thought he could live without caring for anything but himself, and found that he could not. Caesar cares for little. If he represents any strongly positive value in the play, if he makes any emotional appeal at all, if, in fact, he is on the side of life, then I have misread the play completely. The only answer that the play provides is one that some people will find unsatisfactory, the answer of the Sonnets, of Andrew Marvell's *To His Coy Mistress*, the answer that poets are always providing. To care about something, to love something, outside oneself, is what gives life its meaning and purpose, and its quality. To care may involve those who do in greater and greater problems, it may produce supreme suffering as well as supreme joy, but to care is to live, and this is what the play shows.

(Line references to the Oxford Edition of the Complete Works.)

THE FUTURE OF INDIAN EDUCATION

by W. G. McCONKEY

The Indian community this year celebrates the Centenary of the arrival of Indians as colonists of Natal and as citizens of South Africa. For a hundred years Indian people have lived their lives in this Province; Natal has been their piece of earth, the home of their children, their final resting place. For a hundred years the Indian community has been an essential and characteristic part of Natal, part of that rich human diversity, African, Asian, European, which—one day when we have learnt to look beyond our tribal kraals—we shall point to with pride as the special glory of Natal. For a hundred years Indian labour, Indian skill and Indian intelligence have made a very great contribution to the wealth of this Province, a contribution which has been insufficiently recognised, a contribution which could have been vastly greater if it had not been cramped by artificial and irrational restrictions.

It is deplorable that the centenary year should see the community faced with grievous and iniquitous threats to its well-being, to its right to work and to its right to property. But what seems the darkest hour is often the hour before the dawn. May this second century of the Indian community in Natal soon become a century of co-operation in freedom for all the peoples of South Africa.

It is well that in this very special year the University of Natal should have conferred on Dr Arthur Lazarus, the President of the Natal Indian Teachers' Society, the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, *honoris causa*. The University, in honouring him personally for his outstanding services, was also honouring the Indian teachers of Natal. And with good cause: for if in the first century of its settlement in Natal the Indian community has known great disappointments and frustrations, in one major field, at least, it can point to great achievement; and that achievement, in the field of education, it owes in large measure to the labours and the example of its teachers.

It is natural on such an occasion to consider the future of Indian education. There is pleasure in planning the future. It is an optimistic exercise. It assumes that there is a future to be planned. It assumes that there will be no human catastrophe, no revolutionary upheavals which would make the future unpre-

dictable. And that is quite a large assumption these days. But it is an assumption we must make if we are to plan at all.

So let us assume that South Africa will once again grow in sanity, in civilisation, in freedom, in well-being, and let us project the healthier trends of the past into the future on that assumption.

Indian education (our shorthand phrase for the education of Natal children of Indian descent) was a plant of slow growth. In the nineteenth century the peoples of South Africa did not prize education as they do today. The twentieth century was some years advanced before the comparatively well-to-do European community of Natal instituted compulsory education for its own children. Most schools specially provided for the children of the Indian labourers—very much like the “schools for the children of the labouring poor” in England fifty years earlier—were a matter for the churches, the parents, and the benevolent, with the government giving some financial and some professional assistance. The education of those children in separate schools from other Natal children had very much more pragmatic justification in terms of home background and of language than the separate schooling of the “two nations” (or social classes) in Disraeli’s England, and was only incidentally racial separation. Educationally, it was the obvious organisation.

In 1901 there were just under 3,000 pupils in these schools for Indian children.

In addition, a small number of “middle class” Indian children, together with some Coloured children, attended certain mainly European schools. The Governors of Queen Victoria’s Natal frowned on formal discriminations between “the various classes of Her Majesty’s subjects”, and standard of civilisation and standard of living gave admission to these children. But race consciousness was growing stronger and more exclusive, and by about 1905, in what had then become self-governing Natal, the system of separate schools for the separate racial groups had become established.

The extrusion of the small number of middle class Indian and Coloured children from the “European” schools was due to the exclusiveness of the dominant European group, and the groups affected were entitled to resent it righteously — though not too self-righteously, but remembering that we are all men, and that all men are flesh, with the weaknesses of the flesh. For the middle class Indians objected to their children having to go to school with their poorer compatriots; the Coloured parents objected (with some reason) to their children starting school with children who knew little or no English; and the poorer Indians, at the bottom of this human pecking order, applied their own kind of discrimination by sending only one girl to school for every six boys.

The end of the story for these children was our tripartite system of racially separate European, Indian and Coloured schools.

Growth of the Indian schools was slow, but three events in the late 'twenties accelerated progress. These were the visit of Mr Sastri, the Cape Town Agreement, and the foundation of the Natal Indian Teachers' Society. The 'thirties brought the placing of teacher-training on a sound, full-time basis, and the extension of secondary education to most of the larger centres of Indian population in Natal. The greatest period of expansion came after the second world war, when the Natal Administration, reflecting a more favourable attitude of the Natal electorate, pressed forward more actively with the development of Indian education.

While great and serious inadequacies persist, we do not always appreciate the greatness of the actual achievement brought about by three factors in combination: the increasing acceptance of responsibility by the Provincial Administration, the sacrifices of the parents,¹ and the zeal and example of the teachers. More than half of our Indian children now complete the eight-year course leading to the Natal Standard Six Certificate, and the number remaining at school for the ten-year course (Junior Certificate) and for the twelve-year course (Matriculation) is growing steadily. Teacher-training is also on a high level. For admission to training courses men students must now have completed a twelve-year course of education, and no student is accepted for any teachers' course with less than ten years of schooling.

Speaking internationally, Natal Indian children are still educationally behind children of the most progressive countries, but they are quite definitely among the better-schooled children of the world. Perhaps the kind of education they most urgently need is that which comes after school, through doing correspondingly skilled and remunerated work.

And now we make what may strike one as the surprising suggestion that nationally also — in the field of education — Natal Indian children belong essentially to the "Haves" and do not belong to the "Have Nots".

Let us first compare some pupil-teacher ratios. According to a special brochure published by the Union's Information Service "The Progress of the Bantu Peoples Towards Nationhood: No. 2: Education" there were last year 1,428,000 African children enjoying, or at least undergoing, "Bantu Education", and they had 25,000 teachers. That gives an average of 57 pupils per teacher. On the brochure's figure for rate of increase since 1953, there would have been about 300,000 of these children at school in Natal, with about 5,300 teachers. In the last year for which Provincial statistics are available (1957), there were in Natal 87,000 Indian school-

¹In the financial year 1959-60, Indian school committees raised £88,000 for £ for £ school building services. In the same year the Province spent on Indian education: (a) from Capital Account, £88,000, plus approximately £250,000; and (b) from Revenue Account, approximately £2,350,000 (teachers' salaries, general maintenance, administration, school meals, etc.). Provincial contributions and special community contributions (including land purchase) would be approximately in the proportions 96 : 4.

children taught by 2,600 teachers, or 33 pupils per teacher; there were 9,600 Coloured children with 350 teachers, or an average of 27 per teacher; and there were 54,000 children in European Government Schools, with 2,400 teachers, or 22.5 pupils per teacher. All in all, about 450,000 Natal children were taught by + 10,650 teachers, averaging 42 pupils per teacher. So comparatively speaking, Indian, Coloured and European children, each in their degree, all belong to the privileged classes, with better than average provision.

And now let us look at financial provision. The Government keeps its general contribution to African education fixed ("frozen", is the word used) at £6½ million. Over 1,428,000 children at school, this averages about £4 11s. a head. (And according to the brochure, *only 52 per cent of African children of school age are at school*). Now in the same year Natal's unit cost for European Government Schools was £67 19s. 10d., for Coloured Government Schools £46 5s. 6d., and for Indian Government Schools £32 13s. 11d. (For Aided Schools of all groups the figures were substantially lower but not for any group sufficiently so to invalidate the argument). All in all, the average cost per child to the general taxpayer of educating our total Natal *school population* of + 450,000 was about £16. (And this ignores the very large out-of-school child population). Above this figure we have the "Haves", some having more than others, but all having more than the average, and below we have the great mass of "Have Nots".

A similar picture emerges in respect of quality of teacher training; in respect of the amount of the education funds supplied by the general taxpayer as compared with the amount contributed by the particular community separately; in respect of building standards, and of other aspects of educational provision.

Now whatever the Indian's reaction to finding himself among the privileged classes (he may say in indignation, like the rebellious farmer when someone told him that he too had aristocratic ancestry: "But I thought my pedigree was clean!") he will probably agree that the differences in provision for the educational needs of the various groups are too wide to be justifiable on rational or on moral grounds. He may also agree that there should be a progressive diminishing of the discrimination, and *most urgently in the case of the group for which such markedly sub-average provision is made*. But the vital need to be emphasised is not the distribution of the funds available for education. That by itself would bring no profit to education as a whole. The vital need is for the rapid expansion of those funds, so that the best possible provision may be made for all children.

As not enough is spent on the education of any group, the needs of the less favoured groups are obviously great. South Africa is, in fact, seriously underspending on education generally, and most seriously in respect of its non-European children. The (de Villiers) Commission on Vocational Education, giving comparatively small

attention to the needs of the non-European groups, recommended in 1948 that by 1956 the Union should be spending not less than $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent of its national income on education. It is now 1960, and we are not yet spending even that $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. On the educational needs of 80 per cent of its children, South Africa spends less than one per cent of its national income. On the educational needs of two-thirds of its children it spends about one-third of one per cent of its national income. Educationally, this last figure represents sheer abortionism, the denial to the living human being of the right to development; economically it is daftness, the grossest under-capitalisation of our greatest national asset.

The wealth of a nation does not lie primarily in its soil, or in the minerals below its soil. It lies in the trained intelligence of its people. That is why South Africa today is richer than the South Africa of the strandlopers who watched the ships of Da Gama. That is why Britain today is wealthier than the Britain of the Druids. That is why Russia today is wealthier than the Russia of the Czars.

South Africa is a land of vast natural resources — one of the few lands on earth with resources capable of sustaining a high industrial civilisation with a high standard of living for all its people. But it cannot fully develop its resources while its social policies are designed to restrict two-thirds of its population — irrespective of ability — to lowly forms of manual labour in seven-eighths of its territory, and while its educational policies are designed to leave the majority of its children permanently unfitted to contribute in more profitable ways than this to their own well-being and to the national wealth. South Africa can only develop as it should develop when we train and encourage all the intelligence and all the skill we possess, wherever it is found.

The implications for Indian education are many. It is obvious that education should be made compulsory for all Indian children. This step was recommended by the Natal Education Committee in the Wilks Report as far back as 1946. Since that time the Natal Administration has made great efforts to increase provision for Indian schooling. The number of children at school has been more than tripled (from 33,000 to about 110,000), and the number of exclusions due to lack of accommodation reduced to under 1,500, or less than one and a half per cent. Natal, which has had compulsory education for European children since 1908, and for Coloured children since 1942, has thus almost attained the goal of school provision for every child whose education is the statutory responsibility of the Province. It should take the short step to universal schooling with courage while it can still take it with pride.

As an expanding economy makes it possible to finance them, further improvements should include smaller classes, the development of medical and psychological services, and a really adequate meals service. Some would, perhaps, place the elimination of the platoon system before a full school-meal system, and if that is a

considered judgement it should be respected. The defects of the platoon system are obvious, and the system is clearly only a temporary expedient. But the Province of Natal has avoided its worst evils as applied elsewhere. It has double-platoon buildings but not double-platoon teachers. The evil effects of undernourishment in childhood, however, are not always so obvious, but they are far-reaching. The loss in health, in vigour, in alertness and intelligence — in human quality and achievement — does not end with the school years. It ends only with the stunted life.

The enlightened self-interest which causes the great gold-mining houses to invest in sound nutrition for their mine labourers pays handsome dividends. A square meal every day for every child below the bread line would be equally good national housekeeping. Let us not be sentimental. Let us be business-like. If we were stud-farmers we would not under-nourish our young colts if we wanted strong draught horses — or winners at Greyville! The children now in our schools (or unable to find admission to them) will be the workers at all levels in the developing industries and services of South Africa. Their quality will largely determine the national product — how much there is to share — far into the future. Their work will pay for our pensions and our dividends when we are too old to help ourselves. It is surely in our interests that they should be healthy, skilled and vigorous.

We would accept and apply these principles systematically if we were intelligent stud-farmers or stockbrokers. How much the more should we appreciate and apply them as members of a civilisation which acknowledges the unique worth of the individual human being!

The Government has recently set up a Commission to investigate the desirability of a system of family allowances for White families. Now except in so far as this idea may be conceived as a further bribe for use in the 1963 election, its purpose is presumably to strengthen the White population and, by strengthening it, to strengthen South Africa. Surely it will have directly the opposite effect. For the type of parent who would beget extra children because of a per capita grant is not likely to transmit genes of very distinguished quality to his progeny; and he might even spend less of the grant on milk for his progeny than on other liquids for himself. South Africa needs, above all, quality in its citizens. A scheme more or less directly opposite to the Government scheme might have better effects on the quality of our population. Consider, for example, the following purely fanciful scheme which we do not put forward as a practical proposal.

For every child after the third, let the father, whatever his race, and whether his income be £50 per annum or £50,000, pay 2 per cent of his income (up to a maximum of 10 per cent) as a Children's Services Charge. This would discourage the selfish, the improvident, the spongers on the state; but would be a stimulus to the public-spirited and a challenge to all with faith in what they had to give.

Then let the Government, by establishing adequate ante-natal clinics, post-natal care and nutritional centres, nursery schools, welfare centres and children's clinics — and by really adequate school meals — see to it that the children actually born are well cared for and adequately nourished.

Now before returning to the school-room with our healthy and well-nourished children, let us consider for a moment the outside world for which our children are to be schooled. We have said that in talking about the future we should assume orderly development in a sane direction. This means, *inter alia*, that we assume the early termination of the state of mind in South Africa which encourages a Minister to excuse the injustice of Group Areas ejections with the reckless impertinence that there are too many members of one group in commerce. The idea of racial quotas in occupations is a thoroughly vicious one, as incorrect for private enterprise as it would be for the public service, as incorrect for appointments to the judiciary as it would be for employment on the railways, as dangerous a precedent in the field of employment as are the forced sellings under the Group Areas Act in relation to the ownership of property. Soon the electorate will realise this. May we not look forward to the early acceptance — general enough acceptance for legislative purposes — of the idea that no South African shall be debarred on racial grounds from any legitimate economic activity for which he is qualified?

To give every South African the opportunity to develop to full stature, vastly expanded and widely diversified educational provision will have to be made. It is clear, from examination results and other evidence, that many Indian children are now entered for unsuitable academic secondary courses. This is to some extent due to the fact that the academic course opens the way to teaching, the only considerable field of professional employment now open to the Indian student. It is also due in part to the absence of suitable alternative courses. The range of technical courses available is far too restricted. True, the restriction is logically based on the artificially restricted world of employment, but that makes it logical only within a vicious situation. Fields of employment and provision for technical training should be expanded together.

Hitherto, Indian schools have followed the same syllabuses as European and Coloured schools, and by and large, that practice should continue. Life in an integrated economy in a common country demands broadly similar preparation. But while syllabuses should be broadly similar, they need not be identical. We live in an integrated economy, but in an inter-cultural social situation. No group should impose its culture on another group, but every group — indeed every person — should be free to adopt or adapt what he finds useful in the other group cultures, while cherishing what he prizes in his own.

A few Hindu and Muslim Aided schools have recently elected to give Hindu and Muslim religious education instead of the former

secular "moral instruction". And why not, in so far as this is the genuine wish of the school community concerned, and *not a decision imposed from without*? The art of Indian children in Natal has distinctive, culturally determined characteristics. Any visitor to an exhibition of Natal school art will agree that this distinctively Indian work is an artistic and cultural enrichment of the exhibition as a whole. Surely this tradition should be developed in so far as it gives satisfaction to the young artists, though of course not to the exclusion of other sources of inspiration. Again, if in a sewing class the girls would like to make saris as well as sacks, why not? Without the sari Durban would lose in colour and character. But in such matters the final word should rest with the schools themselves.

It is difficult to say what the immediate future holds in university education for Indian students. Obviously, in view of the alarming shortage of scientists and technologists forecast by the Government for 1965, great expansion of university facilities, particularly in the pure and applied sciences, is needed. And that is what should happen as soon as possible. What is threatened in the immediate future is a separate, necessarily small and unarticulated racial college. It is to be hoped that this offence against Indian students and against University education will even yet be avoided, and that our South African universities will again be free to open their doors to all students with the necessary academic qualifications.

Conditions for the establishment of a racial college of genuine University standard at present simply do not exist. No doubt, as the Indian population grows and prospers in a free South Africa, it may be possible to create a fully articulated university drawing its students mainly, or wholly, from the Indian community. But such a development should come — if it must come — from the spontaneous wish of the community. One would hope, however, that education at university level would in future tend more and more to be characterised by universality of membership.

There is one way in which Natal Indians might make a special contribution to university studies. Civilisation has been established and developed in South Africa largely in the western tradition, and the Cape Town Agreement confirmed this as a general basis for the future education of South African children of Indian descent. For the foreseeable future, our civilisation will develop along western lines, though with distinctive national characteristics. But South Africa should not ignore other great cultures. At least one South African university should have a great School of Oriental Studies, and the obvious university is the University of Natal. Now there is no reason why South African Orientalists should be men or women of Asian descent; but obviously Indian students start with at least a linguistic advantage in that field, and that is a capital asset which should be developed in the interests of South Africa as a whole.

The Constitution of the State of India of 1949 declares: "The

state shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds of religion, race, caste, or sex”

“India” said Dr. Verwoerd a few months ago (in a different context, I regret to say), “is now a mature state.”

To what extent is South Africa today a mature state ?

Discrimination on religious grounds has been more comprehensively and more systematically practised in the past decade than ever before in the history of the Union. Over the same period racial discrimination has been entrenched by legislation as never before. And in many other ways there has been retrogression in the conduct of the state.

But the very excesses of separatist domination have called forth strong reactions, and not only in the groups most openly discriminated against. The very formulation of what had previously been unthinking assumptions has caused many people in the dominant group to question, for the first time, the moral basis of those assumptions. The thunderings of racist domination may be as loud as ever. But the voice of reason is also being heard, and listened to as never before, and the voice of reason we hope will prevail.

There is still much sex discrimination, and Indian teachers may feel that they have a special duty in this matter. As mentioned earlier, at the turn of the century there were six boys in Indian schools for every girl. Very great progress has been made, for in the junior and middle school there are now about as many girls as boys. But not in the upper school. In the year 1957, there were in the senior secondary class in Indian schools 398 boys and 66 girls, or almost exactly six boys to one girl. As has been said, the sane and progressive South Africa of the future will need and will use all the intelligence of all its people. Heaven, for its own inscrutable reasons, has divided intelligence just as fairly between boys and girls as between Asians and Europeans. No community can afford to leave half of its top-level intelligence untrained.

And now let us sum up. In spite of our present distresses, we endeavour to see the future education of Natalians of Indian descent in the framework of a sanely co-operating South Africa; for only in such a framework can South Africa have any future at all. Let us first put it at its lowest: we are all here together; if we are not to go down together we must get on together; in the 1960's only the free can get on together; so let us behave like grown-up men and women.

But we should like to put it higher than that. This getting on together should not be regarded as a necessary evil, as a fire-and-burglary insurance premium, as acceptance of the hard decree of destiny.

A quarter of a century ago a distinguished Scottish headmistress was being shown around some Durban schools. As we came out of St. Anthony's School she said to me: “What beautiful children !” And time and time again, at school prize-givings and sports

gatherings, in schools of all groups, one has found one's self saying, "What beautiful children !"

Natal should recognise its human diversity for what it is, its greatest human asset. South Africa has the resources to feed all its children (if they were educated and skilled children) with abundant and nourishing food, to clothe them warmly (or coolly, in February), to house them comfortably, to supply the social and medical services, the cultural amenities, the stimulating opportunities that encourage healthy and civilised living. Very soon, if only because she must do so to survive, South Africa must put aside the artificial restrictions which at present block the progress of her peoples, and must embark on the systematic conquest of poverty.

When that task is undertaken, there must be no looking back, no inter-group rancours, no nursing of old grudges (South Africa has been brought near disaster by that). It is by achieving great things together that a nation becomes great. We must give ourselves wholeheartedly to our destined task of building a great and prosperous multi-cultural society, rich in its diversity and in its humanity — and richest of all in Natal.

In creating that spirit, Indian education will have its greatest opportunity to serve its children and to serve South Africa.

ROME IN THE GRACCHAN AGE¹

by T. F. CARNEY

The most urgent problem of these times was that posed by the spread of large scale ranching in Italy. Results were the movement of peasant small-holders into the cities and especially Rome and the replacement of peasant by slave labour on a scale hitherto unprecedented. Tiberius Gracchus saw the problem as part agricultural, part military: the small-holder class was to be reestablished on the land, thus off-setting the slave menace and replenishing the pool of propertied manpower — sadly diminished by this urban immigration — on which the army had to draw. His brother Caius' measures indicate that the latter saw the problem as urban and economic, with the class of big business men as the key to the situation. Such difference of opinion in two politicians so close to one another is very striking and an attempt will here be made to account for it.

The migration of small-holders to Rome had, by the thirties, momentous political consequences, for the senatorial voting machine,² based on the manipulation of the rural vote, became unworkable as result of this migration. This came about in the following way. Of the 35 wards by which the citizen vote was registered³ only 4 were urban and, apart from the peri-urban rural wards, the rural wards were not generally heavily represented. It had thus become possible for senatorial land-lords, by registering themselves and their dependents in distant wards where they owned land and employing these dependents in their town houses, to swamp infrequently attending rural voters — for a majority in each ward decided the vote of that ward, which counted as one vote irrespective

¹The dates of the tribunates of the Gracchi are 133 and 123-22 B.C. respectively; this study covers both decades (140-120 B.C.) in order fully to assess the background of these three years.

²Marsh, *A History of the Roman World 146-30 B.C.*, 1953, 18-23.

³Three Assemblies are involved, the *Comitia Tributa* and the *Concilium plebis*, in which each ward (*tribus*) counted as one vote, and the *Comitia Centuriata*, where the votes of the propertied classes heavily outweighed those of the *proletarii* (188 to 5 !): cf. in general von Fritz, *The Theory of the Mixed Constitution in Antiquity*, 1954, 234-40 and the more recent articles by Staveley, *Tribal Legislation before the Lex Hortensia*, *Athenaeum* 33, 1955, 8 f. and Nicholls, *The Reform of the Comitia Centuriata*, *American Journal of Philology* 77, 1956, 225 f.; Taylor, *The Centuriate Assembly before and after the Reform*, *ibid.*, 78, 1957, 337 f. especially 348-51.

of disparities from ward to ward in numbers of voters attending.⁴ But when the peasants of these outlying wards, still registered therein although dispossessed by the encroachments of the ranches, came to live permanently in the city, their propinquity to the polls together with their numerical strength made the senatorial arrangements for controlling their vote useless.⁵ And this meant that senatorial control over the election of magistrates — and thereby over their behaviour — and over legislation could not be maintained. Independence became possible in a magistrate for the first time in this century.⁶

This shift in political power was accompanied by no corresponding alterations to the constitution.⁷ It is indeed true that a change in the constitution does seem to have been introduced early in the twenties,⁸ in that the property qualifications required for enrolment in the fifth class of citizens was dropped from 4,000 to 1,500 asses. But this seems to have been aimed at the making of more men available for military service.⁹ It had important and unpremeditated political repercussions in that the propertied classes had their numbers increased by almost twenty-five per cent,¹⁰ the newcomers all being of the minimum income bracket — and this at a time of an inflationary revaluation of the coinage.¹¹ The result was a

⁴Stark, *Das Majoritätsprinzip bei den Römern*, *La Nouvelle Clio*, 9, 1957, 388.

⁵Von Fritz, *op. cit.*, 240-41.

⁶The individual's will to power had always been a feature of Republican politics; what is new is the break-down of the senatorial discipline thereof. The emergence of individualism is demonstrated in an unusual and highly effective medium in Alföldi, *The Main Aspects of Political Propaganda on the Coinage of the Roman Republic*, pp. 63, 65-67, 71-72 (in *Essays in Roman Coinage* presented to Harold Mattingly, 1956, ed. Carson and Sutherland.)

⁷Von Fritz, *op. cit.*, 241 and 252.

⁸Gabba (*Le Origini dell'esercito professionale in Roma: i proletari e la riforma di Mario*, *Athenaeum* 27, 1939, 184-86) dates the change between 133 and 123 B.C. It can be more narrowly dated in that the census statistics reveal a steep rise in the period 130-125: the increases between the registrations of 136/5, 131/30, 125/4 and 114/4 are approximately 890, 64,000 and 600 respectively. The dramatic date of Cicero's *De Republica* dates it to 129 at latest: it thus seems to have occurred in the years 130-129 B.C.

⁹It was the second such change. Initially, the minimum amount of property necessary for enrolment in the fifth class had been 11,000 asses; this was dropped to 4,000 between 214 and 212 B.C., on this occasion also to increase the numbers of those liable to conscription: Gabba, *op. cit.*, 181-86. The property required for admission to the first class had been 125,000 asses since the *Lex Voconia* of 169 B.C. and to qualify as an *eques* or Knight still more was needed, so the admission to propertied status of men of such slender means constituted a very real change in registration policy.

¹⁰The actual numbers were 318, 823 registered in 131/30 and 394,736 in 125/24, an increase of 75,913: cf. Frank, *An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome* vol. 1, 1959, 216-17.

¹¹Between 133 and 123 B.C. the denarius was re-tariffed at sixteen (in place of ten) asses: Sydenham, *The Coinage of the Roman Republic*, 1952, pp. xxviii-xxix, 49 and 222; Gabba, *op. cit.*, 186, n.3; Boren, *Nunismatic Light on the Gracchan Crisis*, *American Journal of Philology*, 79, 1958, 152-55.

proletarianization of the middle class, which enjoyed much more voting power than the proletariat.¹²

This access of political power to the propertiless or near-propertiless coincided disastrously with serious depression. The forties of the second century saw booty pouring into Rome from campaigns in Africa, Macedonia and Achaia and a spate of private and public building in Rome.¹³ In the thirties there were rebellions in Spain and Sicily, the granary of Italy, and a raid into Macedonia, the countering of which imposed a drain on the treasury. In consequence building operations, public and private alike, were discontinued.¹⁴ A plague in Africa further reduced the inflow of grain¹⁵ in the twenties, which were, like the thirties, a period of deflation and drastically curtailed government expenditure (until the tribunes of C. Gracchus and successful conclusion of the Transalpine campaign, both at the close of the decade.)¹⁶ The sufferings of the urban poor were enormous; a 1,200% increase in the price of bread between 140 and 127, a period of widespread unemployment, well indicates their severity.¹⁷

This combination of events produced a radical change in the atmosphere of political life. The dispossessed small-holders formed a new, homogeneous group, united by their privations and in their desire for a return to the land, a desire whose strength is well shown by their fervent support of Tiberius Gracchus.¹⁸ They had considerable voting power and no political allegiances, for the senate, on which they might have relied as the governing class, had alienated itself from them by apparently exploiting its position of authority to extend the ranches which had dispossessed the small-holder.¹⁹ When this body managed to render Tiberius' agrarian reform largely abortive, a proletariat mentality rapidly developed in the urban mob.²⁰ The dropping of the minimum property-qualifications under pressure of military needs resulted in a great extension of the voting power of the poorer citizens. A new element

¹²On the proletarianization of the *adsidui* cf. Gabba, *op. cit.*, 190-93; their voting power is indicated note 3 above.

¹³Boren, *The Urban Side of the Gracchan Economic Crisis*, *American Historical Review*, 73, 1958, 893-96; *Numismatic Light on the Gracchan Crisis*, *op. cit.* 146-48.

¹⁴*Ib.* *The Urban Side*, 896-97; *Numismatic Light*, 148-49.

¹⁵*The Urban Side*, 897-99; for the plague cf. Orosius 5, 11, 2.

¹⁶On C. Gracchus cf. *The Urban Side*, 901-902; on the triumphs over the Gauls, Broughton, *Magistrates of the Roman Republic* vol. 1, 1951, 254.

¹⁷Boren, *The Urban Side*, 898 n.45.

¹⁸Von Fritz, *op. cit.*, 251.

¹⁹Actually the cessation of colonization in 177 was caused by a decline in Roman citizen population which made the senate reluctant to draft its manpower away into colonies: Salmon, *Roman Colonization from the Second Punic War to the Gracchi*, *Journal of Roman Studies*, 26, 1936, 66-67. But in fact allotment en masse to the commons had ceased and the government simultaneously turned a blind eye to the tenure by senatorial landlords of land in excess of statutory limits: *Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. 9, 1951, 16-20; cf. Frank, *op. cit.*, 139.

²⁰Von Fritz, *op. cit.*, 251.

thus appeared in politics, for these poorer citizens were alienated from the government, in a position of economic distress, and with considerable political power, a combination of circumstances which made their manipulation at once possible and profitable. That such manipulation speedily commenced can be seen from the fact that at this point, for the first time in the history of the Republic, ideological parties appear.²¹

A novel situation had produced a new form of political relationship, by no means an unprecedented development in Republican politics where a client relationship had always subsisted and had always developed as the political scene altered.²² Actually, at the commencement of the second century, this client relationship had undergone momentous development when the Second Punic War had seen a formula evolved whereby foreign rulers — and with them huge groups — had come into such relationship with leading Roman politicians.²³ Moreover there was a confluence of Roman ideas and Greek custom during the Roman expansion into the Hellenistic East in the first half of the second century. It was an easy step from honouring a king as a saviour, or a despot as a champion, to entering a client relationship in subordination to an incoming Roman conqueror or governor.⁴² Such client-relationships do not seem to have been brought into play in Roman domestic politics immediately:²⁵ the first two politicians to use them were Tiberius and C. Gracchus.²⁶ Once clients from overseas began to support their patrons in the political life of the capital a new and highly dangerous element was added to what had hitherto been merely senatorial faction feuds. And there could be no rejection of this usage.

The way once shown for such an extension of the numbers over which a client-relationship could extend, it was only a matter of time and opportunity before similar extensions to the client-relationship involving citizens followed. In the Gracchan age the depression gave the wealthy an influence upon politics that was something new.²⁷ For with the small-holder had disappeared the small investor, and banking combines had come into fewer — and wealthier — hands.²⁸ The gulf between rich and poor widened and the depression committed the poor more fully into the hands of the rich. The big business class which had been tremendously enriched by the build-up of empire in the second century, particularly since the sack

²¹Ib. 248.

²²Badian, *Foreign Clientelae*, 1958, pp. 1, 10, 13 and 159.

²³Ib. 155-56.

²⁴Ib. 158; cf. also 163-66.

²⁵Ib. 166-68.

²⁶Ib. 174 and 180-81 respectively.

²⁷Marsh, *op. cit.*, 30-31. Preferably, however, their influence should be connected with their abundant resources for bribery, which had come to replace what had been virtually jerrymandering in the manipulation of the vote: von Fritz, *op. cit.*, 241.

²⁸Frisch, *Cicero's Fight for the Republic*, 1946, 17-18.

of Carthage and Corinth,²⁹ now came to exercise extensive control over the electorate. The advent of this new pressure group changed the whole climate of senatorial politics. Caius Gracchus won to great political power on their support and met with disaster when he forfeited it.³⁰ A noble family, the Caecilii Metelli, gained pre-dominance in the senate by cooperating with the bankers³¹ and thus commenced the change from a centuries-old pattern of senatorial politics which had been that of numerous small factions with no single one in lengthy predominance.³²

The different viewpoints of Tiberius and Caius Gracchus thus represent the speed at which the general political situation developed. Development was mostly of a socio-political, extra-legal nature and consequently not well portrayed by the literary sources which tend to centre their attention on definite incidents of a military, constitutional or diplomatic nature. Fundamentally, Rome was in process of development from a condition where agrarian interests were predominant to one in which urban groups dominated.³³ This was a social revolution involving extensive realignments of power and activated by demographic changes which had little reflection in contemporary constitutional immobility. The suppression of large parts of C. Gracchus' political programme in the interests of land-owning and banking capital largely conceals the extent of the unrest of the times. The century of revolution had commenced at Rome. The advent of the big business group to political power³⁴ marked a total change in the political situation, for the senate had composed the government for over two centuries. And there had been no unrest among the commons since 287 B.C. The Gracchan age is a turning point in Republican politics: the senate had begun to be moved aside from power.

²⁹It is fallacious to term the *ordo equester* a 'middle class': Gabba, *Il Ceto Equestre e il Senato di Silla*, Athenaeum, 34, 1956, pp. 133 n.4 (continued 134); von Fritz, op. cit., 230. It was in flourishing existence at the time of the Second Punic War: Gabba, *Ricerca sull' Esercito Professionale Romano* la Mario ad Augusto, Athenaeum, 29, 1951, 255-56. The conclusion of the Macedonian and Carthaginian wars left Roman business heir to that of Greece and Carthage; The Forum Italianorum at Delos became the commercial centre of the Aegean: Pace in Ussani, *Guida allo Studio della Civiltà Romana Antica*, vol. 1, 1952, 601.

³⁰Respectively: Cambridge Ancient History, op. cit., 77 and 82; Marsh, op. cit., 56-59 and 64.

³¹Bloch et Carcopino, *Des Gracques a Sulla* (vol. 2 in the series *Histoire romaine*) 1952, 277 f.; Badian, *P. Decius P. f. Subulo* Journal of Roman Studies 46, 1956, 94.

³²Von Fritz, op. cit., 248-249; Alföldi, op. cit., 65-66.

³³Boren, *Numismatic Light*, 140.

³⁴By giving them control of the law courts C. Gracchus had given them retrospective control of the magistrates and thus of the government. True, they lost it in the Sullan dispensation of 81; but when Pompey in 70 gave the courts to senators, *equites* and *tribuni aerarii* (a variety of banker), being in a two-thirds majority, the *equites* regained control, which they thereafter kept. See Syme's comments in *The Roman Revolution*, 1952, 13-14.

THE MARRIAGE DEBATE II

by T. G. WHITTOCK

THE MERCHANT'S TALE

The Clerk, in his Tale, opposed the Wife of Bath not only by setting up a different concept of love but also by setting up a different concept of woman. And it is this concept of woman as some 'infinitely suffering, infinitely gentle thing' which gets the Merchant into the fray. His outburst against his wife is not, as most critics assume, the outburst of a bitterly disappointed husband, but a piece of humorous rhetoric, amusingly misunderstood by the simple Host) which forms a prelude to his ribald, down-to-earth tale. His tale is a return to the theme of the war between the sexes, but the Merchant's position is a middle of the way one. His tale shows both male and female abusing each other for their own pleasure. It rejects an idealistic concept of love or marriage, or rather it reveals how ideal concepts are made use of by the sexual drive.

His tale is told as a bawdy pub-room story, it is a *fablieux* tale, but the narrative contains a number of strands from the previous tales. The Clerk's story of how a wife endured with patience the cruelties of her husband is now turned into a story of how a wife replied in kind to her husband. The marriage of a young man to an old woman in the Wife of Bath's Tale becomes now the marriage of an old man to a young woman, and the account is more realistic. The Wife of Bath's treatment of her husbands reappears in May's gulling of January and in her making ready use of her woman's tongue. Thus the Merchant's Tale parodies what has been said by both the Clerk and the Wife of Bath.

The conflict between male and female in the Merchant's Tale is pointed and stressed by the conflict between age and youth. The very names, January and May, give the incompatibility of the two people.

When January decides to marry he indulges in a false picture of what married life is.

A wyf ! a, Seinte Marie, benedicitee !
 How myghte a man han any adversitee
 That hath a wyf ? Certes, I kan nat seye.
 The blisse which that is bitwixe hem tweye
 Ther may no tongue telle, or herte thynke.
 If he be povre, she helpeth hym to swynke;
 She kepeth his good, and wasteth never a deel;
 Al that hire housbonde lust, hire liketh weel;
 She seith nat ones 'nay', whan he seith 'ye'.
 'Do this,' seith he; 'Al redy, sure,' seith she.

(1337-46)

Here the Merchant is echoing the actual words of the Clerk's Tale. The opening of the Tale is devoted to presenting the old man's illusions. The two advisers, Placebo and Justinus, help point the absurdity of the old man's thoughts. Placebo is a neat satire on a court flatterer playing on the old man's vanity. Justinus has a more common-sense attitude, and recognises that a wife will make demands that the old man will find difficult to satisfy.

By hym that made water, erthe, and air,
 The yongest man that is in all this route
 Is bisy ynough to bryngen it aboute
 To han his wyf allone. Trusteth me,
 Ye shul nat plesen hire fully yeres thre,
 This is to seyn, to doon hire ful plesaunce.
 A wyf axeth ful many an observance.
 I prey yow that ye be nat yvele apayd.

(1558-65)

The old man's illusions, however, are in line with the official teaching of what marriage ought to be. The most cutting satire in the Tale is directed at an idea that in holy wedlock a husband can do no wrong to his wife.

'It is no fors how longe we pleye;
 In trewe wedlock coupled be we tweye;
 And blessed be the yok that we been inne,
 For in oure actes we mowe do no sinne.
 A man may do no synne with his wyf,
 Ne hurt hymselfen with his owene knyf . . .'

(1835-40)

The double-edged irony of the last line looks forward to the retribution that is to catch up with the old man. In the account of the wedding and the 'sport' that follows, perhaps the most powerful part of the whole Tale, we are shown the self-centred lust of the old man in action, and the whole scene is a grotesque parody of the meaning of marriage. We are shown the old man's desire growing in the drunken riot of the wedding-feast, his preparation for love-making by taking aphrodisiacs, and the physical repulsiveness of his appearance.

And Januarie hath fast in armes take
 His fresshe May, his paradys, his make.
 He lulleth hire, he kisseth hire ful ofte;
 With thikke brustles of his berd unsofte,
 Lyk to the skyn of houndfyssh, sharp as brere—
 For he was shave al newe in his manere—
 He rubbeth hire about her tendre face

(1821-7)

And a little later, happy after love-play, we get this description of him:

He was al coltish, ful of ragerye,
 And ful of jargon as a flekked pye.
 The slakke skyn aboute his nekke shaketh,
 Whil that he sang, so chaunteth he and craketh.
 But God woot what that May thoughte in hir herte,
 Whan she hym saugh sittynge in his sherte,
 In his nygthe-cappe, and with his nekke lene;
 She preyseth nat his pleyng worth a bene.

(1847-54)

There is a nightmarish reality about all this. What the wife feels is never directly described, but we have been left in no doubt about the horror of her experience. There is, of course, humour in the account, but it is a savage brand of humour. Even January's 'rape' of May is ironic: he thinks he is the sexually dominant partner, but we are made to know that all the sexual vitality is possessed by her; how can Winter pleasure Spring?

In the description of the wedding festivities we are told how Venus

with hire fyrbrond in hire hand aboute
 Daunceth biforn the bryde and all the route.

(1727-8)

This picture of inflamed passion forms an introduction to and a contrast with the impotent lust of the old man. But it is also compares with the picture presented by Marcian of the marriage of Mercury and Philology, and the latter is said to be inadequate to describe what happened at January's marriage. That is, the abstract learning of people like the Clerk cannot enable them to understand the sexual passion involved in love and marriage! So the Merchant's Tale answers the Clerk's Tale.

With the entrance of Damyan into the Merchant's Tale a new element is introduced into the marriage debate: the concept of *courtly love*. For Damyan is the courtly lover, and May is the mistress he will serve.

Now wol I speke of woful Damyan,
 That langwissheth for love, as ye shul heere;
 Therefore I speke to hym in this manere:
 I seye, O sely Damyan, allas !
 Andswere to my damaunde, as in this cas.
 How shaltow to thy lady, fresshe May,
 Telle thy wo ? She wole alwey seye nay.
 Eek if thou speke, she wol thy wo biwreye.
 God be thyn helpe ! I kan no bettre seye.
 This sike Damyan in Venus fyr
 So brenneth that he dyeth for desyr,
 For which he putte his lyf in aventure.

(1866-77)

But just as lust is to be found beneath the ideal of marriage, so too it is to be found beneath the ideal of courtly love. In the Merchant's Tale the courtly love tradition too is satirised, and the 'foul rag and bone shop of the heart' out of which it sprang is shown.

Damyan is seized by love at first sight in the true traditional way; and May is said to feel pity in the traditional way.

This gentil May, fulfilled of pitee
 Right of hire hand a lettre made she,
 In which she graunteth hym hire verray grace.

The next line, however, reveals a most unromantic matter-of-factness in her thinking:

Ther lakketh noght, oonly but day and place

(1995-98)

Many such details help to lay bare the sordid foundation of their romantic love, the most striking perhaps being the little detail of May's destroying Damyan's love-letter by casting it into the privy.

Sordid, I said. This must be qualified immediately. For one aspect of the Tale is that sexual desire has its own laws, which take little account of official codes of behaviour. The old man cannot satisfy the sexual needs of the young woman, so she turns to youth to fulfil her. What if the way they take involves deception and a rather absurd courtly tradition of behaviour ? Such is life !

But January goes blind and will not let May out of his reach. This is typical of the way Chaucer externalises and makes concrete what is really internal and psychological. The blindness represents simultaneously the old man's jealous suspiciousness and ignorant possessiveness.

All the elements of the Tale are brought together in the scene at the end. The garden in which everything happens is both the garden of the *Romance of the Rose* and the walled garden of marriage. In the garden we find Pluto and Proserpina, who represent the male-female dichotomy.

Pluto, that is kyng of Fayerye,
 And many a lady in his campaignye,
 Folwyng his wyf, the queene Prosperpyna,

Which that he ravysshed out of Ethna
 Wil that she gadered floures in the mede—
 In Claudyan ye may the stories rede,
 How in his grisely carte he hire fette—

(2227-33)

He attempts to assert his domination over her, and she attempts to foil him. In their conflict is mirrored the January-May conflict.

January entices May into the garden with a lyrical utterance of his lust which is based on the Song of Solomon. The Biblical origin of the lines, so inappropriate for the situation, further points the old man's self-deception about Christian marriage.

Rys up, my wyf, my love, my lady free !
 The turtles voys is herd, my dowve sweete;
 The wynter is goon with alle his reynes weete.
 Com forth now, with thyn eyen columbyn !
 How fairer been thy brestes than is wyn !
 The gardyn is enclosed al aboute;
 Com forth, my white spouse

(2137-44)

In the garden January promises three rewards to May for being faithful to him. God's love, her honour, and the inheritance of all his goods. Without hesitation May promises him that she will never be false, and insinuates that he, as men often are, may be so. Her mind is not on her husband's rewards but on more exciting fruits. Pluto, watching, is shocked and repeats some of the many allegations against women, but Prosperpina, like the Wife of Bath, comes back at him with an aggressive reply.

So to the glorious comedy of the denouement. At the crucial moment Pluto magically restores the old man's sight; but Prosperpina with even greater magic puts the right answer in May's mouth.

Out ! help ! allas ! harrow ! he gan to crye,
 O stronge lady stoore, what dostow ?
 And she answerde, Sire, what eyleth yow ?
 Have pacience and resoun in youre mynde !
 I have yow holpe on bothe youre eyen blynde.
 Up peril of my soule, I shal nat lyen,
 As me was taught, to heele with youre eyen,
 Was no thyng bet, to make yow to see,
 Than strugle with a man upon a tree.
 God woot, I dide it in ful good entente.
 Strugle ! wuod he, ye, algate in it wente !
 God yeve yow bothe on shames deth to dyen !
 He swyved thee, I saught it with myne yen,
 And elles be I hanged by the hals !
 Thanne is, quod she, my medicyne al fals;
 For certainly, if that ye myghte se,
 Ye wolde nat seyn thise wordes unto me.
 Ye han som glyhsyng, and no parfit sighte.

(2366-83)

No sooner are January's eyes opened to what his wife is up to behind his back, than her woman's wit persuades him that he is mistaken, and Chaucer makes the joke with perfect timing. As a last comment on the Tale as a study in illusion let me quote the (ironic) words of May:

Beth war, I prey yow; for, by hevene kyng,
 Ful many a man weneth to seen a thyng,
 And it is al another than it semeth.
 He that mysconceyeth, he mysdemeth.

(2047-10)

THE FRANKLIN'S TALE

The last word in the marriage debate is had by the Franklin. He speaks with a wisdom that is genial and mature, summing up and re-assessing all that has been said before.

First he rejects 'maistrye' altogether.

Love wol nat been constreyned by maistrye.
 Whan maistrie comth, the God of Love anon
 Beteth his wynges, and farewel, he is gon !

(764-6)

Secondly, he combines the Christian ideal of marriage with the courtly tradition of romantic love-duty and delight united in one whole.

Thus hath she take hir servant and hir lord,
 Servant in love and lord in marriage.
 Thanne was he both in lordship and servage.
 Servage ? nay, but in lordshipe above,
 Sith he hath bothe his lady and his love;
 His lady, certes, and his wyf also,
 The which that law of love acordeth to.

(792-7)

It should also be noted that the cause of this mutual recognition of each's 'otherness' is explicitly said to be brought about by 'gentilesse'.

Having used the description of Arveragus and Dorigen's relationship to show what ideal marriage is, the Franklin begins his Tale proper. Arveragus has to leave Dorigen for a time, and his absence causes her to grieve and worry excessively. Her grief and anxiety seize upon one image to express themselves: the black rocks at the sea's edge. These rocks become an 'objective correlative' of her fear for her husband's safety, and her obsession about disaster. They also become symbolic of all disaster, suffering and evil in life. They are the incompatible elements we cannot account for, the meaningless chaos that seems to belong nowhere.

'Eterne God, that thurgh thy purveiaunce
 Ledest the world by certain governaunce,
 In ydel, as men seyn, ye no thyng make.
 But, Lord, thise grisly feendly rokkes blake,
 That semen rather a foul confusion
 Of werk than any fair creacion
 Of swich a parfit wys God and a stable,
 Why han ye wrought this werk unreasonable ?'

(865-72)

They represent the adversities and cruel misfortunes, such as Griselda knew, which so try our faith. They are also the unknown elements in ourselves, our unconscious passions, glimpses of which may frighten and terrify us (this is suggested by Aurelius's reference to the rocks having come out of their 'owne dirke regione' where 'Pluto dwelleth inne', recalling the explicitly sexual reference to Pluto and Proserpina in *The Merchant's Tale*; furthermore they come to represent for Aurelius the torments of his unslaked desire).

Dorigen is obsessed by these rocks; her fears are presented and criticised as being excessive. They make her unbalanced. She cannot see the harmony and beauty in life. This is shown not only by the difficulty her friends have in comforting her, but also by her obliviousness to the beauty and delight of the garden she is taken to.

They goon and pleye hem al the longe day.
 And this was on the sixte morwe of May,
 Which May hadde peynted with his softe shoures
 This gardyn ful of leves and of floures;
 And craft of mannes hand so curiously
 Arrayed hadde this gardyn of swich prys,
 But if it were the verray paradys.
 The odour of floures and the fresshe sighte
 Wolde han makid any herte lighte
 That evere was born, but if to greet siknesse,
 Or to greet sorwe, helde it in distresse;
 So ful it was of beautee with plesaunce.
 At after-dyner gonne they to daunce,
 And synge also, save Dorigen allone,
 Which made alwey hir compleint and hir moone,
 For she ne saugh hym on the daunce go
 That was hir housbonde and hir love also.

(905-22)

This garden is clearly linked with the garden of marriage, the garden of the Romance of the Rose, and the garden of Eden. It is the place where God's grace and man's endeavours unite in bliss. But Dorigen has withdrawn herself from the dance, and knows not the harmony the dancers know.

Thus, in her state of doubt and dismay, Dorigen is approached by Aurelius. We are not surprised when she answers that she will love him 'best of any man' if he can remove the rocks. We feel that

this answer is more than merely a gracious and evasive reply. Obsessed by the horror of the rocks it seems psychologically right that when searching her mind for an impossible task she should think of removing the rocks: her answer reveals how inwardly she is attempting to dispel her fears by wishing them away. But to explain the psychological insight of the incident does not fully satisfy our feeling of its importance. In Dorigen's fear giving rise to this answer, and resulting in her being forced to keep her promise later, we sense a pattern of justice. Aristotle wrote: 'Even matters of chance seem most marvellous if there is an appearance of design as it were in them; as for instance the statue of Mityls at Argos killed the author of Mityls' death by falling down on him when a looker-on at a public spectacle; for incidents like that we think to be not without a meaning. A Plot, therefore, of this sort is necessarily finer than others'.¹ Such a design we are made to feel exists here: Dorigen sinned by her fear, and the punishment comes from the incautious promise her fear led her to make. Behind the actions of life there is an inflexible order which brings retribution to any who dare deny or rebel against that order.

After Dorigen has given her promise the attention of the Tale focusses upon Aurelius. His situation is a parallel of Dorigen's. Where she fears for the safety of her husband, he is obsessed by his unsatisfied desire. He too now wishes for the removal of the rocks. He prays to Apollo.

He seyde, 'Appollo, god and governour
Of every plaunte, herbe, tree, and flour,
That yevest, after thy declinacion,
To ech of hem his tyme and his seson,
As thyn herberwe chaungeth lowe or heighe,
Lord Phebus, cast thy merciabie eighe
On wrecche Aurelie, which that am but lorn.

.....
Youre blisful suster, Lucina the sheene,
That of the see is chief goddesse and queene
(Though Neptunus have deitee in the see
Yet emperisse aboven hym is she),
Ye knowen wel, lord, that right as hir desir
Is to be quyked and lightned of youre fir,
For which she folweth yow ful bisily,
Right so the see desireth naturally
To folwen hire, as she that is goddesse
Bothe in the see and ryveres moore and lesse.
Wherefore, lord Phebus, this is my requeste—
Do this miracle, or do myn herte breste—
That now next at this opposicion
Which in the signe shal be of the Leon,
As preieth hire so greet a flood to brynge

¹Aristotle, *Poetics*: in *Introduction to Aristotle*, Modern Library, p 637.

That fyve fadme at the leeste it oversprynge
 The hyeste rokke in Armorik Briteyne;
 And lat this flood endure yeres tweyne.
 Thanne certes to my lady may I seye,
 "Holdeth youre heste, the rokkes been awaye".'

(1031-64)

In this passage Chaucer presents the essential order and harmony of the Universe. All elements give to each other and take from each other, dancing together. Naturally there can be no answer to Aurelius' prayer, for it, like Dorigen's anxiety, is an unacceptance of the divine order of things that must be endured: 'To ech of hem his tyme and his seson'.

In despair Aurelius turns to wish-fantasies, and illusions. His brother, out of pity for his state, tells him of the powers of magicians.

'Ful ofte at feestes have I wel herd seye
 That tregetours, withinne an halle large,
 Have maad come in a water and a barge,
 And in the halle rowen up and down.
 Somtyme floures sprynge as in a mede;
 Somtyme a vyne, and grapes white and rede;
 Somtyme a castel, al of lym and stoon'

(1142-9)

This passage, in its rich colouring and vitality of images, gives the power and attractiveness of illusions. 'Humankind cannot bear very much reality.' But when Aurelius himself visits the magician and is shown the magician's powers, the illusions he sees are all expressions of his own lust and cruelty.

He shewed hym, er he went to sopeer,
 Forestes, parkes ful of wilde deer;
 Ther saugh he hertes with his hornes hye,
 The gretteste that evere were seyn with ye.
 He saugh of hem an hondred slayn with houndes,
 And somme with arwes bled of bittre woundes.
 He saugh, whan voyded were thise wilde deer,
 This fauconers upon a fair ryver,
 That with her haukes han the heron slayn.

(1189-97)

The magician asks a thousand pounds for making the rocks *seem* to disappear. Aurelius replies,

'Fy on a thousand pound !
 This wyde world, which that men seye is round,
 I wolde it yeve, if I were lord of it.'

(1227-9)

So men sell the whole rich reality that is — for fantasies.

Dorigen, whose husband has returned safely proving all her fears to have been unnecessary, is now trapped by the promise her lack of faith led her to make. Aurelius demands that she fulfil her vow to love him best, as he has done what she wished (Aurelius is now in the position of a husband who demands his bond of his wife: e.g. Walter, and January.)

In Arveragus' absence Dorigen meditates suicide, recalling a long list of examples of women who killed themselves rather than face dishonour. This passage answers those who despise women and think them incapable of virtue; it is also a rebuke to the Wife of Bath for what she has said of her own sex. Dramatically, it represents Dorigen's fearful attempts to talk herself into doing what she feels she ought to do. But when Arveragus returns and learns what has happened he takes it with fortitude and makes no attempt to shirk reality. He speaks with calm wisdom.

'Is ther oght elles, Dorigen, but this ?'
 'Nay, nay,' quo she, 'God helpe me so as wys !
 This is to muche, and it were Goddes wille.'
 'Ye, wyf,' quod he, 'lat slepen that is stille.
 It may be wel, paraventure, yet to day.
 Ye shul youre trouthe holden, by my fay !
 For God so wisly have mercy upon me,
 I hadde wel levere ystiked for to be
 For verray love which that I to yow have,
 But if ye sholde youre trouthe kepe and save.
 Trouthe is the hyeste thing that man may kepe.'

(1469-79)

Truth here seems to include not only that she should honour her bond (like Griselda), but seems also to refer back to the whole indulgence in wishful-thinking and illusion in her and Aurelius: one must be truthful to oneself and accept one's situation. We must not shirk things as they are — perhaps this is our bond to God which we must honour.

On her way to the garden, the place whose beauty must now be marred because of her earlier weakness, Dorigen meets Aurelius, and tells hem she is going

'Unto the garden, as my housbonde bad,
 My trouthe for to holde, allas ! allas !'

(1512-3)

Aurelius is overcome by this:

And in his herte he caughte of this greet routhe,
 Considerynge the beste on every syde,
 That fro his lust were hym levere abyde
 Than doon so heigh a cherlyssh wrecchednesse
 Agayns franchise and alle gentillesse;
 For which in fewe wordes seyde he thus:
 'Madame, seyth to youre lord Arveragus,

That sith I se his grete gentillesse
 To yow, and eek I se wel youre distresse,
 That him were levere han shame (and that were routhe)
 Than ye to me sholde breke thus youre trouthe,
 I have wel levere evere to suffre wo
 Than I departe the love bitwix yow two.'

(1520-32)

By releasing her of her promise he shows that he too can act with 'gentillesse'. And he in turn is then released of his promise to pay the magician a sum that would beggar him. All act with 'gentillesse'.

The Franklin's Tale does not resolve all the conflicts that have arisen in the 'marriage debate'; what it does do is reaffirm more directly than the other Tales the moral values most worth cherishing. In truth and 'gentillesse' men may learn that denial of self which is the highest fulfilment of self. Concluding his Tale the Franklin asks:

Lordynges, this question, thanne, wolde I aske now,
 Which was the mooste fre, as thynketh yow ?

The question expects no reply: it merely reminds us, in the word 'fre', that he receives most who also gives most.

THE NEW CLASSICS

by P. J. BICKNELL

I have no doubt that this short essay will be unwelcome in many quarters and that it will anger many who imagine that the best in Western civilisation derives from the glory that was Greece, and the grandeur that was Rome. What I have written is deliberately provocative; probably the case is overstated, but if this approach to the classics is ignored and rejected by the majority of scholars, the study of Greece and Rome may die.

What are the classics? Who studies them, and why?

A few years ago classics, qua classics, received the universal respect and admiration of educated Europeans. In England, Latin and Greek tags were bandied across the House of Commons; every reader of the *Times* chuckled to himself over quotations from Horace and Vergil and Cicero, and considered himself an educated gentleman. Even if he had never been to a University, he had had the languages drummed mechanically into him by means of gender rhymes and the rod at public schools. Since the wars, classics no longer hold this esteemed place in our culture. No one justifies his political prognostications with a maxim from Plato. Greek is dead and Latin dying. Teachers' conferences periodically try to resuscitate classical studies by passing resolutions on how they should be taught. They advocate the direct method and deprecate the old rote-learning system. Latin should be a game, not drudgery, they decide, and then, almost without exception, they return to the classroom and change their minds. Back they go to drudgery and with a vengeance. As a school-master said at a conference which I attended, 'To teach boys the finer parts of Latin is like casting pearls before swine, and what swine!' Under his admirable guidance the boys will soon despise Latin as well as his cynicism, and another nail will be knocked into the coffin of his type of classics. Many schools are abandoning Latin. They have perceived that the problem cannot merely be solved by sugaring the pill, the disorder is far more deep-rooted. The teaching methods do not matter so much as what is taught.

In the period before the world wars, the classics department at a University contained the cream of the students, who came from their schools to read the most important of subjects. This has also changed. In England, for example, classics departments are small and attenuated. Often inferior students opt for Latin

and Greek. Once upon a time everyone coming to the University had to have Latin; now this requirement has been abolished, after a desperate rear-guard action by classics masters of a former generation.

At the University, many students of classics either become disillusioned and change to a more congenial subject like English which you do not have to translate, or get a pass degree and sell soap for a vast combine, or perhaps join the Civil Service. Very few students in the classics department get good degrees. These tend either to teach in schools and send more people to the University to teach in schools, ad infinitum, or become University teachers to teach other students to send more people from school to be taught by them, also ad infinitum! The other departments in Universities regard the classicists as cut off from progress, living in the past and not wanting to escape to reality. The world of the classics lecturers themselves can be a very solitary one. The man in the street knows nothing about pure classics and cares less.

Does this mean that the public has been completely cut off from the contribution that Greece and Rome can make to our modern civilisation? That there is a contribution, no one can deny, even if it is far different from that imagined by the establishment.

In Great Britain the public avidly follows the progress of archaeological investigation, and deciphering of linear B, Greek plays on the wireless, and Aristophanes' 'Lysistrata' at a modern theatre. They listen to the broadcast talks of one of the few Professors prepared to come down from his ivory castle, or even those of Robert Graves.

Naturally, the ivory-tower scholars condemn all this. Popularisation is wrong. Archaeology is not classics. Linear B may not be Greek after all. Modern productions of Greek plays are pernicious distortions of the original and no one can appreciate Aristophanes unless he has the text before him (perhaps one may dispute the last point as often Herr Doktor's edition has been carefully expurgated). As for Robert Graves, I remember that a Latin Professor rang up the BBC to denounce this charlatan, and demand that his contract be cancelled. The poor man had given a lucid and accurate talk on the seamier side of Nero. Perhaps the Professor did not want the public to see the true face of Rome, its filth, its vice, its bribery and corruption. Rome to him was an ideal, not to be besmirched. The BBC ignored him and he returned to his master works on the scansion of Latin poetry, or whatever other esoteric pursuit he had in mind.

Classics is obviously out of touch with the modern world, at least as practised by its high-priests; only the more sensational aspects come into the public eye.

This sort of classics has always existed, the preserve of scholars

seeking a refuge from the world. In the turbulent times of the successor kings after Alexander, the Alexandrian scholars studied previous literature and ages with encyclopaedic accuracy; when the Roman empire collapsed Byzantium was the home of poly-maths like Tzetzes, delving into the past, annotating and commenting upon everything, good, bad, or indifferent.

Are we then to conclude that this is the only form of classical study, the game of a retiring intellectual coterie, the sport, as George Thomson calls it, of the mandarins? To see that this is untrue, we have only to turn to the Renaissance, and that period of European history when the feudal dark ages were banished, when the new 'Bourgeoisie' broke the fetters of the old system. Then classics was something dynamic, the study and application of which enabled men to break out into a new way of life, to dispel the diseases of superstition and obscurantism with intellectual Dettol borrowed from the Greeks and Romans. Knowledge of the achievements of the ancients helped the new dominant class to form a new *Weltanschauung*.

As soon as the impetus of this upheaval died down, classics became once more fossilized, once more retired to the Universities. It still preached humanism, but it was losing touch with reality. Contradictions of society began to develop, and classics had no meaning for a class now struggling to defend its own privileges, instead of shattering those of others. If it had any relevance at all it was as a reactionary force. At present it is hardly even that, it too often becomes a fairy castle where sensitive scholars can retire and shut the door on the conflict and strife of the modern world. The wheels of the classics turn round, but do not engage with the rest of the social machinery.

There are only two exceptions. The establishment can have a vested interest in amusing the masses, and this may be achieved by a sort of popularised classics mentioned above. Secondly, in the pursuit of intellectual and ideological warfare, the classicists may be forced to reply to the advocates of a new scheme of things. This seems to have happened to some extent.

As pointed out above, present society is supposedly based on the intellectual and moral values of Greece and Rome as interpreted by the revolutionary 'bourgeoisie' at the end of the dark ages. These values have lost all meaning and interest for the masses in our present society. The conservative establishment indulges them with the modern equivalent of 'panem et circenses', commercialised sex and horror films. Our whole cultural super-structure is the produce of a civilisation in decay. Ordinary people blind to the defects of their society are regaled with Brigitte Bardot and Elvis.

Let us take one example of the classics unconsciously aiding the persistence of the present social system. Our society is acutely conscious of its debt to Athenian democracy, and when this

democracy is attacked by socialist scholars, the classicists are forced to take the arena and reply. When this happens we clearly see how some scholars have lost touch with the facts, how they view the ancient world through rose-coloured spectacles. In a book on the *Ancient Democracy*, A. H. M. Jones tries to convince us that the profits of empire and slave-labour were quite unimportant to Athenian economy. On their own level, of course, the Greeks were unaware of such a contradiction in their society, and Jones falls into the same error on a more sophisticated level. He is rationalizing the vestiges of modern imperialism.

If it is to become of vital significance again, to be relevant to the new society that is to come, the heritage of the classics must be truly realised and exploited, to reveal the corruption both of our own Western civilisation, and of the so-called Communist bloc. Perhaps most important of all Christianity, in the main one of the most important products of the ancient world, must be reorientated to cope with modern needs. Like pure classics, Christianity is dying.

How can the classics gain new life and capture the imagination of ordinary people? Society is changing, and in the new society classics will have a new function; for that it must be prepared. It is possible that classics may play as great a part in the future intellectual life of man as it played in the renaissance, and possibly not a paganised classicism as then. Even if it cannot do that, we cannot let the mandarins kill it.

Our new age is an age of science, of research. Science appeals to the intelligent man-in-the-street, the classics do not. How can this defect be remedied? The latest science is the science of history, the study of the dynamic laws governing the evolution of human society, and it is here that the classical heritage fits in. Classics must no longer be an extension of the study of Latin and Greek, it must become a field where we can use the tools of historical science, analyse the good and bad in the ancient world, and see the relevance of ancient ideals for us to-day.

To this end the languages will become subservient, and appear as tools that enable us to study at first hand the intellectual products of the ancient world, and the sources for its history. It will be asked, "What of the literature", but let us be honest. In the future, we are never going to have people in the mass learning Latin and Greek. They will appreciate the literary masterpieces of Greece and Rome in translation. Is this a bad thing? In a good translation in their own symbols, it will be something living, with a meaning for them to-day, in terms of their own experience. If an ancient work is read in the original, one is at a loss, because so many unconscious preconceptions and thought-processes are lost on the reader. A translation recasts the original experience in modern symbols.

When classics is read in the future, the ancient world will

not be looked back to as an impossible, unattainable state: their environment and all the evil of the world of Greece and Rome will be remembered. The classical masterpieces will not be looked upon as something quasi-divine. The words of a brilliant scholar will be remembered. He is speaking of the attraction that Greek art still has. He says, 'Greek art and the Greek epic . . . in a definite sense uphold the significance of the norm and of the unattainable type. Man cannot transform himself into a child again without making himself ridiculous. But is he not delighted by the simplicity of a child, and must he not himself aspire to raise his own true being to its highest attainable level?' and, 'The fascination which an art has for us does not lie in the fact that it is incongruous with the undeveloped social environment in which it was born. On the contrary, art is the direct result of its environment, and its charm is therefore inextricably interwoven with the realisation that the immaturity of the social conditions in which it arose and in which alone it could arise, can never be created again.'

It will be realised that the *contradictions* of man's society are reflected in classical art, as in any other. An artist may create a fantastic harmony to make up for a real world out of joint. As a modern classics scholar observed, 'Because the works of art embody the spiritual labour that has gone to their production, they enable other members of a community, through the experience of seeing and hearing them, to receive a taste of the same sort of harmony. In a sense, in fact, art can be subversive, because it leads to a fantasy solution of problems, and not a practical one.' That is why classics in the immediate future must be reorientated from its artistic and literary to its historical aspects.

Because of this reorientation of classics, the trend already present, towards fragmentation and narrow specialisation, will increase. If classics is to become scientific, it must organise itself scientifically. The days of polymathic Mommsens and Wilamowitzes are over. The field is too vast, the new evidence so extensive that no man can hope to work more than a fraction of the field. This may at first sight seem, of itself, sufficient to be the death-knell of the classics, and divorce it even more from the practical needs of life. The reverse is the case. Take the case of the physical sciences. Narrow specialisation is done in these fields, but tremendous benefit to man results. The work of classical historians interpreting and illustrating social dynamics from their study of antiquity will enable improvements to be made in the socio-economic structure. The new classics will be the servant of man's social welfare, just as physics is the servant of his physical comfort. The new classicists, like the new physicists, will be expected to make a contribution to their fellow-beings, and not form an isolated clique.

Like all disciplines that are not directly concerned in our present

social framework, classics is becoming hermetically sealed. Scholars lock themselves up into water-tight compartments. Into the field of Greek studies few fresh winds from anthropology and comparative ethnology are allowed to drift. This was not always so, but it is in the interest of the establishment that the purity of our ancestors' Greece and Rome should not be sullied. The sex-dances on the threshing floor should not be allowed to lurk behind an emasculated tragedy. Unfortunately this very seclusion and specialisation is helping to turn classics into a science, and this is just what the establishment must try to prevent. The more scientific, the more objective classics becomes, the more will the true picture of Rome and Greece be visible behind the painted and patched facade. Inevitably classics will take its true place as a critical discipline, the analyser of societies, and not the defender of an antiquated and effete system. Instead of telling us that the Greeks were wise and wonderful, the Romans disciplined and uncorrupt, and supporting their view with inaccurate generalisations culled from the writings of authors blinded to the evils and contradictions of their society, the new classicists will see the real forces which wove and warped ancient society, regardless of the prejudices of its apologists.

In the new classics the emphasis will be removed from linguistics and prose-writing, where we can rarely hope to succeed because we have not been brought up and conditioned like the Greeks and Romans, removed from uncritical eulogies of the products of an age which can 'never be equalled or surpassed', an age that provided, as Gibbons seems to think, the high-water mark of human civilisation and achievement. (In fact, the Antonine age should be called an age of gilt, not of gold, because of the misery upon which it rested, its poverty and degradation, an age whose conditions can and should never be recreated.) Greece and Rome will no longer be extolled as unique, lauded as impossible ideals. They will be seen in their true place in the history of human civilisation, steps, remarkable and wonderful no one can deny, but still mere steps in the evolution of society.

Will this not kill classics? No, only thus can classics be saved from being not only the sport of a minority, but a deliberate lie, a distorted and idealised picture of a far from admirable reality. Man is always worthy of study — Protagoras called him the measure of all things. Classics can reveal both his potentiality for good, and for evil, and perhaps show, as in the past, how to curb the latter.

By way of conclusion, let us try to imagine concretely the shape of classics to come and picture to ourselves the structure of a future department. The future university will have two main faculties, first that of the natural sciences, and second that of the social sciences. The former will include mathematics, the physical and biological sciences and physiological psychology. The latter

will embrace history, now regarded as a science, psychology, both individual and group (though between these two there will be little differentiation), sociology and similar disciplines, now independent.

Both faculties will be expected to contribute to the welfare of society. There will be no room for escapists locked in ivory towers. Besides the two faculties, there will be a purely technical department where languages are taught. The languages will be regarded as tools for the workers in the two main faculties and not as an end in themselves, although, of course, the teachers will be experts. They may even concern themselves, if they wish, with art and literature, but the interpretation and explanation of these are properly the task of the psycho-historians.

The classicists, if the name persists, will be working in a particular sociological and historical field in a sub-department of the faculty of social sciences, having learnt the languages which are tools in their research. They will, among other tasks, seek to discover and elaborate further laws of social dynamics in their own period. Their contributions will help towards a complete statement of the laws which govern the history of the species of man. The enormous size of future societies will then allow more and more accurate predictions to be made concerning its future development and configuration. Classics will not die because future scholars will truly realise the dictum 'humani nihil a me alienum puto'.

The real need is to change society and 'classical' studies will supply some of the weapons.

13th September, 1960.

CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Sirs,

Miss Rappoport's article in *Theoria* 14 (1960) on *Othello* had some interesting remarks in it. It indicates to us some of the complexities of the play in the light of its title, *The Theme of Personal Integrity in Othello*. I would like to add some of my own ideas on the play, using Miss Rappoport's article as a springboard.

There seems to be a contradiction in the way Miss Rappoport views *Othello*. Miss Rappoport says: 'Othello's virtual permission to Iago that Iago should order him is a kind of unchastity.'¹ This is true, and so in the sentence: 'Othello's thoughts (regarding Desdemona) are improper . . . — they have been spawned by Iago'² there appears to be a note of defence of *Othello*. Miss Rappoport has explained the reason for *Othello*'s acceptance of Iago's words earlier: 'The very fact that *Othello* is prepared to listen to the slanders of his bride is a proof that he already has a bent towards accepting grounds of suspicion.'³

I said that there seemed to be a contradiction in Miss Rappoport's view of *Othello*. This arises from the remarks Miss Rappoport makes on *Othello*'s famous last speech. Miss Rappoport says that although *Othello*'s suicide is the natural consequence of his involvement with Iago, it is 'real freedom',¹ and that this freedom is conveyed by the speech.¹ Let us look at the last speech, then, in terms of what *Othello* has done.

In his last speech *Othello* tells his friend to give a just report of him. He says:

'Speak of me as I am.'⁴

Indeed, what sort of person is *Othello*? In his own words:

'one that loved not wisely but too well;
Of one not easily jealous, but being wrought,
Perplexed in the extreme.'⁵

Miss Rappoport says that the first line is 'justified'⁶ and the next one and a half lines are 'well merited'.⁶ In what sense is *Othello*'s statement justified? *Othello* did not love wisely, and thus the whole current of his love for Desdemona is burned into a destructive force. Is it true, however, that *Othello* was 'not easily jealous'?⁵

After we reconsider, we can see how little it took to deceive him, as Miss Rappoport recognises earlier on in her article:

'Othello's jealousy . . . is founded on something very flimsy.'³ Hence how is Othello's remark 'well-merited'?⁶

In fact, Othello in this speech really deceives himself as to his true character. He does not know what he is when he asks them to write of him 'as I am'.⁴ This is relevant since it involves the question of Othello's integrity in his last speech.

Consider Othello's own words and his actions.

First: 'Not from mine own weak merits will I draw
The smallest doubt of her revolt;
For she had eyes and chose me. No, Iago:
I'll see before I doubt; when I doubt, prove.'⁷

Here we have self-deception again, for when we consider what proofs Othello has accepted for Desdemona's adultery, they are altogether inadequate. Othello is credulous once he let Iago's attitudes become his own. Consider the subtlety of Iago's hints given in the famous 'temptation' scene. Here jealousy is not in question, but it is introduced by Iago. In this way the suggestions are introduced spontaneously. Othello is unreflecting. He says:

'No; to be once in doubt
Is once to be resolved.'⁷

He is no match for the diabolical planning of an Iago. As Miss Rappoport has said: "Othello is incapable of bearing doubt or decision, without nice consideration. How does this affect his self-deception? We remember that Desdemona's loss of the handkerchief Othello has given to her convinces him of her infidelity. He does not look so much at Desdemona as a woman, but as the embodiment of immorality, and himself as the righteous avenger. (Act v, sc. 2.) The whole basis of Othello's being wrought up is the hints given by Iago. These move him to a state of irrationality in which the 'proofs' of Iago are readily accepted. Thus his saying that he is 'not easily jealous'⁵ and that he would 'see before I doubt'⁷ are self-deceptions, untruths. He sees, but he does not see what he would have us think he does. He does not really see at all, he feels. In his jealous state, any reasoned, any thought-base to work from does not exist.

Consider what he says of himself when he tells Ludovico what the latter is to say of him:

'An honourable murderer, if you will;
For naught did I in hate, but all in honour.'⁵

The last line, in terms of our experience and knowledge of Othello, is certainly not the whole truth. Did Othello do everything ('all') in honour? One feels that his action arises from jealousy, because of an incapacity to do some thinking on a question most nearly touching himself. We can see that when Othello has to deal with the angry Brabantio in the street,¹⁰ or in the scene where Othello comes upon the fight between Montano and Cassio,¹¹ he is master

of the situation. It is interesting to note that he says in this latter scene:

‘Now by heaven
My blood begins my safer guides to rule,
And passion, having my best judgement collied,
Assays to lead the way.’

This is the tragedy of Othello. His ‘blood’ overrules his reason, the ‘safer guides’. The self-deception arises when he does not realise this. He thinks that he has reasoned out Desdemona’s infidelity, that he has reasoned out what he is to do. Again, Othello says: ‘Who can control his fate?’⁹ This is Othello deceiving himself once more. We do not feel that Othello is a victim of destiny, but a man whose destiny is brought about by his rapid action on a false basis. This is the ‘fate’.

Finally, we see then that Othello is a self-deceiver. He commits ‘honourable’⁹ murder, and is as violent in his reactions to this deed as he was to Iago’s deceptions. Nevertheless, he does not realise that he is to blame for the death of Desdemona, not Iago’s deceptions. It is a lack of self-knowledge in Othello. If we consider Macbeth, we see a nobleman who is willing to steep himself in blood to obtain a crown. Macbeth has terrible pangs of conscience, without which his tragic dimensions would almost not exist, for there would be no contact between him and us. Macbeth murders, but he realises that he will suffer for his act in the world to come, and he finds that he must suffer on earth too. There is a comprehension of motive in Macbeth which is missing in Othello.

Othello dies characteristically. Throughout the play he has been deceiving himself as to his grasp of the situation with regard to Desdemona, and before he dies he cannot, and does not, change his nature. He dies, as it were, in one of the ‘parts’ in the stories he has told Desdemona some time before.

Yours truly,

P. A. ONESTA.

¹ p. 11, ² p. 10, ³ p. 9, ⁴ 1.344, ⁵ 1s.346-48, ⁶ p. 12, ⁷ 3.3, ⁸ p. 8,
⁹ 5, ¹⁰ 1.2, ¹¹ 2.3.

OTHELLO

The Editors of *Theoria*,
University of Natal,
Pietermaritzburg.

Dear Sirs,

I should like to reply to some of the things Miss Rappoport says in her article on *Othello*.

Great tragedies don't show us inferior people who are wrecked by their own gross faults: on the contrary they show us men and women who make us realise what almost heavenly beauty and greatness human beings are capable of, and they show them caught in some net of time or circumstance and character, in which perhaps some small flaw in their own natures, or more often in their knowledge or understanding, plays a part. We see them

'Caught in the toils of fate, and backwards in the dust
They fall.'

By the time the tragedy ends, we have been made to feel about them as Homer does about the brave Cebryones, when he lies dead on the battlefield, with tumult raging so intensely above him that the very weapons of the fighters seem instinct with life. But, says Homer

'. . . in the whirl
Of dust he lay, so great and greatly fallen,
Forgetful of his feats of horsemanship.'

The tragic hero is always 'so great and greatly fallen', and the playwright has always made us feel the excitement and value and glory of all that is symbolised here in 'his feats of horsemanship'. The grief we are made to feel at his destruction is unsoftened in any way, but through it the beauty of his life and death is all the more intensely apparent.

Miss Rappoport knows this, of course, but her article may lead people to suppose that Shakespeare is condemning Othello, for she calls him possessive, and says that he treats Desdemona as a mere 'thing' or 'place'. These are black faults, and if Othello were indeed guilty of them, he would deserve to lose Desdemona. But Shakespeare is at pains to show that he is hardly to blame, if at all, for what happens. I defy any reader of the play to pick on a single moment in the scenes where Iago poisons his mind against Desdemona where it would be natural for Othello to stop the slander, inquire into it and reject it — and the reason why it wouldn't be natural is precisely that his nature is noble, innocent, generous, modest and free, and that he is not 'easily jealous' for 'the sun where he was born Drew all such humours from him', as Desdemona says. 'But being wrought' he is 'perplexed in the

extreme.' And he *is* wrought with such cunning that all his virtues, as well as his circumstances are used first to perplex or madden and then to destroy him.

Consider his virtues: he is a frank and open-hearted soldier — a natural leader of men, trusting his soldierly intuition and experience in military matters (that's why he chooses Cassio rather than Iago), but in peace and civil life extremely modest, and even humble, and feeling himself a little out of his depth. Iago has been a trusted comrade-in-arms for many years, a man whom everybody in the play regards as 'honest'. He is hardly ever mentioned without the epithet 'honest'. Everybody trusts him. Even his wife, Emilia, who knows him best and does not like him, never suspects what he is capable of: she is so stunned when his perfidy is at last uncovered that she can only reiterate again and again, almost voiceless with shock and incredulity, 'My husband !' There is nobody in the play who ever for a moment sees through Iago — except, of course, Roderigo at the very moment (and not till then) when Iago's dagger kills him. Iago seems to everybody who knows him to be cynical, indeed, but truthful to a fault: his hearty, bluff, friendly, sympathetic yet brusque manner (so wonderfully conveyed by Shakespeare) seems to err on the side of frankness. He is the very last person in the world whom the generous and open-hearted Othello would even dream of suspecting. Shakespeare established beyond doubt that it would be impossible for a shadow of suspicion to enter Othello's head of Iago's having an ulterior motive in what he says.

Then, consider Othello's circumstances. He hardly knows Desdemona at all. He believes that he knows Iago, his shoulder-companion in many a battle, infinitely better. His meetings with Desdemona have been few; and in them he has been the talker, she the listener. He loves her with a measureless passion, but like all intellectually honest men of his time of life, he knows very well that it is possible to be so moved by sexual attraction that a man's being besotted about a woman is no guarantee at all that he understands and has reason to trust her. On the contrary, love is well-known to be blind. Then, what he does know of Desdemona might be interpreted differently from the way he has always interpreted it — the way in which (Iago cunningly suggests to him) his vanity and the depth of his desire to be loved, have made him interpret it hitherto. For example, it is she who made the first advances to him ('Upon this hint I spoke'). He has hitherto taken that behaviour to proceed from simple love and innocence (as in fact it did), but Iago now makes him question that and wonder whether perhaps Desdemona is habitually too ready to invite men to make love to her. And then he knows that she hoodwinked her father, and carried on the courtship with him and the runaway marriage without her father's suspecting anything at all. Brabantio's last bitter words about his daughter were, 'She has deceiv'd her father, and may thee.'

Moreover, Othello is black (many readers in South Africa seem to forget this). He is not an ignorant black savage, it is true, but a

highly civilised, noble-natured, chivalrous-mannered Moor. Nevertheless, he is black, very black — his bosom is “sooty” — he is what Elizabethans thought of as the devil’s own colour, and it is clear from the text that among Venetians of the time, there is a powerful prejudice against him on this account. It is even considered unnatural for Desdemona to have fallen in love with him — it cannot be love she feels, some of her countrymen suggest, it must be a perverted kind of lust. This idea would never have invaded Othello, but for other circumstances. For example, he is no longer young — he is almost past the prime of life and it seems very surprising to his modest nature (for Othello, with all his pride, has a touching natural humility) that a creature of light such as Desdemona seems to him should prefer an aging, ugly, black man (he thinks of himself as ugly) to the handsome young suitors of her own age and nation who surround her. Then too she is a Venetian, member of a race regarded as ‘super-subtle’ and a civilisation that by Othello’s clear and simple standards of honour is decadent, permitting of shady complexities and moral compromises that he doesn’t understand. Perhaps, he thinks, he doesn’t understand Desdemona at all, but as an uninitiated foreigner, is thoroughly deceived by her appearance of simple goodness, which may hide heaven knows what differences of code and habit from those he was bred in.

Iago assiduously finds and taps all these unobserved sources of doubt in Othello’s soul. Later in the marriage they could never have been tapped, because by that time they would have vanished, for Othello would have got to know Desdemona. It is the way Iago ‘works’ him that makes Othello helpless. From his very first exclamation, ‘Ha ! I like not that !’, which he allows to escape him as if it were unconsciously spoken, Iago appears to be trying hard to cover up that unconscious murmur and to be keeping back loyally from Othello the suspicions, and later the knowledge, that he can’t keep from troubling his own mind. He very skilfully puts Othello into the position of having to wring the truth from his reluctant lips by his agonised questions. At what point, I ask again, could Othello in these circumstances have doubted Iago ?

Here let me amplify my statement that Iago could not have raised and wrought on these doubts later in the marriage supposing events had taken a normal course. To show quite clearly that he intends this to be understood, Shakespeare actually deludes his audience into accepting two contradictory times for the duration of the plot — the famous double-time trick which the entranced reader or spectator doesn’t even notice. He implies clearly that supposing Othello had been given a few hours to talk calmly to Desdemona, his suspicions would have been cleared up. But he gives him no such time, rushing him into the murder the very night after the first on which he and his wife have slept together. In between these happenings, Shakespeare throws out many suggestions that a period of about three weeks is elapsing, enough time for an intrigue

between Cassio and Desdemona to develop. For example, when Othello says

‘I slept the next night well, fed well, was free and merry
I found not Cassio’s kisses on her lips’

the audience are so racked with pity for him and hatred for Iago for causing his agony, that it doesn’t occur to them that there was no time for either night, the night with Cassio, nor the ‘next’ one! The effect is very like that of distortion in a Picasso painting: poetic truth is reached more swiftly by violating literal truth. It would have taken many a laborious scene and much trivial invention to provide reasons why Othello should not have a chance for three weeks or so to talk matters over quietly with Desdemona, and in the course of these, the tragedy would have lost its powerfully moving urgency and drive. Shakespeare, with his usual boldness, simply ignores possibility, and makes us believe utterly (as we do) that time and passion swept Othello along so inexorably to disaster, that there was never any opportunity for a clearing up between husband and wife of the misconceptions.

. . . ‘Like to the Pontic sea
Whose icy current, and compulsive course,
Ne’er keeps retiring ebb, but keeps due on,
To the Propontic, and the Hellespont
Even so my bloody thought with violent pace
Shall ne’er look back, ne’er ebb to humble love
Till that a capable and wide revenge
Swallow them up.

This speech does not express resolution, as Miss Rappoport says it does, so much as the overwhelming compulsion of that huge rush of rage, grief and disillusionment with which Iago’s hints have flooded his consciousness. The words reveal, among other things, how strongly tempted Othello knows he will be to ‘ebb to humble love’, for in calmer moments he never quite loses hope until the actual moment of the murder, that Iago is somehow wrong. That Iago is lying, never enters his head. When he meets Desdemona just after the first ‘temptation’ scene, his ability to attend to anything has been shattered, and he answers Desdemona with a most pitiable abstraction. Until the moment when he kills her, the hope of her innocence has persisted, however faintly. But when she seems to admit infidelity with Cassio he believes his worst fears and is able to kill her in a rush of rage—an act from which his intense intuitive feeling for her as a matchless individual (not a ‘thing’ or a ‘place’) has deterred him despite resolve till then. The candle speech makes his sense of her unique being very clear.

Unfortunately there is no room in a letter for much quotation, but I should like to argue on Miss Rappoport’s interpretation of three speeches. The first one occurs where Emilia after the murder cries in stupefaction

“. . . that she was false to wedlock?”

and Othello replies

Ay, with Cassio — had she been true,
If heaven would give me such another world
Of one entire and perfect chrysolite
I'd not have sold her for it.

Miss Rappoport says Othello compares Desdemona to a jewel that may be bartered. No; he says the opposite as emphatically as it is possible to say anything; he says that she was *not* to be bartered; and the chrysolite that he would *not* have bartered her for is very far indeed from being a jewel — it is 'such another world', that is, everything that human beings know and have ever known, given a superhuman, superworld glory by being of the flawless quality and radiance of a perfect jewel — a heavenly body such as our own world would be were it without spot. The image is one of infinite depth. It never stops expanding as you look into it.

The second speech is

'I had rather be a toad
And live upon the vapour of a dungeon
Than keep a corner in the thing I love
For other's uses'

Miss Rappoport uses this as proof that Othello regards Desdemona as a 'thing'.

To read in this way is to interpret language mechanically. 'Thing' in the passage above is no more to be taken literally than 'corner' and it is an unstressed word filled with meaning from the rest of the passage.

If on the strength of such images as these Othello is said to be thinking of Desdemona as a 'jewel to be bartered' or a 'thing', what shall we say of Juliet just before her wedding night:

'O, I have bought the mansion of a love
But not possessed it.'?

Would Miss Rappoport say that Juliet is thinking commercially? Language works more freely and subtly than such interpretations allow for. Words in poetry pick up their meaning from other words, as one touch of yellow in a painting picks up all the other yellows. The context of passionate anticipation empties Juliet's image (of course) of the commercial connotations that the literal might see in it, and fills it instead with the sense of a happy and feverish longing for a reality that shall be even more satisfying than the rapture of expectation — the glorious empty rooms of the noble mansion that is now hers to enjoy are to be filled with delights, are to be lived in and to become familiar and more beloved in the happy future that is now so near.

So too, when Othello so bitterly says of himself that he

'Like the base Indian threw a pearl away
Richer than all his tribe.'

it doesn't vitally matter who the base Indian was, or whether what Shakespeare really said was 'the base Judean'. The point that is thrown into relief by all the rest of the image is that he was base — stupid and low-minded. We all think of a pearl as something hard to come by, of extraordinary rarity, value, beauty and purity, and the image makes us see Desdemona as like a pearl in possessing these qualities. When Othello says 'richer than all his tribe', our sense of these qualities in Desdemona is tremendously enlarged. But of course the word 'pearl', when we apply it to Desdemona, is emptied of the meaning 'a small round object found in an oyster shell'. 'Threw away' as applied to Othello loses its meaning of a physical action of the arms, but suggests with striking effect in the context an act of crassly ignorant rashness, so shamefully indiscriminating, so disgracefully stupid, as to deserve condemnation bitter as gall.

Having been made to feel this immeasurable value in Desdemona, and this bitter self-condemnation in Othello, how can we also possibly feel that the Desdemona who is being compared to the pearl is not being valued as a person, but is thought of as a mere trinket to be sold for a good price? Yet if Miss Rappoport applied the same standards to this image that she does to the other two, that is what she would say.

The third passage, which occurs shortly before the murder scene, seems to me the key speech of the play. Seasoned warrior as he is, Othello speaks it weeping:

Had it pleas'd Heaven,
 To try me with affliction, had they rain'd
 All kinds of sores, and shames on my bare head:
 Steep'd me in poverty to the very lips,
 Given to captivity, me, and my utmost hopes,
 I should have found in some place of my soul
 A drop of patience. But alas, to make me
 The fixed figure for the time of Scorn,
 To point his slow, and moving finger at,
 Yet could I bear that too, well, very well:
 But there where I have garner'd up my heart,
 Where either I must live, or bear no life,
 The fountain from the which my current runs,
 Or else dries up: to be discarded thence,
 Or keep it as a cistern, for foul toads
 To knot and gender in. Turn thy complexion there:
 Patience, thou young and rose-lipp'd cherubin,
 I here look grim as hell.

Miss Rappoport takes the images 'here where I have garner'd up my heart' and 'the fountain from the which' to indicate that Othello regards Desdemona as a mere 'place'. No. I can think of no passage in all literature that gives a more complete idea of the nature of married love, and the reason why sexual jealousy in

marriage seems both inevitable and morally right. The image of the barn 'where I have garner'd up my heart' suggests the husband's utter trust in his wife. He is married to Desdemona. Marriage is an absolute committal — all his life's harvest, all his heart, is treasured up in her and her alone, and upon the wheat there garnered he must live for the rest of his life, or else starve. The next image, of the fountain, makes this even clearer. He loves, as he says himself later, 'not wisely but too well'. Again the fountain image suggests the degree to which Othello's whole soul and life are committed to his marriage: if the fountain dries up, he cannot live. Then comes the cistern image, which most powerfully suggests the just foundation of sexual jealousy. If professions of love are shallow — if in the act of love there is not what there seems so unmistakably to be, the complete and most loving giving of one person wholeheartedly to another, then those who commit it are in their falseness like 'foul toads' that hideously 'knot and gender' and their acts pollute the source from which the married lovers draw their life. Whatever theories people have held from time to time about the naturalness of polygamy and the meanness of jealousy, this does seem to be what not only the Elizabethans but their successors today actually do feel, at a depth far below logic and reason — that infidelity is lying, betrayal and pollution of something of irreplaceable value. It is wiser, of course, not to love too well, but Shakespeare thinks Othello better than wise. Othello's integrity, I think, is complete, and no speech in the play makes me more aware of it than this. For the small degree to which he is to 'blame', — for his ignorance — he is super-abundantly punished. First and most, by the death of Desdemona. Next, by Emilia's calling him, with justice, for not knowing that Desdemona could not be false:

'. . . Oh gull, oh dolt,
As ignorant as dirt.'

And last, Othello takes himself by the throat, as he once in Aleppo took the Turk, that other unbeliever, 'the circumcised dog', and stabs himself to death. This is his own judgment of what he deserves: for the ignorance that was his only fault (and in the circumstances an excusable one) he blames himself so hugely that he gladly pays for it with his life.

Yours faithfully,

Christina van Heyning.

LANGUAGE AND THE WORLD VIEW

Department of English,
University of Natal,
Pietermaritzburg.
25 August 1960.

The Editors, *Theoria*,
University of Natal,
Pietermaritzburg.

Dear Sirs,

I must apologize for returning to the subject of my earlier letter (*Theoria* 11) concerning Mr Cope's article *Language and the World View*. For it will seem ungracious of me to do so, when Mr Cope has already (*Theoria* 13) conceded that 'the case for a science of metalinguistics does not seem to have been made'. But since, in spite of this, he heads a section of his letter: 'Towards a Science of Metalinguistics', it is evident that he and I have not yet understood each other.

In his original article, Mr Cope wrote: '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.' The explanation that he gives in his subsequent letter only confirms my suspicion that by 'living semantically' he means 'observably correlated with the world view'. Metalinguistics sets out, then, to demonstrate a correlation between language and world view by ignoring those elements of language that cannot be correlated with the world view. This makes it too easy to ignore inconvenient evidence.

Mr Cope gives an interesting demonstration of the process of explaining away inconvenient evidence when he deals with my deliberately embarrassing suggestion that the Englishman, by saying 'I am' and 'he is', refuses to recognize a common state of *being* in himself and his fellow-men, while the Afrikaner, by using the same verb-form for each person, shows an awareness of the common lot of mankind. Mr Cope points out (what I would never have denied) that 'am' and 'is' are grammatically parts of the same verb; he offers a neat proof of this. He points out too that English has in this respect simplified more than French, though less than Afrikaans. Therefore, the comparison has no metalinguistic significance. I cannot follow the argument; the question that I proposed still stands — *why* has Afrikaans, in this respect, simplified more than English? Metalinguistics purports to seek the answer in a difference between the world views of Afrikaners

and Englishmen, but apparently retains the prerogative of rejecting any answer that conflicts with its preconceptions about the two races.

Mr Cope's answer to another of my objections seems to lead to the recognition of a hitherto unsuspected complication. I suggested that the large number of words for 'horse' in English did not warrant the deduction that the horse was far more important than the cow in English culture. Mr Cope quite rightly replies that the concentration of vocabulary round the horse in *English hunting circles* is in direct proportion to the importance attached to the horse in *those circles*. In other words, Mr Cope and I appear to have made, in the course of this exchange, the interesting discovery that if the conclusions of metalinguistics are to have any validity, they must be based not on the consideration of what we commonly think of as 'languages' (e.g. English, Russian, Zulu), but of what might more properly be called 'dialects', such as 'County' English, farm labourer's English, soldier's English, officer's English, civil service English in correspondence, and South African University English. Each dialect has its own, quite distinct, concentrations of vocabulary, and to generalize about the abstraction 'English' by counting words in dictionaries would clearly be misleading (as the 'horse' and 'cow' example showed).

This, of course, compels one to consider the wide range of individual differences within each group; for each is far from being homogeneous. Perhaps metalinguistics must confine itself, if it is ever to achieve any degree of scientific precision, to the relationship between language and *Weltanschauung* is one man at a time. Then it will not be far from turning into literary criticism (which, I hasten to add, is far from claiming to be a science).

Mr Cope still does not convince me that the number of words a language uses to distinguish species within a genus is in direct proportion to the importance attached to the genus. Probably a deep interest in a subject (on the part of an individual, or of a series of people in a continuous linguistic tradition) goes with an ability to make subtle and precise distinctions within that subject—but this ability hasn't necessarily much to do with the number of words used—some of which, as I said before, may well be undifferentiated synonyms.

Having admitted, as he has, that a case has not been made for a science of metalinguistics, Mr Cope still appears confident that such a science will come into being at some time in the future. Nothing that he has said so far, however, suggests that the study he describes and illustrates is one that can ever aspire to that degree of objectivity and precision that might convert a series of interesting guesses into a systematic structure of demonstrable facts from which deductions and predictions can be made.

Incidentally, many readers of *Theoria* must have been grateful to Mr Cope for drawing our attention to *The Structure of English*, by Charles Fries. It is from some such direction that the teacher of English must hope to receive, though not soon, a substitute for the old formal grammar, the deficiencies of which Fries so clearly demonstrates. But Fries, while confining himself to the study of spoken English among a limited number of people, still treats the *word* as the linguistic unit. (Why should 'he', in 'he goes home', be regarded as anything but a prefix, performing the function that would in many languages be performed by a suffix or a vowel change? Why, for that matter, not regard 'home' as a suffix? Word-divisions are, after all, largely a matter of typographical convention.) Structural linguistics must surely start with an even more radical re-examination of formal grammar than Fries offers. It will be a long time, then — even longer than one might suspect from reading Fries — before the kind of study he proposes can help the teacher to teach students to write clear and exact English.

Yours faithfully,

R. T. JONES.

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