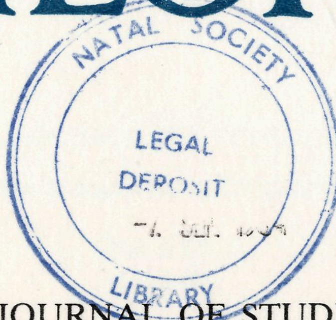
THEORIA



A JOURNAL OF STUDIES

in the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

Vol. LXII

May 1984

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Like those who watch over great reservoirs of water in this part of Africa, we can at present rejoice in abundant supplies to our forum of thought and opinion. Writers who wish to have a say must now wait longer before a place can be found for them or their voices can be heard. We hope that, with the editors, they will see the situation as a whole and recognize conditions of plenty to be invigorating. No less than other forms of life, the intellect cannot flourish in dearth and drought.

For this issue, contributions offer a range of interests: a form of poetry which comes from the oral tradition; views on literature by contemporary and earlier writers; areas where literature may impinge on politics and science; and further discussion of a claim that the good family might be a pattern for good government.

THE EDITORS

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MIAMI MEETING
AN INTERVIEW WITH ISAAC BASHEVIS SINGER[1]
23 JANUARY 1983

by JOSEPH SHERMAN

As I boarded a flight from Washington to Miami, lovingly cradling an umbrella bought in Paris a fortnight before, the air hostess demanded, with that disconcerting combination of friendliness and bossiness so characteristic of Americans who deal with the public, 'Whaddaya want an umbrella for? It's not raining in Miami'. Two days later, fierce winds and drenching rain flooded the streets, trapping thousands of holidaymakers in their hotels and recording the worst weather in living memory. 'Next year,' viciously wailed a heavily-painted matron at the bar of my hotel to her haggard husband, 'I'm gonna take out *weather* insurance.' This startling contrast of expectations was to prove characteristic of my whole visit to Miami Beach, the sole purpose of which was to interview Isaac Bashevis Singer.

Picking up a telephone to make an appointment with a Nobel Laureate is something I never imagined myself doing. Why should he give me an interview? But prodded by the guilt of having received a small university grant for this purpose, and protected by the indifference to rebuffs that a traveller in foreign parts quickly develops, I telephoned his apartment and spoke to his wife. Mr Singer took no phone calls during the day as he worked, she told me. Also, he was very busy that week, and could make no appointments. If I wanted to speak to him in person, I could call back at nine that evening. Thank you. Goodbye.

A day of dreadful despondency followed. Academics on limited budgets cannot indefinitely prolong their stay anywhere, and a cursory glance had moreover not urged Miami Beach as a desirable possibility either.[2] A few hours walking down the main road of this huge island—eight miles long—increased the depression. The beach, to which all rich America flocks for the winter, is ruthlessly blocked from free peeps on the part of casual passers-by by massive hotels and ugly condominiums. Two cinemas, one specialising in hard-core pornography, the other in hard-core Sylvester Stallone, confounded the illusion that every American city is the home of movies. The heat was unbearable, and my winter woollies totally unsuitable. Nothing seemed to be working out.

At nine that evening, I hopelessly telephoned again. No reception could have been more cordial. Yes, certainly he would see me. The only time he could offer was Sunday evening, 23 January 1983, at eight. Would that suit me? Yes, of course. Thank you. Thank you very much.

When he came down to meet me in the foyer of his apartment building, he looked exactly like his photographs — little, lithe and lively. He showed me to some downstairs reception rooms: the first one he chose was crowded with noisy card players, dimly perceived through a haze of cigarette smoke. He grumbled lightly as he groped his way round a free room looking for the light switch. When we were finally seated, he looked at his watch — a bad start, I thought. I am taking up his valuable time to no purpose. Another false impression. In one of the books I had brought him to autograph, he wrote, 'In friendship', and throughout our meeting this is what he offered, openly and generously. When we had finished the formal interview, and I was hurriedly packing to go, he tapped my little tape recorder. 'Is this thing off? Good. Now we can talk.' And this we did, like old friends, for another hour, during which his wife came in.

They were both very interested in hearing of South Africa, about which they know very little. He was pleased to learn that his books were readily available and widely read here, and several times expressed an interest in visiting the country. 'Would I be acceptable to them?' Of South African literature he knew the work of Alan Paton — 'He's a mulatto, isn't he?' Putting this right led me into deeper waters — for example, the difference between Africans and Afrikaners. My attempted explanation made him laugh. 'You see what I said about the human disaster? Whatever they build — machines, buildings — in their personal relationships, people are so petty, so little.'

What follows are the thoughts of at least one person of whom this is not true.

* * *

Mr Singer, you've said that you prefer the short story to the novel.
SINGER: Yes.
Yet in your novels you explore in great depth and detail issues that you presumably felt were too wide to deal with in a single story. What do you see as the artistic purpose of the novel as opposed to the short story?
SINGER: I will tell you, my friend. Actually, like a father, I love them both. When a father says, 'I like this son better, or the other son better', he only says so — he likes both his children. I like both the novel and the short story. Of course, I would say it's more difficult to write a good short story than a good novel, because your time, your space is so limited. You have to do it short, and still there should be a story and there should be tension and character and human personality. To make it short and still good is a great challenge. But actually, we cannot really interchange them. Some stories don't need more than a few pages, and others need a large

space. I would say both of them are integral parts of literature, and one cannot really . . . there is no competition between them.

Now in a recent introduction to a selection you made of your short stories,[3] *you said that, 'Fiction in general should never become analytic'. Could you enlarge, perhaps?*

SINGER: What I mean by this is that fiction should not . . . It should tell a story instead of explaining the story. But there are very many modern writers from the so-called psychological school or any other school, who are so enchanted by Freud that while they tell the story they try to explain it according to Freud, or others will explain it according to Adler or Jung and so on, which I think is not really good, because the story itself should be constructed so that it should tell everything: the explanation should come out from the story, not from this which is another part of the story. There was a writer who wrote *Point Counterpoint.* What was his name?

Huxley. Aldous Huxley.

SINGER: Huxley. Huxley. Aldous Huxley. He tried to explain everything which he told there, and the explanation just did damage to the novel. You couldn't read the novel because the explanations did damage. I once heard if Homer would have explained his *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* according to the psychology of his time, no one would be able to read the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey.* The fact that Homer told the story made it so wonderful. The same is valid in our time. Of course there should be explanation by critics, by professors; this is *their* job; they try to explain or to bring out intentions and influences and so on and so on. But the writer himself should not do it. He should leave it to others. He should leave it actually to the good reader, to the critic, to the editor; he *tells* it.

Now in that very amusing and very famous disclaimer that you made when you received the Nobel Prize, in 'Why I write for children',[4] *you seem to some people to be dismissing the very concerns with which your writing seems to be most involved — the alienation of man from his world, the possible redemption of man and his world —*

SINGER: You mean in the children's stories?

But in general, when you say 'Why I write for children', really you're making some very — I think — amusing and pertinent remarks about why you write in general.

SINGER: Well, I will tell you. I will tell you. I really don't believe that a writer can have a programme. Many have; they say, 'I'm writing about alienation', or whatever they call it. I don't have this programme. I have a story to tell and I sit down to tell the story, *believing* that if the story will be told in the right way, some truth or even generalisation may come out of it. In other words, I'm not one of those modern writers who are trying to write, with the power of literature, a better world. Not that I wouldn't like to do it, but I don't think it is in the power of literature. We cannot use, let's say, a

stick where you have to use a sword or an atomic bomb. It is not in the nature of literature. We know, for example, that the Nazis read all the good books of Goethe and Schiller, and modern books. While they kept on reading, they played with the little heads of children. Literature did not make them better people. Neither did literature make better people of the dictators . . . I would say that there are limits to the power of literature — the socialists knew that a cheap brochure can bring more action than a great work. So, because this is not in our power, we should not really waste our time to do the impossible, because if you try so very hard to change history with a powerful novel, history will not be changed but the novel will be changed: it will become very bad. The reason why I mention this is because I grew up in a time when all my colleagues were radicals, communists — they all tried their best to write so that it should bring communism in Poland or wherever, and it's already sixty years that the communist critics and editors tried their best to make the writers write what they called 'socialistic' novels, 'communistic' novels, novels which will tell you that Stalin was great and Brezhnev was great, and Andropov is great and so on and so on. Oh, just nothing comes out of it. Literature in Russia which used to be the greatest in the world has become the smallest almost, because of this tendency, because of this force with which they tried to make the writer do what is not in his nature. One should — one must — repeat it and stress a lot, because many people are hypnotised by this idea that they can still do it.

So when you wrote in that same collection recently that 'at its best art can be nothing more than a means of forgetting "the human disaster" for a while —'[5]

SINGER: Disaster. I meant it. Very much so. I think that which is against the human disaster, by the way, is a very great thing, because many of us are so unhappy about this human disaster that for them an hour of forgetting is a great achievement, so perhaps you cannot even reach this. But I don't feel — I *don't* — that I could write a novel which would make, really, humanity better. I wish I could. That's all I can say.

What do you think of chiefly as 'the human disaster'? In world terms? Personal terms?

SINGER: It is a disaster in every way. Let me tell you why. First of all, man is the only creature who knows about death. The animals don't foresee their deaths. They live — they live as long as they can and they die quietly, but men foresee their death and many, many people are concerned about it. They say, 'Here I am, gathering knowledge, and titles, and suddenly with one little bullet or with a little knife or a few bacteria the whole thing is finished'. It's tragic. As far as I know, man is the only creature, at least on this earth, who knows his death. Another thing is, God has created men so, that

they have to fight for their existence, and not only fight, but really fight — with their last powers they keep on. Wars have been going on, wars and revolutions have been going on for thousands of years. Young people suddenly got up in the morning and went to conquer Syria or Israel or whatever: suffering and making other people suffer, bringing hunger and epidemics. All other animals also fight for their existence but in a different way, not with any hatred, not with any ideals. When two stags will fight for a she-deer, they will stand their fight and one will fall down, the other one will conquer. There will be no marches and no songs and no books about it. Man feels that he is doing the wrong thing. A hundred thousand soldiers died fighting for Verdun, maybe so many died in Stalingrad and man cannot get out of it. There is always an attacker, there is always a defender, and sometimes you don't know who the attacker is and who the defender; the soldiers who are being the attacker are just as helpless as the soldiers who serve the defender. Human life is a great tragedy and it seems while we are very clever and we are building airplanes and what else that comes to human society, we are as silly and as idiotic and as vicious as the savages from ten thousand years ago and there seems to be no way out of it. This is, by the way, the reason why so many writers would like to write some novel, some story which would help people see what you are doing — 'Desist! Stop doing this nonsense!' — but it does not help, because there are powers stronger than literature, which push people in this direction. All their good intentions become bad intentions and more than bad intentions — bad deeds. When I think about humanity — I've lived through the First World War, the Second World War, I've seen the Holocaust, the Jewish Holocaust in Poland — so much misery and so much misfortune. So the human disaster to me becomes greater from day to day, at least in *my* mind.

You mentioned the Holocaust: something that has puzzled me and moved me very much is in the Preface to Enemies, a Love Story *when you write that you were not writing the individual stories of real people, but you say there that you 'did not have the* privilege *of going through the Holocaust —'*[6]

SINGER: Because if I did have the privilege to be *there* I could really write about it with more authority than I write about hearsay, you know — I *could* have — I don't know ... maybe I shouldn't have said it's a privilege. . . . But anyhow, I often felt that because I wasn't there, because while these people suffered and fought for their life I was sitting in a cafeteria reading the *Jewish Daily Forward*[7] and drinking coffee, I feel that I am not entitled really to do this. And to be able to do it would have been in a way a privilege.

. . . *Yes. . . . Could I turn to some aspects of* Yiddishkeit[8] *in your books?*

SINGER: Yes. Yes.

The chief characters of all the novels seem to me to be displaced people, people who, as you write about Asa Heshel in The Family Moskat, *'have lost God and they haven't found the world'.*[9] *Would you say that that choice was a self-willed choice?*

SINGER: I would say that my main hero is always the sceptic, not so much the believer. Of course I have great respect for the belief of a man like, say, in *The Manor*, Jochanan — and his belief was great. But still, since I am not a believer like he is, since I'm a sceptic, I feel more for the sceptic than for anybody else. So being a sceptic myself, I prefer really to write about the suffering of the sceptic because he is neither here nor there. He believes in God and he does not believe in God; he complains to God and while he knows there is someone to complain to, he doesn't know who is the one who is supposed to listen to his complaints. He is really very tragic and very often even funny because he has to convict himself. A sceptic . . . sometimes he acts like a believer, sometimes he acts like a non-believer. He is not consistent. So all this makes, in a way, good literature.

Very good — very exciting.

SINGER: Thank you very much. Thank you for saying so.

But what troubles some Jewish critics of your books — it doesn't trouble me personally —

SINGER: You mean the Yiddish critics?

Yes . . . and even young people who don't read Yiddish but who are very involved with Judaism as an active faith. They say that modern rabbinical thought makes it possible for the Halakhah[10] *to be implemented in the day-to-day life of everyday people in the modern world and that it isn't any longer a choice simply between either the* shtetl[11] *or assimilation.*

SINGER: No, I am against assimilation, but neither can I really say that Rabbinical . . . the *Halakhah* is something which I believe unconditionally. Because while the Torah tells us that Moses gave the Ten Commandments on Mt Sinai and God has spoken and we have seen all these miracles, I am not sure that they really did happen. I don't *have* this — I wish I would have it but I just don't have it. So, to go into the *Halakhah* you have to believe that everything which every Rabbi has written since the time of the *Anshei Knesset Hagedolah*[12] was given to Moses: *Kol mah shetalmid vatik atid lechadesh ne-emar loh le Moshe mi Sinai* (All that an efficient scholar will in the future be able to discover [in the Torah] was already revealed to Moses at Sinai).[13] This is what my father believed and my grandfather, but I just don't have this belief, and not having this belief I cannot identify myself with the Rabbis, although I respect them and I envy them their belief, but I just don't have it.

In the novels the Rabbis are always such powerful figures — they are all tzaddikim *(righteous men; saints).*
SINGER: I will tell you, yes. When I compare the good Rabbis to the bad assimilationists or even to the like-minded socialists and so on, they come out greater because they have a God. The only thing is . . . where could I get their belief? I cannot just say to myself that if I write a line on the Sabbath I make God angry and he is raging against me. I don't have it. So, since I came from a religious people (my grandfathers were both Rabbis and my father), I have great respect for religion, even love for religion — I mean true religion. Still, I cannot force myself, just as no one can force me to say I am a communist, neither can I force myself to say I believe in all this. If I did believe I wouldn't sit now with you — I would have a white beard and I would study the Talmud and so on. . . . I cannot do it.
And yet, for me, nobody has created holiness in writing, and a sense of real faith, better than you have.
SINGER: Well, you are most kind to say so. Of course, while I write about these people, I live in their spirit, because I have seen my father and my mother who were really ready to sacrifice their lives for any little law in the *Shulkhan Arukh*[14] and so on, and I know how serious they were. So I can see it all, but just the same I did not bring up my child — my son — as a believing Jew. I don't practise. So to suddenly come out and say, 'I identify myself with these people', would be lying, which I cannot do.
How far would you regard yourself as a mystic?
SINGER: Oh I would say . . . I would say, very far. I really am a mystic — not . . . not a mystic who is sure of his mysticism, but I am in my mysticism also a sceptic, which means I have an open mind. When a man tells me that he witnessed some act which proves telepathy I am very happy to hear about it, but I would like to be sure that what he tells me was *really* so. In other words, I believe that we are surrounded with great powers of which we have no inkling and they are *there* and they influence our lives and lives of other people. But again, I cannot come out like some of these mystics who said I have gotten a revelation, and so on. I never got any revelation. I have to say to myself, 'Yes there are great powers but I don't know *what* they are'. I am not sure, hundred percent, that they exist. So even in my mysticism, I am a sceptic as I think it's right to be a sceptic in mysticism because if you accept everything which the mystic tells you, you become again a kind of believer in everything. I'm not.
How would you see the modern Jew today?
SINGER: The modern Jew is actually at most a Zionist. He is lost. . . . He is trying. . . . Some of them, they tried to believe — very many of them, years ago, tried to believe in communism, and then Stalin showed them his real face — that he is a vicious man, a

murderer and an anti-Semite, a hater of the Jews although the Jews helped create communism in Russia more than any other group of people. They would like to believe in Zionism and many do believe, but then there is disappointment there too. We believe that there will be a quiet, that finally we will get our country, and it seems it's an eternal war. We have to go back to the Biblical times again. The Philistines — one day their forces killed a thousand Jews and the next day we killed a thousand Philistines. After two thousand years of not having fought with swords and arrows, we don't like to do it, it is not really in our power. When I read about. . . . I saw a picture of a child which lost its little hands in Lebanon when a bomb fell, and it broke my heart. I thought what comfort is there for this little child which has to grow up without hands. So I'm a deeply disappointed man, I'm not ashamed to say so. Disappointed almost in all worldly beliefs. At least when it comes to God, I am not really sceptical. I believe that there is a God. I don't believe that everything happened according to chance, but when it comes to God's purposes — what does God want? Where does He lead me? — of course I am a sceptic.

So do you see a future for Jews?

SINGER: I hope to God that there will be a future. There are many, many powers who would like us not to have any future — just to disappear altogether. They would try their best to do it. But I think that since God has . . . and now I speak about how God has kept us alive for the last three thousand years and all its exiles — He's not going to destroy us now. In this modern wilderness do we have proof that God still has a future for us? Did he give us back this land just that we should lose it again in the next few years? But, I hope that humanity — I hope against hope, let me say — that humanity will one day decide that killing one another is not really a way out. It is true that according to Malthus we have to do it, because if we wouldn't do it the world would be filled with human beings and there would be no place for us, but since we have learnt the art of birth control, we don't need any more to kill ourselves to control the number of human beings; there are other ways. And because of this, to me birth control, believe it or not, is a part of my religion in a way — of my hope. Because of this, human beings will be able to control their numbers without committing all these cruelties.

Just a few more questions, if I may.

SINGER: Yes, yes, yes.

You expressed the wish that your writing should be what you call 'a certain bridge'[15] *over which I think you hoped the young Jews today could cross to view their past and their heritage. Do you not then feel that you are writing of a world which, as your late brother said, is 'a world which is no longer'?*[16]

SINGER: I wouldn't say it's no longer. Of course six million of our

people have perished but there are another maybe ten who are still alive, thank God. I have this feeling, although there's no evidence for it, that the Jew is going to last as long as humanity. I just believe. I cannot see a world without Jews. There will always be those that have a Jewish kind of feeling of the world, which is a part of humanity and is going to stay so. Of course I think that from every point of view, from the point of view of justice and the point of view of human pride, also from the point of view of art, it's not good for people to assimilate, to lose their roots. There's no reason why I should suddenly become a Dutchman because I have been exiled and I have residence in Amsterdam. My history of Jewishness is *over*, let us say, my citizenship in this or another country. And I think (let's say in this country) America really does not demand from the Jews to assimilate. They have nothing against it if we keep the Torah, and build synagogues instead of churches, and so on. So I think that assimilation is something which is, really, below human dignity. Assimilation has one meaning—to adjust oneself to the stronger, to act like the mighty do. If you come to Rome, act like a Roman. I don't believe in this. You can go to Rome and no one tells you to act like a Roman. You can act like what you are. In my speeches I always say that it's not right that we forgot the Yiddish language, that we neglect it, and I praise the fact that we remember Hebrew, that we try to remember, but I am not a preacher by nature. Preaching is just not my business. Since my father preached, and my grandfather preached, let there be one of the family who doesn't preach.

How far do you see the specifically Jewish problems that you discuss in your books as having a relevance to non-Jews, to the world at large?

SINGER: Every writing which is true, which is genuine, has relevance to every thinker. Like in gravitation, every part of matter attracts any other part of matter. The moon and the sun attract every little pebble of the street, and every little pebble tries to attract, in its own small way, the sun and moon. The same thing is true of literature. If you write a good book about Jews or Japanese or Turks, you've written a good book for humanity.

I agree. I ask only the questions that are asked of me when I teach your books, for instance, or try to. All of us who are your admirers are, of course, looking forward very greatly to your latest work. Do you think that your latest work has undergone any change in terms of your concerns and your attitudes?

SINGER: I would say since I'm getting older and in a way also riper, there are some changes which I really don't try to investigate. I leave this to the others, you know, because another person sees you better. If you have become two years older you know that you are two years older, but you don't see it in your face, while your

relative, your uncle, might see it. Let them see whatever there is to see.

Which brings me really to my last question. You have spoken about the critics and the academics. What do you feel about academic studies of your work? How does a creator respond to a critic?

SINGER: I will tell you. Some of us have the feeling, why do they bother with us? Why don't they just read our books and leave us in peace? But the fact is, there are faculties of literature in every land, in every university. There is a great interest in studying genuine art. And just as the scientists are entitled to study geology and biology and any other '-ology', there is no reason why they should not be interested in literature. If they can find things which a writer did not know himself, or make him conscious of something, if they can compare things, let them do it. They will not do any damage: the opposite; in the long run they help the writer, they help the readers to get a better notion of literature. I am not sure that all critics help me: some of them just repeat the story and add a few words of praise, others complain, but there are also others who have something to say, and I wait to hear something which is right from them because they have the same brains as we have. If they would have devoted time for creativity they might have themselves created good things. But while I'm not an analyst while I write, I think that there is place for analysis of literature. No question about it.

Thank you very much.[17]

University of the Witwatersrand,
Johannesburg.

NOTES

1. The transcription of this recorded interview was made by
   Ian Barnard
   Norman Bernard
   Eve Horwitz
   with additional assistance and information from
   Lewis Levin
   Hugh Raichlin
   The completed draft transcription was meticulously revised and amended by Norman Blight, Department of Communication Studies, University of the Witwatersrand, whose suggestions were invaluable. I am deeply grateful to all these friends and colleagues.
2. Despite having lived there for over forty years, Singer dislikes Miami Beach himself. He told me so in forthright terms, and referred me to his story, *A Party in Miami Beach* (in *Old Love*, London: Jonathan Cape, 1980, pp. 85–100).
3. *The Collected Stories of Isaac Bashevis Singer*, London: Jonathan Cape, 1982. Author's Note: p. vii.
4. *Nobel Lecture*, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1979, pp. 13–14.
5. *The Collected Stories of Isaac Bashevis Singer*, London: Jonathan Cape, 1982. Author's Note: p. viii.
6. *Enemies, A Love Story*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1977, 1983. Author's Note.
7. The *Jewish Daily Forward* is the biggest Yiddish daily newspaper in America, with a readership of between fifty and seventy thousand. Published in New York,

its present editor is Simon Weber, who succeeded Abe Cahan. Singer's first job in America was on the staff of this newspaper, and he has contributed to its columns every week since his arrival in the United States nearly fifty years ago. All his novels have been serialised in this paper, and a good proportion of his stories. To this day, on Thursdays and Fridays, the *Forward* publishes seven or eight columns of Singer's prose. Much of this material has yet to appear in English.

8. *Yiddishkeit*: the condition of being Jewish; the integration of religious observance, morality and ethics with day-to-day living.
9. This is the central problem with which all Singer's major fiction grapples. Singer puts the quoted formulation into the mouth of Asa Heshel, the dispossessed hero of *The Family Moskat*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1980. p. 513.
10. *Halakhah:* derived from the Hebrew root *'halakh'* meaning 'to go', this is the body of Judaic law which embraces personal, social, national and international relationships as well as all other practices and observances of Judaism.
11. *Shtetl*: diminutive of the Yiddish word *'shtot'* meaning 'town', these were relatively small communities in Eastern Europe in which the Jews lived, as a consequence of both legislative restriction and religious preference, creating a unique socio-cultural communal pattern.
12. *Anshei Knesset Hagedolah* (Men of the Great Assembly): great legislative and administrative council of the early Second Commonwealth (537 B.C.E.—70 C.E.). This institution had its origins in the organizational reconstruction of Ezra, and took the form of a loosely-knit representative body which met at intervals to pass major enactments such as the canonization of Biblical books and the establishment of the liturgy.
13. *Palestinian Talmud: Pe'a:* Chapter 2. Cf. also *Exodus Rabbah* 28:4.
14. *Shulkhan Arukh:* literally, 'the prepared table' in Hebrew. It is the name given to an Halakhic code written by Joseph Caro in the 16th century, an entire codification of Rabbinic Law.
15. Rosenblatt, P. and Koppel, G. *Isaac Bashevis Singer on Literature and Life.* Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1971, 1979. p. 39.
16. Singer, Israel Joshua: *Of a World that is No More: a Tender Memoir.* New York: Vanguard Press, 1970. Translated by Joseph Singer.
17. A copy of the recording of this interview is housed in the Media Room, Wartenweiler Library, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

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ZULU IZIBONGO AS WRITTEN LITERATURE

by A.T. COPE

Today, in addition to its traditional oral role, Zulu izibongo poetry plays the part of a written medium. Far from suffering a loss of vitality in the transition, it not only retains its vitality but shows a development of the traditional poetic mode and a sustained level of attainment arising from the fact that literate composition gives the opportunity to perfect the product. One may see in the contemporary development of Zulu poetry an image of the development of Western poetry at a time when poets were starting to compose on paper but still in the traditional mode. One can hardly imagine that the wonderfully developed alliterative verse of Old English poetry could have been composed and retained in the mind, without benefit of literacy.

In this contribution to the subject of the influence of the izibongo tradition on modern written poetry, I consider the works of the two most outstanding Zulu poets, Vilakazi and Dlamini. They were aware of the importance and the potential of the tradition when most poets had turned their backs on it to face in a western direction. For in the thirty years between 1940 and 1970 one could hardly detect from the poetry published in Zulu (amongst which there was some worthwhile literature) that there was an indigenous tradition very different from the English Romantic tradition. Both Vilakazi and Dlamini appreciated this tradition, although neither was able to write izibongo poetry because of temperamental inability to identify with the ethos of heroic poetry. Vilakazi tried and failed, and Dlamini used the mode but not the style, the frame but not the content. Towards the end of this thirty-year period, the izibongo tradition started to manifest itself in written literature, and we find the poets, Otty Nxumalo (*Umzwangedwa*, 1968), Myeni (*Hayani maZulu*, 1969) and Makhaye (*Isoka lakwaZulu*, 1972) for the first time producing a few examples of personally composed written praise poems; for the first time we come across praise poems not transcribed from oral performance but written in the first instance. The most successful poet in this new written oral tradition is Msimang (*Iziziba zoThukela*, 1981), and I shall present a section of one of his poems. I shall also deal with a praise poem which was written to be orally performed, yet another variation on the theme of the mutual influence between the traditional oral and the modern written traditions.

* * *

The classical definition of oral poetry is poetry that is composed in performance with the aid of formulas, in a traditional style and on a traditional theme. This definition does not quite fit Zulu oral

poetry, in my experience, because there is an interval, a lapse of time, between the mental composition and the oral performance. In fact Zulu oral poetry seems mostly to be memorized, and as much from past heritage as from present invention: a chief's praises emerge as much from his ancestors, his family and his contemporaries as from the creativity of his praiser, although it is the praiser who assembles, arranges and produces the performance. The Zulu oral poet or praiser (*imbongi*) nevertheless uses formulas, both phrase formulas which are more or less fixed expressions like 'the ford with slippery stones where people slipped as they tried to cross' or 'the pile of rocks which sheltered elephants in bad weather', and structural formulas such as 'noun-verb initial link parallelism' or 'negative-positive cross link parallelism'. The praiser uses these formulas not only to aid his composition but to aid his memory in performance; and not only as an aid but as a vital ingredient to the style of izibongo poetry, without which it would not be recognised or appreciated as such.

The style of Zulu izibongo is heroic, elevated, dignified, highly allusive and highly artificial, with its alliterations and parallelisms, formal structure and regular rhythm, and its theme or content is purely personal, neither 'ode' which is reflective nor 'epic' which is narrative (although it has elements of both ode and epic, as Lestrade has observed), but rather 'eulogy' (although not entirely eulogistic: it is 'memorial' when the subject is spirit with his ancestors and 'mirrorial' when he is flesh with his earthly family). I have in mind *izibongo zamakhosi*, the praises of chiefs, heroes and important people, but the praises of lesser mortals are reflections of the praises of the great. (Or rather, I would say, the praises of the great are elaborations of the praises which are universal and endemic in Zulu society).

When one thinks of Zulu written poetry, one thinks immediately of B.W. Vilakazi, the first and still the foremost Zulu poet, and of his two 'volumes' of poetry: *Inkondlo kaZulu* (1935) and *Amal'ezulu* (1945). Vilakazi was a romantic by temperament and his first poems were odes to the wind, birds and flowers, even to a Zulu clay pot (Grecian Urn), very much in the style of, in fact in imitation of, the English Romantic poets. Some of these poems show promise of the maturity to come.

As a tribute to the Zulu tradition (I suggest), he wrote some long narrative poems. In the same spirit (I suggest), he wrote some long poems in praise of heroes, principally, of course, Shaka. To me it seems he wrote them out of sense of duty. The longest poem in the book (eight pages) is entitled *UShaka kaSenzangakhona* and subtitled with the famous stanza about the women of Nomgabhi:

Uteku lwabafazi bakwaNomgabhi
Betekula behlezi emlovini

Bethi uShaka kakubusa kakubankosi
Kanti yilapha ezakunethezeka

(The joke of the women of Nomgabhi
Joking as they sat in a sheltered spot
Saying that Shaka would not reign, would not become king,
Whereas it was then and there he was about to prosper)

1. To you foolish person
Till I shrink to a thread
Don't delay me for nothing
I am compelled to complete
The song of the calf
Of Punga and Mageba
Who was born by the sun
And nourished by the moon
So that he would blaze the trail
Of the Zulus as far as Pondoland.

2. To you foolish person
Till I waste though derision
I am overwhelmed by thoughts
Which cause me to emaciate—
Give me my beshu (kilt)
And my sakabula feather
And give me my spear
That I may praise the spears
That stabbed the flanks
Of the waves of the sea shore.

The Zulu original is expressed (or rather suppressed) in a mould of rhyming couplets, the language minced and mincing, quite unsuitable to the subject of 'arms and the man', quite unsuitable to Zulu phonology, and quite contrary to Zulu 'natural' poetry.

There is only one stanza relevant to the subject under discussion:

Dance (*giya*) and dance with the pen
About the victories of the axe (*ilembe*)
That overcomes other axes (*eleq'amalembe*)
All the people reeled
And died from cold steel.
Sharpen (*lola*) and sharpen the pens
And enter into the (recreational) dance,
They are our (decorative) shields
For composing praises.

This dance (*umgido*) is not for war and these shields (*amahawu*) are not for fighting. However, Vilakazi is unable to use his pen for this purpose. Neither the style nor the theme of Zulu izibongo suits his temperament. His reference in this stanza to one of Shaka's praises, *ilemb'eleq'amany'amalembe* (the axe that overcomes other axes) he

wrecks by saying 'the axe of whom they say it overcomes the other axes' (which I have avoided in my translation), thus distancing himself from the subject.

There is another long poem (six pages) on the same subject, *Phezu kwethuna likaShaka*, 'Above the grave of Shaka'. Shaka's tombstone is a monument of white marble in a small park in Stanger, the site of Shaka's Dukuza residence. Vilakazi's poem leaps over the monument to reach his subject as Shaka's warriors leap over the forest to reach the sea:

Now as I look upon these stones
Of clear white marble
I compare them to a shield
I compare them to a covering
For your white bones
Which are now our heritage
Stamped and impressed
Upon the Zulu consciousness.
It is this shield of yours
With which you used to rouse
Our ancestors and forefathers —
When there was no war to fight
They leaped over bush and forest
Rushing off with great speed
Eagerly to attack the sea
Exulting when they found it
Powerfully and furiously raging (*dlondlobele*) —

Which brings to mind the praise generally regarded as most typical of Shaka:

Udlondlwane luya luhlezi
Luya ludlondlobele
Lubek' isihlang' emadolweni.

(The young viper always sits/lives in a state
of furious rage and excitement
with his shield ready on his knees).

Vilakazi continues more characteristically:

I am filled with great serenity
When I recall how Nandi
Used to gather natural greens
From fields left fallow
Which I see now full of sugar-cane
While others bear nothing
But black-jacks and pig-weed.
It is these greens that nourished
The milk which filled the breast
Of that young girl of Langeni,

It is these greens that nourished
Your blood and bones
And gave growth to the flesh
As I now feel them empowering me,
For the daughter of Nkontshela
Used to gather these greens for me
Sprouting from the original roots
Of those same plants once cropped
By the young girl of Langeni.
So why should I not feel proud?

Vilakazi has dispensed with rhyme in this poem, and one can feel the release of the language even in English translation. But it is not izibongo. It is lyrical romanticism rather than heroic eulogy, and even the eulogistic sections are not izibongo.

In *Amal'ezulu* Vilakazi leaves behind his duty to tradition and advances to the fulfilment of his romantic temperament under the guidance of his personal muse, which he slowly realises to be a Zulu muse. He becomes what he had wanted to be and what he had tried to be in his historical poems, the voice of the Zulu people; but now he speaks not from the relatively recent and specific standpoint of Shaka, but from the depths of the Zulu experience.

In *Ezinkomponi* ('In the Mine Compounds') he expresses the slow realization that the misery, sweat and tears, dislocation and disruption of his people, are due not to 'the machines of the mines' but to exploitation by the universal whiteman. He appeals to the ancestors:

Your country today and yesterday
Is plundered by raiders/robbers/ogres.[1]
Your country enriches many nations
But I and my black family/nation
Have nothing, absolutely nothing.
We go outside and see the grass
Green like the firmament of the sky[2]
And we look around there and call,
Alas! but you do not answer us.

In *UMamina* ('the personification of the essence of my self') he finds his muse in the same way that a diviner finds inspiration and fulfilment through his ancestral spirit, after painful and perilous experiences. It is difficult to say how close Vilakazi could have been to traditional Zulu beliefs and responses, bearing in mind his Christian and academic background, but in this poem one has the poetic expression of the dedication of a literally 'bemused' subject to a personal divinity.

Vilakazi has distilled the Zulu essence and preserved it for future generations, exactly as he said he would do:

Give me, ladle out to me today (Spirit of Knowledge)
From that container which you keep on the national shelf
The ability to write down that which I know
And preserve it for the poor homeless people of Ndaba.

However, the later Vilakazi, transformed from personal consciousness and pastoral fields to national consciousness and industrial dumps (*Ezinkomponi*), and transfigured from a lost and lonely soul to a committed and dedicated disciple (*UMamina*), is not relevant to my subject, and I turn now to Dlamini.

J.C. Dlamini has published three books of poems: *Inzululwane* (1957), *Imfihlo yokunyamalala* (1973) and *Amavovo ezinyembezi* (1981), but only the first—by my judgement and on his own admission—is the really personal expression of his innermost responses.

If Vilakazi is of the Romantic temperament with its longing for freedom and release, its search for the source of inspiration, strength and beauty, and its occasional achievement of communion with this source ('sublime bliss'), Dlamini could be said to be more of the Metaphysical temperament: he has thoughts arising from the reason of his mind rather than the feelings flowing from the affections of his heart. He asks questions and poses problems as though the asking of questions and the posing of problems and difficulties were sufficient in itself; whereas Vilakazi believes that there are answers: he seeks the truth.

But Dlamini cannot be fitted into the Metaphysical slot as aptly as Vilakazi fits the Romantic mould. Although he has some unusual and original 'metaphysical' images (Vilakazi also, as we have seen, uses the pots and ladles of Zulu material culture as well as the sights and scents and sounds of the romantic tradition), his style is smooth and natural. The sense flows with and coincides with the line which has not the Metaphysical jerks, internal breaks and external enjambments of the Metaphysical line.

An example of his imagery is *Bhokod'Amanzi*, literally a long staff for probing the depth of water, figuratively the B.A. degree which the whiteman gives him:

'I give you a real *Bhokod'Amanzi*
With this staff you can easily cross the fords'[3]
So saying he shakes his hands and turns away
And I stand and watch him disappear.
Wonders (*ilumbo*) go on forever with *Bhokod'Amanzi*
You did wonders (*lumba*) to me whiteman, and disappeared.[4]

Day by day I no longer get rest
The dawn starts with *Bhokod'Amanzi*
It sticks to my hand and drags me on
And I go straight to where I know not where I am being dragged:

With thoughts I cross the fords
With words I cross the fords
With deeds I cross the fords
Ngibhokod'amanzi ngiwele —
I probe the water and cross over —
The water of difficult thoughts
The water of conflicting words
The water of determined deeds
The water of striving schemes
The water of cleansing blessings.

Dlamini's line is a syntactical unit, complete both grammatically and semantically. His lines have a regularity and an interrelationship brought about by repetition, parallelism and linking. In other words he uses the techniques of the traditional Zulu oral poet:

- *Uma usungibona sengivunule ngiqedile*
  If you see me dressed beautifully to completion
- *Ngokuzimisela sengigqoke ngaphelela*
  By great effort dressed to the utmost perfection
  Sengidl' ezakho Mlungu zikanokusho
  Having donned your dress, Whiteman, of the finest quality
  Sengishaya ngidwale ngiqonde khona
  Striking out, gazing ahead, heading right there
- *Ngiqonde khona kwezephakeme izikole*
  Heading straight to the schools of higher learning
- *Ngiqonde khona kwezemfundo yeziqu*
  Heading straight to the schools of university degrees
- *Ngiqonde khona kwamakhulu amagula*
  Heading straight to the large calabashes
  Amagula achichima izangqondo
  Calabashes overflowing with the rich milk of intelligence
  Izangqondo zemfundo engenamlaza
  Rich milk of education without watery whey
  Ungalibali ukuthi noma senginkawuza
  Do not forget that although I am imitating
  Ukuguquk a ngibemhlophe angikucabangi
  To change and turn white is far from my thoughts —
  Mlungu, ungazikhohlisi!
  Whiteman, do not deceive yourself!

Not the parallelism between *sengivunile ngiqedile* and *sengigqoke ngaphelela* in the first two lines; the parallel triplet introduced by the final link *ngiqonde khona* of the previous line and the effectiveness of the change from schools to calabashes on the third repetition; the cross links with *amagula* (calabash gourds) and

izangqondo (thick rich curdled milk—*ingqondo* also means intelligence, hence my translation).

For all these signs of traditional craftsmanship, Dlamini's poetry is not izibongo. For all these means whereby traditional poetry achieves its heroic, high-flown, emotional and momentous style, Dlamini's poetry is not izibongo, neither in style nor in content, for not one of the poems purports to be in praise of a person. His concern is the sense of confusion and alienation of himself and his people in the present social and cultural situation.

I would like to turn now to a poem written by Mr E.S. Mathabela when he was principal of Menzi High School in honour of Mr J.A.W.Nxumalo, the then Minister of Education and Culture, when he visited the school. There is no doubt that the poem, *Sabela Zulu* (published in both Zulu original and English translation in Theoria 46, 1976), though written, is an example of Zulu izibongo, not only in nature, style and content, but in context, for it was performed in the presence of its subject before an audience gathered together for a ceremony in which the subject was the chief and focal point, and it was delivered in the traditional manner: the performer (in this case the composer) literally 'raised' his voice and declaimed with the intonation peculiar to izibongo recitation. The differences were that he did not pace up and down as he declaimed: he remained in one spot (by the microphone), because of which his performance lacked something of the rhythmical force and emotional excitement; he did not recite from memory: he read from typescript, because of which his performance lacked something of the headlong rush and apparently spontaneous outburst; and he had composed the poem with pen in hand and paper on desk, perfecting and polishing until it was ready to be typed out by the school secretary.

Here is the first section of the poem (except for the opening salute which establishes the ancestry and clan affiliation of its subject):

- Our leader at Ntombazi's place (Zwide's mother)
  Our leader is not like his father, Zwide,
  Who led the people and they were slaughtered,
- He led the children with chalk and his people
  laughed at him.
- They said here is a coward, here is an educated person,
  Others became angry in the extreme
  And said here is an educated person, here is the seller of the nation.
- But (*kanti*) as they angered him they sent him onwards
  He used the chalk abundantly and sent it onwards
  Minds were opened and there was enlightenment in South Africa.
  They started to say, 'Even I am going to succeed!'
  They gave the alarm and called even those looking after the calves
  And said, 'You among the calves,

Zwide is a strong man,
Respond Zulus for you are called
He who stays behind gets nothing but the scraps'.
Chrous: *Sabela Zulu uyabizwa*
Isihlalandawonye sidl' amajwabu.

This stanza is simply an expanded Shakan stanza: statement ('the leader', *umkhokheli*), extension by noun-verb initial link parallelism ('he led', *ukhokhele*), development ('they said'), and an extended 'contrary conclusion' typically introduced by *kanti* ('but yet'). The important point is that it is only the advantage of pen and paper that enabled the composer to use the traditional formula at such length and to such development. A Shakan stanza normally consists of four lines (see the example quoted by Vilakazi, reproduced and translated above): here it has been expanded to sixteen lines.

The 'chorus' or *Sabela Zulu* refrain is the formalisation of the response of the audience. In the oral tradition the response is left to the audience. In this new written oral tradition the author decides and transcribes what he wants the response to be; in this new written oral tradition nothing is left to chance, to the mood of the moment or to the spur of the moment.

Section 2 starts with 'the disturber (noun) of dust'—'he disturbed (verb) the dust of education' and it ascended and confused and confounded ignorance—

Light came in with a rush
Darkness shed tears and departed.

Section 3 likewise starts with noun-verb initial link parallelism:

Umsweziseli wakithi kwaLanga
Uswezisel' u Zulu ngemfundo namasiko
Our realization of need at Langa's place
He made the Zulus realise the need of education as well as tradition
He enticed them into the great trap of knowledge[5]
I saw it at Hlazakazi, I saw it at Dundee,
I saw it at Malandela, I saw it in South Africa,
At our own place at Ntombazi I saw it and threw myself into it[6]
He overcame me with the spear of arithmetic
He overcame me with the spear of English
He overcame me with the spear of the Zulu Treasury
He overcame me with the spear of the deep thinker
The depth and solidarity of the Zulu Storehouse.[7]
The child of Ndaba (the Zulu child), no longer able to defend himself,
Was stabbed and swallowed—[8]
The spear of education was too much for him—
It ripped out the kidneys of ignorance and they were scattered
It ripped out the livers of stupidity and they were scattered

For it was thrown by our hero from Langa
With his regiment of male and female teachers.
The old person Angazi ('I don't know') died, Zulus,
And there appeared the new person, Knowledge.
It is your doing, Zwide of Langa!
Chorus: *Sabela Zulu uyabizwa*
Isihlalandawonye sidl' amajwabu.

The imagery may shock modern educationists, but stylistically this is *izibongo uqobo lwazo,* 'the very essence of izibongo poetry'; except, as I have already said, that it is 'perfected and polished', brought to a high level of attainment and sustained there throughout the poem, which one does not find in a purely oral poem.
From section 4, I quote:

He made every single Zulu feel the need (*swezisela*)
Taking him from down below at Gobidolo ('bend the knee')
And sending him up to Simanganyawo ('we stand on our feet')
Saying, 'Nevertheless the fight is still on, Zulus,
Here is Compulsory Education now nearby
Here is English next year—
Even old women, I swear by Ntombazi,
Will learn through English next year!'

Neither of these ideals were near realization at the time, but Zulu izibongo poetry is always positive and confident.
And from section 5 I quote:

I feel like doing a wild war dance
I feel like brandishing my weapons
I draw parallels to similar great scenes
As when the Zulus came back with the herds of Sihayo
And as when the Zulus washed their spears
In the blood of Englishmen at Sandlwana.

Could there be a more forceful and effective expression of the educational aspirations of the Zulu people? But throughout the poem it is constantly stressed that 'it is your doing, Zwide kaLanga', it is *izibongo zikaNxumalo*, the personal praises of the Honourable Mr Nxumalo.

Is it possible to draw the line so clearly between oral poetry composed or primarily presented in performance, and oral poetry composed or primarily presented on paper? The praises of Cetshwayo (as presented by James Stuart) have several highly structured passages:

- *Washikizel' uMashikizel' omnyama*
The restless black one moved on

Edondolozela ngenhlendla yakhe
Supported by his long barbed spear
Impi yakhe eyakuyibuthisa eNdlwayini
Going to mobilise his army at Ndlwayini

- *Wafik' izinkomo zaseNdlwayini*
When he arrived the cattle of Ndlwayini
Wazihlaba kanye namathole azo
He slaughtered together with their calves

- *Kwathiwa, Ziyeke lezo mntakaNdaba,*
It was said, Leave them alone, child of Ndaba,
NgezikaNyokokhulu, ngezikaLangazana,
They are your grandmother's, they are Langazana's.

Washikizel' uMashikizel' omnyama
Edondolozela ngenhlendla yakhe
+9 lines

Washikizel' uMashikizel' omnyama
Edondolozela ngenhlendla yakhe
+5 lines

Note the stanza structure of statement, development (usually of a narrative nature) and conclusion (usually of contrary nature, or simply a comment). Also note how the same statement is used to introduce the next two stanzas, so that altogether there is a 'section' (a passage structured at a higher level than a 'stanza') of 25 lines. In fact Cetshwayo's progress round the country, gathering or enforcing support and tribute (in the lines I have not quoted) culminates in the great and decisive battle at Ndondakusuka (1856) as this section culminates in Cetshwayo's famous praise:

Igwalagwala likaMenzi elisuk' eNtumeni
Lourie bird of Menzi (Mpande) that set out from Ntumeni
Kwaye kwabhej' iNdulinde kwabhej' uThukela
And the Ndulinde hill turned red and the Thukela river turned red
Isiguqa sikaNdaba abasifulele ngamashoba
Powerful bull of Ndaba whom they covered with decorative tail tufts
Bathi sivuka sadl' uZulu
When it arose it overcame/took control of the Zulu nation[9]

One could well presume that such passages had been 'worked' by pen on paper (perhaps by James Stuart), but this is certainly not the case for they are independently recorded elsewhere. Nyembezi's version is even longer (37 lines), with an extra stanza starting with the statement:

Udondolozela nangenhlendla
Ngob' umuzi wakhe kuseziNhlendleni
(He goes supported by a long *inhlendla* spear

Because his residence is at eziNhlendleni, the place of long barbed spears)

The reference to blood-red hill and river, however, occurs 33 lines later:

Igwalagwala likaMenzi
Elisuk' eNtumeni kwabhej' eShowe
Kwaze kwabhej' ulwandle noThukela
(Lourie bird of Menzi
That set out from eNtumeni and eShowe turned red
Until eventually the sea turned red with the Thukela)

And the reference to the powerful bull occurs 30 lines earlier:

Isiguq' esizifulele ngamahlamvu aseNdondakusuka
(Powerful bull that covered itself with branches at Ndondakusuka)

These slight variations in expression and great variations in order of praises or stanzas ('order' in the sense of logical sequence or chronology is irrelevant to personal eulogy), together with the fact that every record includes some praises not found elsewhere and omits others — many others when compared with Stuart's and Nyembezi's lengthy versions — typify the tradition of Zulu oral poetry.

Compare these oral praises to praises written in honour of Mr J.E. Ndlovu, the then Chief Inspector, by Mrs Grace Khuzwayo of the staff of Menzi High School at Ntokozweni (Umlazi):

The striker does not strike, he hurls a great distance,
Hot wind that blows strongly
It blows strongly down the slopes of Umlazi
And the world of education catches fire and advances.[10]

Energetic activater, I have great respect for him
He activated by GG lorry (Government Garage)
For he transported the furniture of the children
And schools sprouted like mushrooms at Umlazi.[11]

Ndlovu! Gatsheni! (isibongo and isithakazelo)
Ndlovu zadl' ekhaya (the elephants grazed at home for lack of
Ngokuswel' abelusi herdsmen)[12]

Far more so than Cetshwayo's praises, these praises are almost entirely formulaic, not only structurally, but in the narrower sense of phrase formulas: So-and-so I have great respect for him; something sprouts like mushrooms; the striker does not strike, he does something else; and the clan praises, of course, are commonly and widely memorized. And yet I happen to know that these praises

were in the first instance *written* by Mrs Grace Khuzwayo to conclude a short account of the history of Menzi High School on the occasion of its tenth anniversary, and published in the School Magazine.

Mr Mathabela has also written and published in the School Magazine a poem of over eighty verses of *izibongo zikaNdlovu*, the praises of the same Mr Ndlovu. Although this composition is lengthy, it is not as highly structured or as highly sustained as *Sabela Zulu*, with its flowing lines so skilfully linked and its five sections each with its own thematic unity. These praises are much more like spoken izibongo than written izibongo, praise piled upon praise as the praiser exhibits his subject for public approval, as, to use Vilakazi's simile, the sculptor exhibits his sculpture by turning it or lighting it to show up its facets. Mr Mathabela certainly *wrote* these praises, and I would suggest that the difference between *ezikaNdlovu* and *ezikaNxumalo* is that he knows the former more intimately than he knows the latter, and that the latter was written for a more formal occasion than the former. More certainly and more significantly, however, the latter could only have been written, whereas the former could conceivably have been orally composed.

I conclude with an extract from Msimang's collection entitled *Iziziba zoThukela* (the deep pools of the Thukela river). A number of his poems are izibongo, but whereas Mathabela's poems in praise of Nxumalo and Ndlovu were written to be performed, Msimang's poems were written to be printed. He is therefore further along the way from orally composed poetry to the modern tradition of written poetry, a way which passes through the stages of poetry prepared in the mind for performance some time later, and poetry composed on paper for performance some time later. To my knowledge, Msimang's praise poems have never been performed, yet they remain examples of the Zulu izibongo poetry and reflect the essentials of the oral tradition. I give the opening stanzas of his poem *Ku D.B.Z. Ntuli,* now associate professor of African language at the University of South Africa in Pretoria:

> The chosen one of Gcotsheni (his home place)
> Who beat his wings and made for the East
> The rooks and crows
> Cried out in wonder
> And fled searching in the West
> For temporary shelters to hide themselves.
>
> The determined walker of the way
> Who trod it until his peers became weary
> Even today they are still always weary.
> He trod it persistently at Ndulinde
> His peers tried to keep up

They were affected by weakness in the knees
And collapsed unable to go on.
He trod it persistently at Ndaleni
His peers eventually gave up (*thela*)
They shouldered their packs and took up their pangas
Preferring to go and cut cane.
He trod it persistently at Mariannhill
His peers eventually gave up (*duba*)
They took their picks and shouldered them
And chose to work on the roads.
He trod it persisently forwards
Pressing on to Ngqondonkulu (the place of great intelligence, i.e. the university).

The master of depth (*Sojulase*) who does not fear depth (*jula*)
For he swam the turbulent pools
And he swam the Thukela
And he eventually crossed the sea (on overseas conferences)

He who dared everything (*Malokotha*) that is dareable (*lokotheka*)
For he dared the headring (laurel wreath)
And the elders were open-mouthed in amazement
Never before having ever seen
A calf with a headring.
For even Vilakazi, they said,
Put it on when he was mature,
And even his fathers, they said,
Put it on when they were grey,
And even his grandfathers, they said,
Put it on when they were bald.

The *umthente* grass pricks while still young (Zulu proverb)
The calf of MaShezi (his mother)
Pricked (*hlaba*) before it had grown horns
For it succeeded (*hlabana*) with Bheka
And all the nations debated
Enquiring how much Bheki was worth.[13]

Msimang continues chronologically with subtle references to the characters and events in Ntuli's literary works, as well as his subsequent achievements. Here again is seen the influence of pen-and-paper composition, for traditional poetry does not attempt chronological sequence. The high degree of integration of the poem as a whole is also to be noted. For both these reasons it would be difficult to omit or change the order of stanzas without spoiling the poem. Such considerations are irrelevant to the oral tradition where every performance is a variation to be judged on its own merits, by a performer who may choose to stress whatever aspects he pleases in whatever order he pleases. Thus, although izibongo poetry has undergone development with its entry into written literature, it has

consequently and inevitably lost the qualities of spontaneity and adaptability associated with the performance of oral literature. But such considerations are likewise irrelevant to the written tradition.

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NOTES

1. *Umkhulutshane*, a regiment of Dingane; also 'they whose hair grows like grass', such as Europeans and the legendary ogres.
2. Blue and green are the same colour (*luhlaza*) in Zulu.
3. To cross the fords also means to have the experience of life.
4. The noun-verb initial link, *ilumbo — lumba* is a typical traditional technique, but what do these words mean? The verb *lumba* means not only to do wonders but to practise witchcraft and to invent 'tall stories' or simply to lie; and Doke's dictionary glosses the noun *ilumbo* as not only a wonder such as a new invention or 'magic', but 'downright lie, amazing falsehood', and thirdly as 'disease whose cause is unknown'.
5. Ophathe — the place where Bhongoza led the Boers into an ambush by Dingane's army.
6. 'It' refers to 'the great trap of knowledge'.
7. Zulu Treasury and Zulu Storehouse: the titles of Zulu language textbooks.
8. *Gilwa* means to be tricked as well as to be swallowed, which bears out the imagery of the enticement and the entrapment in school.
9. *Isiguqa* (powerful bull) also refers to Cetshwayo's act of kneeling (*guqa*) on Mbuyazi's shield to gain the ascendancy over him and from which he arose (*vuka*) as his father's successor, for Mbuyazi and five of his brothers and hundreds of his supporters had been killed, hence the image of blood.
10. Umlazi, once an Anglican mission reserve, now a large township to the south of Durban where Menzi High School is situated.
11. In 1968 the school moved to its present site, and Mr Ndlovu commandeered a GG lorry to enable it to do so.
12. The Ndlovu clan praises, which the praiser follows with a recital of six generations of Mr Ndlovu's ancestry in the male line.
13. *UBheka* is the title of his first novel, and uBheki is his pet name at home.

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COLERIDGE ON WORDSWORTH'S PREFACE TO 'LYRICAL BALLADS'

by CHRISTINE WINBERG

There is a tradition in Wordsworthian criticism which has been handed down from Coleridge, Matthew Arnold, Leslie Stephen, and Irving Babbitt; and which persists in the contemporary critical writings of Herbert Read, Helen Danby, W.J.B. Owen, and Stephen Prickett. This tradition has it that Wordsworth exalts emotion at the expense of intellect,[1] instinct in place of thought,[2] and spontaneity in place of morality.[3] The tradition holds that Wordsworth's critical writings are largely nonsensical; and where they do make sense they are derived from Coleridge.[4] Critics in this tradition are also convinced that Wordsworth's theories and his practice have, happily, very little in common, and endorse Coleridge's view that:

> In short . . . his only disease is the being out of his element; like the swan, that, having amused himself, for a while, with crushing the weeds on the river's bank, soon returns to his own majestic movements on its reflecting and sustaining surface.[5]

The transformation of the ungainly waddlings of the swan among the weeds to the grandeur of its own motion on the water, is Coleridge's image for the contrast between Wordsworth's critical theory and his best poetry.

It is my aim in this paper to take issue with what I believe is an erroneous tradition. Wordsworth's critical writings are incidental and fairly random, but nevertheless partake of the mainstream of critical thought and are central to the understanding of his poetry. I believe that much of Coleridge's Wordsworthian criticism which gave rise to the erroneous tradition, is unwarranted; and, in fact, it is my contention that the literary theories of both men have much in common.

Coleridge's succinct criticisms of Wordsworth's theory of poetic diction, for example, have often been noted; but their basic ideas on poetic language stem from a common concern. Both saw the neo-classical tendency to adhere to 'rules' as a negation of the creative impulse and, in essence, their aims are the same: to infuse new life into the language of poetry which had become dulled by custom and over use.

Coleridge praises Wordsworth's 'reformation in our poetic diction',[6] but goes on to take issue with several aspects of Wordsworth's theory. His first objection is that poetic diction cannot be the monopoly of the rural classes, and Wordsworth's diction is 'by no means taken from low or rustic life in the *common*

acceptation (my italics) of those words'.[7] As this is obviously true, it is surprising that Coleridge does not probe beyond the 'common acceptation', for he makes little attempt to understand the significance of the rustic symbol — even on so simple a level as the 'permanence' of their occupations and interests which Wordsworth hopes will impart a similar appeal to his poetry.[8] As Abrams points out, anyone who tries to show that Wordsworth does not use rustic diction or syntax has largely missed the point. The similarity between rustic diction and Wordsworth's poetry is that both forms of discourse are instances of language really spoken by men under the stress of genuine feeling.[9]

Coleridge's repeated objections to rustics and their speech convey the impression that the entire Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads* is peppered with allusions to the use of rustic diction, which it is not. It is confined to a single paragraph,[10] and after this initial mention 'the language of men' is substituted. Owen points out in his comparison between the Prefaces of 1800 and 1802,[11] and the differences in the poetic subjects to which these Prefaces refer, that rustic diction specifically applies to the narrative and dramatic poems of the original 1798 *Lyrical Ballads*; while 'the language of men' is for general use, indicating Wordsworth's departure from the original rustic experiment.[12]

Coleridge implies that the speech of rustics and 'the language of men' are one and the same when he objects to this sentence, which he attributes to Wordsworth:

> 'The language of these men (i.e. men in low and rustic life)
> I propose myself to imitate and, as far as possible, to
> adopt the very language of men'.[13]

This is a misquotation made by combining two separate ideas which are some one hundred lines apart. This is what Wordsworth actually said:

> The language, too, of these men has been adopted (purified indeed from what appear to be its real defects, from all lasting and rational causes of dislike or disgust) . . .[14]
>
> (ll 98–100)
>
> My purpose was to imitate and, as far as possible, to adopt the very language of men; and assuredly such personifications do not make up any natural or regular part of languages.[15]
>
> (ll 201–4)

I have included the latter part of the second quotation to show that 'the very language of men' has nothing to do with rustic diction. While 'the very language of men' may not be a satisfactory term for Wordsworth's diction (it should be remembered that it 'imitated', in

the technical sense) it is understandable in the light of the overwrought quality of much late Augustan poetry.

So too the term 'prose' seems to Wordsworth to be a convenient term for describing a style which is free from all the traditional poetic encumbrances. He obviously did not mean it *literally*, as Coleridge implies. Coleridge insists on seeing 'prose' as a term for writing which is matter-of-fact and unmetaphorical, and takes no notice of Wordsworth's insistence that the sort of prose he means must not be matter-of-fact and must be 'alive with figures and metaphors'.

Wordsworth has an intense dislike of the conventionally 'poetic', of Gray and Collins's arbitrary inversion of natural word order, of Johnson's bombastic Latinisms, and of Erasmus Darwin who combined both. Wordsworth's pet hate is a particular variety of stereotyped personification which involves inappropriate periphrasis. (He allows himself to personify natural phenomena in a more natural way). But Coleridge refuses to see words like 'rustic' and 'prose' as a reaction to Augustan excesses. Instead he seizes upon these words, and in his eagerness to show that they are not the stuff of poetry, he loses touch with the spirit behind Wordsworth's innovations.

Coleridge argues that the principle of a '*selection* of the real language of men' is an insufficient one for the process of poetic creation. This is because, in the first place, the poet must have 'previous possession' of the language from which the selection is to be made — and the language he possesses will not be that of the rustic; and secondly, there are no known 'rules' that might be applied to this selective process.[16] Coleridge again equates the 'language of men' with rustic speech, which is a basic problem in this and other arguments. However, conceding Coleridge his point, he is surely wrong in holding that rustic speech has no virtues of its own, and he is still more perverse in his opinion that it is impossible to select from a dialect without destroying its peculiarity. Hazlitt points out that if Coleridge's contention were true it would be impossible for any style of writing to retain its distinctive quality.[17] Coleridge's introduction of 'rules' is quite out of character; Wordsworth has an imaginative, not a mechanical process of selection in mind.

In an expressive theory of poetry, poetic diction is bound to play a significant part. The conventions in the Gray sonnet which Wordsworth discusses, like:

> And reddening Phoebus lifts his golden fire:

are rejected because their conventional nature entails an avoidance of direct feeling and perception. They represent a set of conventions that have been handed down from one generation of poets to

another. They are a negation of 'the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings'. The language of the italicised lines is no less metaphorical, for example:

> My lonely anguish melts no heart but mine;

but by avoiding stock epithets and using his *own* diction to describe his emotions, the poet achieves an immediacy and sincerity which is lacking in the unitalicised lines.

Coleridge argues that the italicised lines *are* different from prose, and Wordsworth acknowledges this difference when he says that 'by the foregoing quotation it has been shown that the language of *Prose* may yet be well *adapted* (my italics) to Poetry . . .'[18] Coleridge seems to have forgotten that he subtitled *The Nightingale* 'a conversational poem'. Coleridge, in his objections to Wordsworth's theory of poetic diction, is at his most literal. In a discussion of *The Last of The Flock* and *The Thorn*, he admits that the words are 'current in all ranks of life' — but, he asks, is this the *order* in which a rustic would have used them? Nowhere in the Preface does Wordsworth state that he is content to limit himself to a rustic vocabulary and syntactical arrangement. His aim is to revivify poetic language, not to contribute to its stultification. In the midst of all this hairsplitting, Coleridge has completely lost touch with the spirit behind Wordsworth's innovations.

Coleridge suggests, correctly, that Wordsworth's use of the word 'real' is a reaction to the 'gaudy affectation'[19] of current poetic styles, and that Wordsworth has, in consequence, chosen a style as remote as possible from the 'false and showy splendour which he wished to explode'.[20] Wordsworth, he states, is not the first poet to opt for simplicity of style: the German poets Garve and Gellert have done so before him. Their style is:

> just as one would wish to talk, and yet dignified, attractive, and interesting; and all the time perfectly correct as to the measures of the syllables and the rhyme.[21]

Coleridge's description of the German poets approximates Wordsworth's description of 'similitude in dissimilitude':

> Now the music of harmonious metrical language . . . an indistinct perception perpetually renewed of language closely resembling that of real life, and yet, in the circumstance of metre, differing from it so widely — all these imperceptibly make up a complex feeling of delight . . .[22]

Coleridge accepts his description of the German poets as a valid statement of what nineteenth-century poetry should be, but fails to see the similarity between this and Wordsworth's argument.

Coleridge goes on to suggest that there are even earlier poets who opted for a 'simple style'. Spenser's *Faery Queen* has passages of extreme simplicity and beauty, showing an integrity of 'thought, image, passion, and metre'. Chaucer's *Troilus and Creseide* might give the impression of being natural and unstudied, yet displays an interdependence of meaning and poetry. And Herbert is 'master of a species of wit where scholar and poet supplies the material, but the perfect well-bred gentleman the expression and argument'.[23] Coleridge's championing of these poets is notable for, with the exception of Spenser, they were not generally recognised. His choice of poets is significant for all are, in their own ways, champions of the 'real language of men'.

What Coleridge has done is to substitute 'the simple style' for Wordsworth's 'the real language of men'—and although Coleridge's term may be preferable because it is less ambiguous, Wordsworth and Coleridge are really saying the same thing. This gives rise to several misconceptions in the *Biographia*, without Coleridge appearing to realize it.

Coleridge's criticism of Wordsworth's theory of metre centres on the word 'superadded', which is an unfortunate choice of word to describe something which is, in Coleridgean terminology, 'organic'. Coleridge states:

> nothing can permanently please which does not contain in itself the reason why it is so . . . if metre be superadded to poetry then all the other parts must be made consonant with it.[24]

The problem is that Coleridge implies that this is all that Wordsworth ever said about metre, and this is a mis-statement.

Metre, according to Coleridge, exists 'to check the workings of passion'.[25] Metrical composition differs from prose in that it expresses a higher state of excitement, and also because this excitement is controlled by artificial means. Coleridge here raises a central concern of expressive theories: to what extent can poetry be 'the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings'? If Coleridge is suggesting that metre alone is a sufficient controlling agent, then I do not think that he is correct. What Wordsworth says of 'recollection in tranquillity' by a poet who has thought 'long and deeply' is more relevant to the problem of control. Collingwood's distinction between the 'betrayal of emotion' and the 'expression of emotion' is a useful discrimination in this context.[26] The poet's own understanding of his emotions is of far greater importance as a 'check on the workings of passion' than mere metre.

Coleridge goes on to make some rather uninteresting points about the various effects (serious, humorous, etc) of metre. By contrast, Wordsworth's theory of metre gives rise to a profound enquiry into the nature of metre and its many diverse effects.

Wordsworth conceives of metre as an element of regularity in the midst of the abnormal excitement of poetic creation. Its regularity, which can be imagined as a positive sign (as in mathematics) is able to 'cancell out' the negative sign given to overly painful or intense feelings. Any disruption of the regularity of the metre has the immediate effect of intensifying the passion, before it surrenders to the control of the usual metre. Slight changes in the metrical scheme can thus lift 'naked and low pitched words' to a higher emotional level. Metre has a tendency 'to divest language in a certain degree of its reality, and thus to throw a sort of half-consciousness of unsubstantial existence over the whole composition'.[27] This idea has a parallel in Aristotle's concept of catharsis where the aesthetic element in tragedy, through the metaphor of the stage, tempers or changes the feelings of the audience. As an example of this power of metre, Wordsworth's suggests that the pathetic parts of Shakespeare are more bearable than those of Richardson; and that even the artless metre of the old ballads has the effect of moderating the pathos of their tragic narratives. Related to this point is Wordsworth's idea of 'similitude in dissimilitude' and vice versa.[28]

Wordsworth provides us with a profound analysis of the operation of metre and its many diverse effects and the problems of metrical composition, presented by a working poet. Coleridge, although he does not discuss the whole of Wordsworth's theory, confining himself to the idea of the 'superaddition' of metre, does seem to acknowledge the importance of Wordsworth's discussion, for he states:

> The discussion on the powers of metre in the Preface is highly ingenious and touches at all points on truth.[29]

He then goes on to make an extraordinary pronouncement:

> But I cannot find any statement of its powers considered abstractly and separately. On the contrary, Mr Wordsworth seems always to estimate metre by the power which it exerts during (and I think, in consequence of) its combination with other elements of poetry.[30]

Has Coleridge not been hammering this exact point, that metre is an integral part of the unified elements which make up poetry? The whole point of his argument has been that metre cannot be 'superadded' to poetry as it is an organic part of poetry -- how then can its powers be considered 'abstractly and separately'? Coleridge seems at times to be quite perverse, criticising Wordsworth even when he does not really agree with his own criticism, and this suggests that his Wordsworthian criticism in the *Biographia* is not quite free of personal animus.

For Coleridge, poetic creation is the fullest activity of the human mind, so it is not surprising that he should take issue with

Wordsworth's assertion that 'all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful emotions'. Of course, neither Wordsworth nor Coleridge would deny the co-presence of both intellectual and emotional elements. For Coleridge art is an intellectual activity and the 'property of passion is not to *create* but to set in increased activity';[31] while for Wordsworth the intellectual activity of the poet who has thought 'long and deeply'[32] is a check on the 'overflow of powerful emotions'. Wordsworth is not foolish enough to suggest that emotion alone creates poetry, as Coleridge apparently thought.

Coleridge concedes that emotion plays an important role in prompting an author to write, but what happens once he has received the initial impetus from his feelings? Does he now forget these feelings and concentrate on the aesthetic task of writing the poem? Or does he, as Collingwood suggests, carry the emotion with him throughout the creation of the poem, seeking to become fully conscious of it, to understand it, and to clarify it so that others may understand it too? The problem is one of control, and Coleridge implies this control when he talks of a 'more than usual state of emotion with more than usual order';[33] Wordsworth also, in the 'recollection in tranquillity' section speaks of the emotion being 'contemplated', presumably a mental process, and also of the emotion being 'voluntarily' described.[34]

Wordsworth's theory of control has an interesting development. Although the 'spontaneous overflow . . .' is an incomplete account of poetic creation (as Wordsworth himself acknowledges in introducing the 'recollected in tranquillity' qualification), it raises the issue of sincerity. F.R. Leavis suggests that poetry which aims to convey a poet's emotions should be judged by the criterion of sincerity.[35] A lack of organized expression does not indicate sincerity; on the contrary, a poet who, for example, professes to be expressing grief but who in fact wallows in that emotion, is really enjoying his grief and is therefore quite insincere in his expression. On the other hand, the poet who has come to terms with his grief, is the poet who can express it accurately, and therefore sincerely.[36]

Both Wordsworth and Coleridge believe that creation of poetry has its origins in the emotional and intellectual qualities of the poet, and they therefore find it impossible to define poetry before asking the question: 'what is a poet'? But while this is a basic similarity, there are substantial differences which are best demonstrated by a comparison of the relevant passages. Wordsworth's reply to the question 'What is a Poet?' is that:

> He is a man speaking to men: a man, it is true, endowed with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul than are supposed to be common among mankind; a man pleased with his own

> passions and volitions, and who rejoices more than other men in the spirit of life that is in him; delighting to contemplate similar passions and volitions in the goings-on of the Universe, and habitually impelled to create them where he does not find them. To these qualities he has added a disposition to be affected more than other men by absent things as if they were present; an ability of conjuring up in himself passions, which indeed far from being the same as those produced by real events, yet (especially in those parts of the general sympathy which are pleasing and delightful) do more nearly resemble the passions produced by real events, than anything which, from the motions of their own minds merely, other men are accustomed to feel in themselves:-whence, and from practice, he has acquired a greater readiness and power in expressing what he thinks and feels, and especially those thoughts and feelings which, by his own choice, or from the structure of his own mind, arise in him without immediate external excitement.[37]

Coleridge's definition follows:

> What is poetry? It is so nearly the same question with, what is a poet? that the answer to the one is involved in the solution of the other. For it is a distinction resulting from the poetic genius itself, which sustains and modifies the images, thoughts and emotions of the poet's own mind. The poet, described in ideal perfection, brings the whole soul of man into activity, with the subordination of its faculties to each other, according to their relative worth and dignity. He diffuses a tone and spirit of unity that blends and (as it were) fuses, each to each, by that synthetic and magical power to which we have exclusively appropriated the name of imagination. This power, first put into action by the will and understanding and retained under their irremissive, though gentle and unnoticed controul (*laxis effertur habenis*) reveals itself in the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities: of sameness with difference; of the general with the concrete; the idea, with the image; the individual with the representative; the sense of novelty and freshness with old and familiar objects; a more than usual state of emotion, with more than usual order; judgement ever awake and steady self-possession, with enthusiasm and feeling profound and vehement; while it blends and harmonizes the natural and the artificial, still subordinates art to nature; the manner to the matter; and our admiration of the poet to our sympathy with the poetry.[38]

In these two passages there will be found about three areas of similarity. The first concerns the nature of the poet and his genius. Wordsworth begins with the humble proposition that the poet is 'a man speaking to men', but this view is immediately qualified. The poet is 'endowed with more lively sensibility', he possesses a 'comprehensive soul', is knowledgeable about human nature and, on an even grander scale, he is in touch with cosmic forces, perceiving their patterns in himself and able to recreate them in his

poetry. Wordsworth therefore implies that the poet is simultaneously a member of common humanity and the supreme representative of mankind. Coleridge's definition of 'poetic genius' which brings 'the whole soul of man into activity', implies a similar identification with common humanity as well as a fuller manifestation of that humanity.

Coleridge emphasises the wholeness of the poet's activity, its emotional and intellectual aspects in bringing 'the whole soul of man into activity', and the imagination is the prime reconciler between the parts which have been made active. This is, of course, consistent with Coleridge's theory of the imagination. What is surprising is the emphasis that Wordsworth too places on imagination, although Coleridge would call it 'fancy' rather than the 'esemplastic imagination'. Wordsworth states that the poet has the peculiar quality of being 'affected more than other men by absent things as if they were present . . .' This was written by Wordsworth some fifteen years before the *Biographia Literaria*, so that it is hardly surprising that Wordsworth should, in the absence of a comprehensive theory of the imagination, rely on Dr Johnson's dictionary definition, which is:

> *Imagination*: Fancy; the power of forming ideal pictures; the power of representing things absent to oneself or others.

Thus the latter part of Wordsworth's definition has to do with the 'power of forming ideal pictures', and the former with the 'power of representing things absent to oneself or others'. Wordsworth's statement is primitive when compared with the detail of Coleridge's theory, but is quite consistent with it.

The distinction between physical and imaginative reality is a necessary part of any theory of art, but neither Coleridge nor Wordsworth conceive of the imagination as pure fantasy, nor as a mere pleasure-giving faculty; but rather they see the imagination having a function in the discovery of truth. This has to do with the third point of similarity in the two passages: the poet's control which, it is agreed, is a necessary part of poetic creation. Wordsworth states that the poet has a 'power in expressing what he thinks and feels . . . without immediate external excitement'. Thus for Wordsworth one element of control is to be found within the poet himself, in his ability to understand and to organize his feelings for their expression in poetry. Coleridge believes that control is derived from external as well as internal sources. The poet's imagination, 'while it blends and harmonizes the natural and the artificial, still subordinates art to nature'—so 'nature', or physical reality, becomes the second element of control, ensuring that the poet, even when indulging in fantasy, will always keep a firm grasp on truth.

Wordsworth also attempts to provide this sort of mimetic control. Immediately following the passage under discussion, Wordsworth states:

> But whatever portion of this faculty we may suppose even the greatest Poet to possess, there cannot be a doubt that the language which it will suggest to him, must often, in liveliness and truth, fall short of that which is uttered by men in real life, under the actual pressure of those passions, certain shadows of which the Poet thus produces, or feels to be produced, in himself.[39]

Wordsworth is trying to suggest a truth standard which is, in some sense, similar to Coleridge's assertion that art is subordinate to nature. But Wordsworth has not said it very well, confusing the truth standard with the matter of poetic diction. Poetic diction is not unrelated to external reality, but Wordsworth has rather introduced the matter out of context and in a statement that will not bear examination.

Both Wordsworth and Coleridge believe that poetry establishes its importance by dealing with the truth. For Wordsworth nothing is so trivial or commonplace that it cannot be a stimulus for the mind, although poetry always deals with 'Important Subjects'. Coleridge is, however, reluctant to include the commonplace in the realm of poetry. Misquoting Aristotle, he asserts that 'poetry as poetry is essentially ideal', 'an involution of the universal in the individual'.[40] Certain of Wordsworth's poems, he suggests, meet these requirements: *The Brothers* and *Michael*, for example. But other poems do not, in particular those poems which deal with exclusively rustic interests and occupations. This is because the farmer's interests are with farming and facts, while the poet must seek to discover and express connections between things, from which some general law is deductible. It is, of course Wordsworth's aim to go beyond farming and facts and to demonstrate the 'indwelling law'. He does not, of course, always succeed but often does; and Coleridge is usually unstinting in his praise of Wordsworth's moral insights.

Coleridge concentrates, in his criticism, on 'objective' criteria, criteria intrinsic to the work itself; but because organic compositions are subject to the laws of nature and of experience, they must also express principles of moral value. For Coleridge, Shakespeare's moral greatness is inseparable from the dramatic text and he believes that Wordsworth is, like Shakespeare, a 'philosopher poet' and awaits with anticipation the publication of Wordsworth's 'great philosophical poem', *The Recluse* (which was not completed and which did not live up to Coleridge's expectations). When Wordsworth reaches heights of moral grandeur in his poetry, Coleridge is ecstatic:

> It was the union of deep feeling with profound thought; the fine balance of truth in observing, with the imaginative faculty in modifying the objects observed; and above all the original gift of spreading the tone, the *atmosphere*, and with it the depth and height of the ideal world around forms, incidents and situations of which, for the common view, custom had bedimmed all the lustre, had dried up the sparkle and the dew drops.[41]

Coleridge believes that Wordsworth's preoccupation with rustics and his later preoccupation with himself represents a threat to his moral integrity. He deplores Wordsworth's departure into an expressive poetic mode because he feels that this must necessarily interfere with his moral judgement:

> I am startled by instances of self-involution in Wordsworth . . . and I trembled lest a film should arise, and thicken on his moral eye.[42]

A poet who is trying to understand and express his own feelings is not being self-indulgent—if he is, he will not produce very good poetry. On the contrary, moral judgement is of primary importance to an expressive theory of poetry. It must also be noted that Wordsworth is never entirely expressive, for one of his main concerns is the effect of his poetry upon his reader who, he hopes, will be in some degree enlightened and whose 'affections' will be strengthened and purified.[43]

Coleridge's assessment of Wordsworth's Preface is summed up in his remarks about the 1815 edition of Wordsworth's poems. 'Mr Wordsworth', he notes, 'has ... degraded this prefatory disquisition to the end of his second volume, to be read or not at the reader's choice'.[44] Happily, Coleridge says, Wordsworth's theories were not allowed to interfere with his practice:

> And I reflect with delight how little a mere theory, though one of his own workmanship, interferes with the processes of genuine imagination in a man of true poetic genius who possesses, as Mr Wordsworth, if ever man did, most assuredly does possess,
>
> 'The vision and the faculty divine'.[45]

In fact, most of the original *Lyrical Ballads* do reflect Wordsworth's theory. They describe incidents from ordinary life, written in a natural language; the colouring of the imagination is thrown over these everyday incidents so that unusual aspects are isolated; the primary laws of human nature are traced; the significance of the memories of childhood are shown; all men are seen to have, essentially, similar habits of mind; and the use of artificiality for its own sake is studiously avoided. Wordsworth's later poems are no longer 'lyrical ballads' and the Preface, though it is not without relevance to most of Wordsworth's poetry, cannot in fairness be used to criticise late poems.

The original *Lyrical Ballads* are notable as an experiment in dramatic technique.[46] Unlike the later 'egotistical sublime' style, Wordsworth has in these poems suppressed his personality and has attempted to enter the consciousness of the persons described. Coleridge, in a previous chapter,[47] had admitted this much. He remarked that in *The Thorn* Wordsworth became 'dull and garrulous', in *The Idiot Boy* he became idiotic, and in *The Sailor's Mother* he adopted perfectly rustic speech. Now, in order to suit his present argument, Coleridge quotes from the second edition and later poems (when the experiment is over and a new poetic is emerging, one that has to do with Wordsworth's interest in himself) and even quotes from poems that are not 'lyrical ballads'. The poems that Coleridge quotes from are: *The Rainbow* (1802), *Lucy Gray* (1800), *Idle Shepherd Boys* (1800), *The Blind Highland Boy* (1807), *Ruth* (1800), *There was a Boy* (1800), *Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle* (1807), *Joanna* (1800), and *The Excursion* (1815). Not one of the poems, which are quoted to illustrate the distinctiveness of Wordsworth's style rather than the subjugation of his personal style in favour of the rustic idiom, is an original 'lyrical ballad'.

Coleridge argues that Wordsworth uses polysyllabic words which are not used in ordinary conversation, and moreover, Wordsworth does heighten his diction.[48] Coleridge mentions, for example, 'concourse wild' in *There was a Boy*. Other examples include: 'The thrush is *busy* in the wood' (a description of a bird singing); 'Both earth and sky keep jubilee' (a beautiful May day); 'That uncertain heaven received into the bosom of the steady lake' (the reflection of sky in a lake). In short, Coleridge concludes:

> were there excluded from Mr Wordsworth's poetic compositions all that a *literal* (my italics) adherence to the theory of his preface would exclude, two-thirds at least of the marked beauties of his poetry must be erased.[49]

Writing to R.P. Gillies, Wordsworth remarks that when discussing poetic style 'the word "artificially" begs the question'[50] for quite obviously, a poem is an artefact. Wordsworth's objection is to conventional poeticisms, to artificiality for its own sake as inorganic ornament. The descriptions quoted by Coleridge are not incompatible with Wordsworth's theory. Nowhere in the Preface does Wordsworth state that the language of poetry must be unmetaphorical. On the contrary, he insists that it be 'alive with figures and metaphors'. The words themselves of the descriptions above: 'busy', 'jubilee', 'uncertain', 'heaven', 'bosom', 'steady', etc. are, unlike 'reddening Phoebus', not a specialized language of poets, they are current in everyday usage, and Wordsworth has demonstrated their abundant suitability for poetic use.

Coleridge's criticism of Wordsworth's diction would have been more to the point if he had looked at the way in which the poetry itself works, why it seems so simple yet proves to be so complex. Wordsworth's diction which, if seen in isolation, often seems too elevated is, in context, a perfect mode for the way in which his poetry interchanges literal and figurative planes of meaning.

The main points of Coleridge's criticism of Wordsworth's poetic theory can be briefly summarized. Coleridge does not believe that rustics have the monopoly of 'the real language of men'. He objects to Wordsworth's assertion that metre is 'superadded' to prose in the creation of poetry. He objects to Wordsworth's belief that 'all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings'. He takes issue with Wordsworth's theory of poetic diction, claiming that poetic diction is necessarily a heightened form of language, and not 'lingua communis'. Furthermore, a poet is not 'a man speaking to men', but an imaginative and intellectual genius. Finally, Coleridge suggests that Wordsworth does not follow his own theory in the creation of his poetry.

Most of these objections are irrelevant because, as I have pointed out, Coleridge has either misunderstood Wordsworth's point, or has ignored the context. One of the most distressing things about Coleridge's Wordsworthian criticism in the *Biographia* is Coleridge's extreme literal-mindedness. He is content to reduce Wordsworth's arguments to their bare logical bones, without taking into account the spirit in which the argument is advanced. Coleridge does not attempt to understand what Wordsworth *means* by an apparent overstatement, instead he is over-ready to remove words and phrases, especially the more controversial ones, from their contexts and thus to criticise them on unfair grounds. Coleridge also ignores the numerous qualifications that Wordsworth gives to nearly every statement he makes, and the resulting complexity that this lends to many of his arguments. We do not see Coleridge arguing at a higher level, say, about some of the consequences of Wordsworth's expressive theory, but always at the most superficial level of sense and nonsense.

Although Coleridge admits that the Preface was a 'half-child of (his) own brain', the overriding impression conveyed by the *Biographia* is that Coleridge would like to disown any part he may have played in its conception. He makes repeated attempts to point out Wordsworth's foolishness and naivety. But the *Lyrical Ballads*, including its Preface, is the product of the collaboration between both Wordsworth and Coleridge. George Whalley, in his essay 'The Integrity of the *Biographia Literaria*', points out that the integral structure of the *Biographia* is centred, not on Coleridge's own work, but on Wordsworth's; and the central paradox of the *Biographia* is that the account of Coleridge's literary development

should be centred on Wordsworth's work[51] — which surely indicates the complementary nature of their ideas:

> In this idea originated the plan of the *Lyrical Ballads*; in which it was agreed that my endeavours should be directed to persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic; yet so as to transfer from our inner nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, that constitutes poetic faith. Mr Wordsworth, on the other hand, was to propose to himself as his object to give the charm of novelty to things of every day, and to excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural, by awakening the mind's attention from the lethargy of custom and directing it to the loveliness and wonders of the world before us; an inexhaustible treasure, but for which, in consequence of the film of familiarity and selfish solitude, we have eyes yet see not, ears that hear not, and hearts that neither feel nor understand.[56]

This poetic manifesto is a succinct statement of those basic ideas on which both Wordsworth and Coleridge are in agreement: the emphasis on the supernatural (the realm beyond the world of Newton and Locke), the idea that perception is an active rather than (as Godwin and Hartley would have it) a passive process — which is an affirmation of the power attributed to the imagination. Wordsworth endeavours to lay bare the unusualness of the usual, and Coleridge, conversely, the usual in the unusual. In either case the end is the same: to reveal the hidden wonderous vitality of the world which has been obscured from us by deadening custom and dulled by mechanical theories. These fundamental ideals are never disputed by either Wordsworth or Coleridge.

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NOTES

1. S.T. Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria: or Biographical Sketches of My Literary Life and Opinions,* G. Watson (ed), (London: Dent, 1977), p. 199. Hereafter referred to as *B.L.*
2. Miriam Allott (ed), *Matthew Arnold: Selected Poems and Prose,* (London: Dent, 1978), p. 236.
3. Irving Babbit, *Rousseau and Romanticism,* (Boston: Bell, 1919), p. 155.
4. Herbert Read, *Wordsworth: The Clark Lectures, 1929–1930,* (London: Cape, 1930), p. 196.
5. *B.L.*, p. 247.
6. Ibid., p. 188.
7. Ibid., p. 190.
8. D.J. Enright and Ernst De Chickera (eds), *English Critical Texts,* (Cape Town: O.U.P., 1979), p. 162. This contains the text of the Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads,* hereafter referred to as *L.B.*
9. M.H. Abrams, *The Mirror and The Lamp: Romantic Theory and The Critical Tradition,* (London: O.U.P., 1980), p. 110.
10. *L.B.*, p. 164.
11. See W.J.B. Owen and Jane Worthington Smyser (eds), *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1974), I, pp. 118–131.

12. W.J.B. Owen, *Wordsworth as Critic*, (Toronto: T.U.P., 1969), pp. 110–112.
13. *B.L.*, p. 198.
14. *L.B.*, p. 164.
15. Ibid., p. 167.
16. *B.L.*, p. 201.
17. Quoted in H.W. Garrod, *Wordsworth: Lectures and Essays*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963), pp. 163–164.
18. *L.B.*, p. 169.
19. *B.L.*, p. 222. Coleridge's phrase is reminiscent of Wordsworth's 'gaudiness and inane phraseology'.
20. Ibid., p. 223.
21. Ibid., p. 223.
22. *L.B.*, p. 180.
23. *B.L.*, p. 228.
24. Ibid., p. 173.
25. Ibid., p. 206.
26. R.G. Collingwood, *The Principles of Art*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1938), p. 121.
27. *L.B.*, pp. 178–9.
28. Ibid., p. 180.
29. *B.L.*, p. 207.
30. Ibid., p. 207.
31. Ibid., p. 199.
32. *L.B.*, p. 165.
33. *B.L.*, p. 174.
34. *L.B.*, p.171.
35. F.R. Leavis, 'Reality and Sincerity', in *A Selection From 'Scrutiny'*, (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1968), I, p. 252.
36. Ibid., p. 253.
37. *L.B.*, p. 171.
38. *B.L.*, pp. 173–174.
39. *L.B.*, p. 172.
40. *B.L.*, p. 192.
41. Ibid., pp. 48–49.
42. E.L. Griggs (ed), *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1962), II, 1013.
43. *L.B.*, p. 166.
44. *B.L.*, p. 170.
45. Ibid., p. 202.
46. See S.M. Parrish, 'Dramatic Technique in the *Lyrical Ballads*', *(PMLA*, lxxiv, 959), pp. 85–97.
47. *B.L.*, pp. 192—194.
48. Ibid., p. 233.
49. Ibid., p. 236.
50. E. de Selincourt (ed) *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: The Middle Years*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1939), II, 555.
51. George Whalley, *Essays and Studies*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1953), p. 153.
52. *B.L.*, pp. 168–169.

POLITICAL ALLUSIONS IN FIELDING'S 'COFFEE-HOUSE POLITICIAN'

by JEREMY BLACK

'These are busy and critical times'.[1]

Henry Fielding's early play *The Coffee-House Politician* is a sustained satire upon Londoners obsessed with the news. Politic is so concerned by reports of European developments that he neglects the dangers with which his daughter Hilaret's virtue is faced from Squeezum the corrupt JP, and Ramble a sinister rogue. During the play Politic and his friend Dabble concentrate upon the consequences of various political developments suggested to them by the newspapers. It is the intention of this note to draw attention to contemporary comments upon the obsession of Londoners with the news, to explain the political allusions made by Politic and Dabble, and to assess their degree of probability.

The play opened as *Rape Upon Rape* at the Little Theatre in the Haymarket on 23 June 1730. After the summer vacation it was played, as *The Coffee-House Politician*, in the Haymarket on 27 November and in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields on 4, 5, 7 and 17 December. There are no signs that the political allusions in the text were altered between June and November, and it is therefore necessary to relate them to newspaper reports in the spring and early summer of 1730, the supposed period of the play's composition.[2]

In the play Politic shows most concern about Turkish intentions. Aside from these, the other principal topic of conversation between Politic and Dabble relates to the diplomatic complications produced by Don Carlos' claims to the succession to the Italian principalities of Tuscany, Parma and Piacenza.[3] Politic's first soliloquy (I, iii) is devoted to the Turks.

> I cannot rest for these preparations of the Turks: what can be their design?—It must be against the emperor.—Aye, ay, we shall have another campaign in Hungary. I wish we may feel no other effect from them.—Should the Turkish galleys once find a passage through the straits, who can tell the consequence? I hope I shall not live to see that day.

In the following scene Politic tells Dabble, 'the Turks give much greater uneasiness than Don Carlos can; what the design of their preparations can be is difficult to determine.—This I know, that I know nothing of the matter'. Dabble is less concerned, claiming that 'the prospect of affairs in the West is so black, that I see no reason to regard the East: . . .' In the next Act Politic returns to the Turkish threat:

> I find no such affinity in our interests. Sir, I dread and abhor the Turks. I wish we do not feel them before we are aware . . . what can be the reason of all this warlike preparation, which all our newspapers have informed us of? Yes, and the same newspapers a hundred times in the same words. Is the design against Persia? Is the design against Germany? Is the design against Italy?—Suppose we should see Turkish galleys in the channel? We may feel them, yes, we may feel them in the midst of our security. Troy was taken in its sleep, and so may we . . . the justest apprehensions may be styled dreams . . . should the Turks come among us, what would become of our daughters then? and our sons, and our wives, and our estates, and our houses, and our religion, and our liberty? When a Turkish aga should command our nobility, and janizaries make grandfathers of Lords, where should we look for Britain then? . . . Give me leave only to show you how it is possible for the Grand Signior to find an ingress into Europe. — Suppose, Sir, this spot I stand on to be Turkey—then here is Hungary —very well—here is France, and here is England—granted—then we will suppose he had possession of Hungary—what then remains but to conquer France, before we find him at our own coast . . . this is not all the danger . . . he can come by sea to us . . . (II, xi).

There is no doubt that Fielding is satirising Politic's fears. The prospect of the Turks, who had been defeated by Austria in the wars of 1682–1699 and 1716–1718, advancing to the Channel was slight. Indeed, Politic's demonstration of the ease with which the Turks could advance through Europe, clearly betrays an absence of geographical knowledge. Even had the Turks regained Hungary it was far from being the case that they had only to conquer France. Politic's fears reflected newspaper and diplomatic speculations about the intentions of Ahmed III. These alternated between admitting that they did not know what the Turks intended to do and claiming knowledge of specific Turkish plans. However, in the latter case the newspapers were inconsistent. In one issue there would be certain news that the Turks intended to attack the Venetian possession of Corfu; in the next that they were to attack Persia, Russia, Poland or Austria.[4] Politic's speech was therefore a fairly accurate representation of the confusion affecting the press though his fears cannot be found in any newspapers.

Politic's fears of the Turks are clearly meant to be ridiculous but it should be noted that in 1730 Venice, Austria and Russia did indeed greatly fear Turkish attack. The Turks were not yet the sick men of Europe. In the next Balkan conflict, the Austro-Turkish war of 1737–9, the Turks were to defeat the Austrians in battle and regain Belgrade and some of the possessions that they had lost in 1718. Furthermore, Politic's fear of Turkish naval power would not have been totally ridiculous to the audience. In May 1730 for the first time for many years Algerine corsairs appeared in the Channel. This attracted much press attention, and it is probable that

Fielding's composition of the play predates this development, for though the Algerines presented no threat to Britain their arrival certainly made Politic's fears appear slightly less ridiculous.

It is possible that in the person of Politic, Fielding was mocking those who feared a Jacobite invasion. Politic's comments upon the threat from the Turks to the liberty, religion, property and daughters of the British is reminiscent of the fears expressed of similar dangers from the Jacobites. The autocratic and bigoted Catholic beliefs that were widely attributed to the Jacobites were used by the Walpole ministry in order to rally support for the House of Hanover and the Protestant succession.[5] Ministerial newspapers, such as the *Flying Post or Post Master*, singled out by Fielding for attack in this play as the 'Lying Post', constantly returned to the theme of the Jacobite threat, and used it to urge support for the ministry.[6] It is possible that Politic's speech about the Turkish threat to Britain is intended as a parody of anti-Jacobite ministerial propaganda. Opposition politicians and opposition newspapers, such as the *Craftsman*, argued that the ministry was deliberately exaggerating the Jacobite threat for partisan reasons. If Politic's speech is intended to make the same point this would suggest that, as in the attack on the *Flying Post* (V, iii), the *Coffee-House Politician* should be seen as a play betraying opposition sympathies.

The second major source of foreign allusions in the play is the disputed position of Don Carlos. Don Carlos was the son of Philip V of Spain and his second wife, Elizabeth Farnese. In 1725, by the First Treaty of Vienna, Philip V had allied with the ruler of Austria, the Emperor Charles VI in an alliance aimed against Louis XV of France and George I of England. This alliance included an agreement for the marriage of Don Carlos to one of the daughters of Charles VI, who had no male heirs. In attempting to enlist popular and parliamentary support for its opposition to the Vienna Alliance the British ministry claimed that the balance of power was threatened by this projected marriage. They pointed to the precarious health of the Prince of Asturias, Philip V's son by his first marriage, to the precarious health of Louis XV and to the absence of a Dauphin, and suggested that there was a danger that Don Carlos would inherit France, Spain and Austria. In 1729 the situation changed. In September a Dauphin was born and the French succession became less precarious. In November, Britain, France, the United Provinces (the modern-day Netherlands) and Spain signed the Treaty of Seville by which Spain left the Vienna Alliance. It was agreed that in order to secure Don Carlos' rights to the successions of Tuscany, Parma and Piacenza, Spanish garrisons should be introduced into Leghorn, Porto Ferrajo, Parma and Piacenza. Four months were to be devoted to securing the consent of the Emperor and the Grand Duke of Tuscany to this stipulation.

If they refused consent, force was to be used, and the garrisons were to be introduced not later than 9 May (ns) 1730, six months after the signature of the treaty.

The Austrians rejected the demands for the introduction of Spanish garrisons and poured troops into Italy. In response the powers of the Alliance of Seville began preparations for war. The Spaniards encamped a large army near Barcelona and the British prepared to send an expeditionary force to Italy.[7] These preparations account for the Marseilles article Dabble reads from the supposed *Flying Post* (V, iii) and to the reference in the epilogue to British youth being 'wafted with Don Carlos' to Italy. The supposed *Flying Post* read by Dabble is an accurate parody of the British press from December 1729 to the summer of 1730. It was asserted both that Austria would accept a peaceful solution and that there would be war.[8] Thus, the *Whitehall Evening Post* of 31 January 1730 printed contradictory reports from Cologne and from the Hague concerning Austrian intentions. The *St. James's Evening Post* four months later, on 30 May printed an account from the Hague that listed the warlike preparations of the various powers and concluded, 'But, after all these preparations . . . men pretend to be very well assured there will be no action this summer'. The pretentious conclusion in Dabble's supposed *Flying Post* about leaving all 'to the determination of time' is a faithful example of the manner in which newspapers concluded contradictory reports.[9]

It is clear that Fielding's *Flying Post* is fictional. The passage that is clearly inaccurate is that from 'Moscow, January the 5th'. It refers to the Empress taking the air in her coach. However, the Empress referred to is Anne, who succeeded as Czarina after the death of Czar Peter II, who did not have a wife who would have been referred to as Empress. Peter died of smallpox on 28 January (ns) 1730, i.e. 17 January old style. Thus the account is clearly wrong. All the other pieces in the supposed issue are plausible, although it should be made clear that no issue of the *Flying Post* accords with Fielding's supposed issue. As the Empress taking the air in her coach is not material to the play in any fashion there is no excuse for Fielding's error. He could easily have checked the facts. That he did not suggests either that he wrote the piece in a great hurry or that he was not concerned greatly by the particular details in his satire upon press reporting. However, probably only a few pedants watching the play in June would have recalled the date of the Czar's death.

The style of Fielding's supposed *Flying Post* captures brilliantly the style of the contemporary press. 'It is observable that Cardinal Fleury hath, for several days last past, been in close conference with the minister of a certain state, which causes various speculations . . . We hear daily murmers here concerning certain measures taken by a certain northern potentate; but cannot certainly learn either who

that potentate is, or what are the measures which he hath taken.' Such items were not even ambiguous; they conveyed too little information to justify such a description.[10]

The *Flying Post or Post Master* was not notorious for such faults. Indeed its reporting of European news was of a high standard. It is likely that Fielding's selection of it for attack reflects the newspaper's prominent ministerial tone. Fielding's description of it as the 'Lying Post' was not novel: this was the well-known opposition description of the newspaper. During the Spring of 1730 the paper launched bitter attacks upon the opposition. On 26 March it attacked Lord Bolingbroke for fabricating information about the repairs at the port of Dunkirk in order to attack the ministry for failing to defend national interests. The same issue carried verses praising George II and Sir Robert Wale. On 2 April the newspapers printed George II's reply to the loyal Address of the Irish House of Commons. On 7 and 9 April, 19 May and 2 June bitter attacks were launched upon the leading opposition newspaper the *Craftsman*, described on 19 May as a libeller that carries 'off all the political filth that runs thro' the cities of London and Westminster'.

Fielding's attack upon the newspaper relates very probably to its ardent defence of ministerial policy, for if he had wished to satirise merely the press he could have chosen one of the other newspapers mentioned by Politic (V, iii). The *St. James's Evening Post*, another, but less ardent, ministerial paper could have been selected. Its issue of 17 March was typical of the pieces satirised by Fielding.

The discussion between Politic and Dabble in the first act (I, iv) about whether Don Carlos should be established in Italy is made ridiculous by Politic and Dabble's ignorance about the size of Tuscany. Dabble thinks it only a town, Politic believes it to be as large as France. Geographical ignorance was shared by the press. The *Corn-Cutter's Journal* of 23 October 1733 printed a letter from 'T.W.' in Rochester, who claimed that the press made nothing of writing about 'Princes and Towns that never had an existence, especially when they get into Poland and Muscovy; and we have lately observed some of them make mention of Alsatia and the Brisgaw, which are known to be large countries, as if they had supposed them single towns'.

Other newspapers had written about Peter the Great's operations against Persia in 1724 as though it was a simple matter to march troops from Siberia to Persia.[11] Fielding in his portrayal of Politic and Dabble, however, pushed geographical ignorance to the point of improbability. Politic had been a London merchant, and given the prominence of the Leghorn trade it is difficult to believe that any London merchant could be unaware of the situation in Tuscany.

Dabble fears that Carlos's introduction into Italy will be

dangerous. Politic is more concerned by 'the monstrous power which the emperor may be possessed of'. Politic's concern reflects ministerial propaganda in the spring and summer of 1730. In preparing public opinion for British action against Austria, the ministerial press stressed the autocratic policies of Charles VI, the threat his power presented to the balance of power, and the argument that he could be weakened in Italy without threat to the balance. These arguments had marked ministerial propaganda since 1725. They are satirised by Fielding in his portrayal of Politic as a man who fears the Emperor but lacks geographical knowledge, and exaggerates grossly the power of the Turks.

Dabble takes a contrary view. He is sceptical of the Turkish threat and concerned about the dangers represented by Don Carlos. This was a theme exploited by the opposition in 1730. In the Lords debate on the Treaty of Seville Lord Bathurst had claimed that the introduction of Spanish troops into Italy might cause 'a dangerous and expensive war' and 'destroy the balance of power in Europe'.[12] Opposition to war with Austria had mounted during the spring. In March the Saxon Resident Zamboni reported that, 's'etant formé ici de ma certaine science un gros parti de plusieurs puissans seigneurs et autres (qui d'ailleurs ne sont ni mecontens, ni Jacobites, mais zeles pour le bien de la Patrie) lesquels en cas qu'on vint à se resoudre de faire la guerre conjointment avec la France contre l'Empereur, ont determiné de parler clair au Roy, et aux ministres, et d'en empecher l'execution'.[13]

Fielding's Dabble clearly shares these views, and, in the conversation between Dabble and Politic, Fielding introduces an element that would have disconcerted a ministerial apologist. Dabble rushes in to declare 'We are all undone . . . all blown up! all ruined. . . . An express is arrived with an account of the Dauphin's death'. Dabble fears that this may make Don Carlos too powerful, and hopes that the news, denied by Porer two scenes later, will lead to an end to the schemes for the introduction of Don Carlos into Italy.

As with so much in the play this serves a double purpose. The obvious one, underlined by Politic and Dabble's different responses to the news, and by its subsequent denial, is to poke fun at coffee-house politicians, described by Worthy as 'Quixotes'. In addition there are the political overtones of the work. These are more elusive and suggestive and are clearly meant to be less significant than the overt subject matter of the plot. However, these allusions are too frequent not to be noticed, and they all reflect attacks upon the ministry. Squeezum, the corrupt JP, is interested in packing juries (II, i). This is probably an allusion to Walpole. In November 1729 Richard Francklin, the publisher of the *Craftsman* had been acquitted amidst public rejoicing, when prosecuted by the ministry.

To improve his chances for a second attempt at prosecution, an attempt that was to prove successful in 1731, Walpole had Parliament pass in the session of 1730 an act for the empanelling of juries in the cities of London and Westminster that enabled the government to select the jurors. When Francklin was tried for the second time one of the jurors was the father of Walpole's mistress.

In the conversation between Dabble and Politic (I, iv) the news of the Dauphin's death underlines the vulnerability of the ministerial diplomatic position. The death of the Dauphin would revive the chances of a Franco-Spanish dynastic union, an alliance that would be fatal to Britain. By choosing to mention the Dauphin (Dabble could easily have rushed in to announce the death of the ailing Grand Duke of Tuscany, or of the Czar, or of the ailing Augustus II of Saxony-Poland) Fielding makes an important political point: the Anglo-French alliance is precarious, prone to the vagaries of dynastic chance.

Thus Fielding's play contains political allusions that were of some significance. The attack upon the *Flying Post* and upon Squeezum's empanelling of juries can be linked plausibly to the press war then strong in London. The allusions to European developments constitute a sceptical response to the claims of ministerial apologists.

Fielding's play also fits within a contemporary theme, that of commenting upon the obsession of Londoners with the news. Politic's long list of the London newspapers he reads, a total of seventeen (though some are weeklies, some tri-weeklies), palls besides the number that he could have read. As *Oedipus: or the Postman Remounted* commented on 5 March 1730, 'There is almost every Day new Papers coming out, as well as old ones continu'd and improv'd'. Six years earlier *The Flying Post or Post Master* had noted, 'there are 24 newspapers for the 24 hours in the day, nine or ten for every week, six or seven for every month'.[14]

These titles catered for a large metropolitan readership. There are no accurate circulation figures for the press in 1730. Michael Harris has shown that the *Craftsman* sold between 850 and 1 500 copies per issue in the first half of 1727.[15] In 1730, however, the pamphlet *Liberty and the Craftsman: A Project for Improving the Country Journal* claimed that whilst the *London Journal*, one of the more prominent ministerial weeklies sold 2 or 3 000 issues weekly, the *Craftsman* sold 10 or 12 000.[16] Distribution figures are, however, a poor guide to sales as newspapers could be hired from hawkers for ½d, or read for free at coffee-houses, barbers and taverns. The *St. James's Weekly Journal* referred to 'such who shave and read politics once a week', and to readers in 'tipling-rooms'; the *Weekly Packet* referred 'to a sober tobacconist' reading about Russo-Swedish relations 'at the Rainbow', the *Weekly Medley* to its

readership among 'Barber Surgeons'. A newspaper, referred to in Politic's list, was specifically founded for the coffee-houses. The *Loyal Observator Revived; or Gaylard's Journal* claimed that 'all the artisans in London, and some in the country, are let into the secret of state affairs . . .' by the press.[17] *The Penny Post: or, Tradesman's Select Pacquet*, a new London newspaper founded in 1717, was clearly aimed at London tradesmen. It is clear from the diary of Dudley Ryder, that London tradesmen and artisans used to read and discuss the news at coffee-houses.[18] The Swiss visitor Cesar de Saussure, visiting London in October 1726, noted, 'La plupart des artisans commencent la journée par aller au café, pour y lire les nouvelles. J'ai souvent vu des décroteurs et autres gens de cette étoffe, s'associer pour acheter tous les jours la gazette'.[19]

The newspapers they read concentrated upon foreign news. The news satirised by Fielding in his fictional *Flying Post* with its total concentration upon European affairs was a faithful representation of the press of the day. Assessing the previous day's press the *Grub Street Journal* of 12 December 1734 noted, 'In the *Daily Advertiser* . . . there are but eleven lines of domestic news; in the *Courant* and *Daily Post Boy* not one'. Newspapers prided themselves on the quality of their foreign news. Announcing that it was to become a daily, the *Post Boy* stated in August 1728 that this new paper would include, 'as usual, the Original Hague Letter, confessedly superior to anything extant of that kind; which has never fail'd to give general satisfaction, and which can be procured by none but the proprietors of this paper'.[20] The first number of the *British Observator*, a London paper founded in 1733, proclaimed, 'Our constant care shall be to procure the best foreign advices, to digest them into a proper method, and to cloath them with a convenient stile'.

In his play Fielding thus satirised, in Dabble and Politic, the mass London readership, and in his *Flying Post*, the foreign news of the press. He presented a picture of the ill-informed misleading the uninformed, who lacked a knowledge of even basic geography. The implications are clear — international politics is a 'mystery of state' that the unlearned should, must, and can only be kept in ignorance of. Politic is a former merchant. If he cannot be trusted with the news, Saussure's artisans have no chance. Parallel sentiments can be found in some of the newspapers of the period. In 1731 the *Weekly Register* depicted the coffee-house bore who 'raves most vehemently about Kings, Parliaments, Ministers, Treaties, fortifications, trade, and a thousand other things, that 'tis easier to talk of, than understand'.[21] A year later the *Comedian, or Philosophical Enquirer*, a well-informed London monthly, attacked 'these mechanical Machiavilians' (sic), the 'inferior tradesmen' who assiduously read the press.[22] In 1760 Goldsmith

satirised the obsession of the English with news and attacked the press for printing 'a collection of absurdity or palpable falsehood'. In an interesting parallel of Fielding's technique he produces a specimen newspaper.[23]

It is necessary to be careful not to construct too great a weight of political allusions and consequences upon Fielding's play, but it is interesting to note that Fielding's satire of the press and its readers has implications that were to be brought out by the ministerial press. Most newspapers were aware of the problems posed by attempting to report European politics. The *Post Boy* in November 1727 reported a conference of envoys at The Hague, and commented, 'It is not to be expected, that we without doors should be able to give a detail of what passed in that conference, or furnish out the precise contents of Monsieur de Fenelon's dispatches'. The following month the *Evening Journal* noted with reference to the councils being held in Madrid, 'But everything which passes is kept so secret, that there is no diving to the bottom of what is transacting'. In 1732 the *Comedian, or Philosophical Enquirer* commented, 'The study of politics is of that intricate nature, and the secret springs by which the wheels of state move so difficult to be discerned, that it requires no slender genius, nor a small share of knowledge, to gain an insight into this science'.[24]

Harassed by legal action[25] the opposition press made great claims for the freedom of the press, and for the right of the public to knowledge. Thwarted by ministerial control of Parliament the opposition had to have recourse to the press. Thus, Bolingbroke and Putteney sponsored and wrote for the *Craftsman*, Chesterfield for the *Champion*. The opposition press claimed to compensate for the corruption of Parliament and played a major role in revealing matters that the ministry would have preferred concealed, the repairs to Dunkirk in early 1730, the secret Anglo-Austrian negotiations in January 1731.[26] The *Craftsman* accepted that it was difficult to report accurately upon developments, but it blamed this upon the ministry. The *Craftsman* of 26 July 1729, for example, argued that it was difficult to discover the 'secret springs' of policy, because statesmen deliberately concealed their real purpose.

Opposition press arguments were taken up by Dr Johnson. In his *A Compleat Vindication of the Licensers of the Stage* of 1739 and his *Essay on the Origin and Importance of Small Tracts and Fugitive Pieces* of 1744 Johnson castigated ministerial attempts to suppress information and debate. Johnson, in common with the opposition press, in defending the liberty of the press, also argued in favour of a well-informed public.

Contrary arguments were advanced by the ministerial press. The liberty of the press was castigated for the opportunities it presented for seditious comment: this was held to benefit the nation's enemies

and to threaten the development of a 'giddy multitude' inflamed in their ignorance by misleading press reports. Thus, the ministerial press developed already existing scepticism about the press into a distinctly critical stance. In 1723 the *British Journal* attacked the inability of the press to distinguish between important and trivial news. In 1729 the *Flying-Post or Post Master* alleged that 'some deep-learn'd Dealer in Libelling' was behind the *Craftsman*.[27] Two years later Chesterfield, then a ministerial supporter and British envoy in the United Provinces (the Netherlands), urged a vigorous ministerial publicity campaign.

> They attack with invectives, and should be answer'd in the same manner; and we should not content ourselves with reasoning, with enemies that fight with poison'd arrows, besides that all reasoning is thrown away upon the people, they are utterly incapable of it.[28]

The *Daily Gazetteer*, the ministerial paper founded in the summer of 1735, and the leading pro-government publicity organ in the latter years of the Walpole ministry, betrayed a deep suspicion of the public's interest in politics. The paper attacked 'the multitude of papers', argued that press discussion equated with 'the mob ready to sit in judgement on the legislature' and expressed contempt for the public's reception of the news.

> There is nothing so difficult with respect to the Populace as suspence. Rather than believe nothing, they will believe the most errant Falshood. Nothing is more common that to see them decide at random, rather than wait ever so little a time for better Information. The Vulgar, like the ancient Oracles, undertake to answer all Questions as soon as they are proposed, and with like success. They are often in the wrong, tho' seldom they will bear being told so. Men prone to Opposition know this, and know the Advantages it affords them. They practise on that Weakness which in their Hearts they despise, and celebrate as infallible those Decrees which they are conscious have no just Foundation. By steps like these, they raise themselves into popular Repute, and value at a high Rate that Reputation which was acquired by servile Flattery, and which can be supported only, by a base perseverance in the same low Art. This is a thing common in all Ages, and in all free Governments . . . such as desire to come at Truth, and are really Wellwishers to the Cause of their Country, are content to take things in their natural Order, to be well inform'd of the Circumstances attending an Event, before they offer their Opinion about the Measures which produced it.[29]

The ministry blamed popular agitation on the press; 'Had not some Gentlemen, out of Power, set up Incendiary Journals to deceive and inflame, not one Man in a thousand would have said a libel against the Administration'.[30] A publicly-stated low view of the populace's

response to the press was therefore taken by the ministerial press during the Walpole ministry. This accorded with the fiscal policy represented by the Stamp Acts. The Second Stamp Act of 1725 put several newspapers out of business. It accorded with legal action against those half-penny newspapers that evaded the Stamp Acts. In 1738 it was estimated that there were between six and ten unstamped papers of which over fifty thousand copies were distributed weekly in the London area.[31] It accorded with an active legal campaign against sedition in the press, a campaign that had begun with the Whig consolidation of authority and power after the accession of George I. This campaign helped to destroy several papers. The attacks upon ignorant readers and irresponsible newspapers mounted by the ministerial press were the expression of a policy of legal repression.

Fielding had no sympathies for such a policy, and he was to become one of the leading journalists opposed to Walpole. It is therefore ironic, that, before his journalistic career had begun, he produced in the *Coffee-House Politician* a portrayal of metropolitan newspapers readers that contradicted the praise of public debate espoused by the *Craftsman* and other opposition newspapers. Politic and Dabble are characters that would not have disgraced a ministerial newspaper. There was no reason to believe that this was intentional, but in the light of Fielding's subsequent journalistic career, it was deeply ironic.

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NOTES

Unless otherwise stated all dates are given in old style. New style dates are marked (ns).

1. Charles Delafaye, Undersecretary of State in the Southern Department, to Earl Waldegrave, British Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary in Paris, 9 July 1730, Chewton Mendip, Chewton Hall, Papers of James First Earl Waldegrave. I would like to thank Earl Waldegrave for giving me permission to consult these papers.
2. J. A. Masengill, 'Variant Forms of Fielding's Coffee-House Politician' *Studies in Bibliography* V (1952–3) pp. 178–183.
3. *The Post Man and the Historical Account* 17 Feb. 1730.
4. *London Evening Post* 21, 26 Mar., *Daily Post Boy* 31 Mar., 6, 13 Ap., *Evening Post* 4 Ap., *Weekly News and Daily Register* 22 May 1730.
5. *London Journal* 16 Nov. 1728; *Weekly Journal: or British Gazetteer* 21 Sept. 1723; J. Black, 'The Catholic Threat and the British Press in the 1720s and 1730s,' *Journal of Religious History* (forthcoming).
6. 'The Progressive Tree of Popery' in *Flying Post or Post Master* 15 Aug. 1728.
7. J. Black, *British Foreign Policy 1727–31* (London, 1982). On Spanish naval preparations, *Whitehall Evening Post* 5 Feb., 15 Mar., *London Evening Post* 17 Mar., *Evening Post* 24 Mar. 1730. On French war preparations at Marseilles and Toulon, *St. James's Evening Post* 4 Feb. 1730.
8. *Daily Post Boy* 9, 18 Feb. 1730.
9. Newsletter to Lord Perceval, 30 Ap. 1730, British Library, Additional Manuscripts, vol. 27981 f. 106; *Fog's Weekly Journal* 20 Feb. 1731.

10. The *Craftsman* satirised this type of article and argued that it would be the inevitable product of increased supervision of the press, *Craftsman* 13 Feb. 1731.
11. The *Daily Journal* of 15 Dec. 1733 attacked the *Daily Post Boy* for claiming that the French fleet would be able to bombard St. Petersburg. It stated that sandbanks made the river unnavigable.
12. Bathurst, 27 Jan. 1730, W. Cobbett, *Parliamentary History of England* . . . VIII, 773, 775–6.
13. Zamboni to the Saxon statesman, Count Manteuffel, 31 Mar. (ns) 1730, Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. Rawl. 120 f. 103.
14. *The Flying Post or Post Master* 2 May 1724; *Gentleman's Magazine* I, 1731, Introduction: 'no less than 200 half-sheets per month are thrown from the press only in London and about as many printed elsewhere in the three kingdoms'.
15. M. R. A. Harris, 'Figures Relating to the Printing and Distribution of the Craftsman 1726 to 1730', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research,* XLIII, (1970), pp. 233–242.
16. Anon, *Liberty and the Craftsman* (London, 1730) p. 4.
17. *St. James's Weekly Journal* 14 Sept. 1717; *Weekly Packet* 13 Dec. 1718; *Weekly Medley* 6 Dec. 1718; *Loyal Observator Revived; or Gaylard's Journal* 9 Mar. 1723; *English and French Journal* 12 Sept. 1723.
18. Transcripts from the Shorthand Journal of Dudley Ryder, 12 July, 6 Sept., 3, 28 Dec. 1715, Sandon Hall. I would like to thank Earl Harrowby for giving me permission to consult these transcripts. The items cited were omitted from the published edition of the Journal. Anon, *The Case between the Proprietors of News-Papers, and the Subscribing Coffee-men fairly stated* (London, 1729).
19. *Lettres et Voyages des Monsr. César de Saussure 1725–1729* (Lausanne, 1903) p. 167.
20. *Post Boy* 29 Aug. 1728.
21. *Weekly Register* 3 Ap. 1731.
22. *Comedian or Philosophical Enquirer* Aug. 1732.
23. *Public Ledger* 7 Feb. 1760.
24. *Post Boy* 30 Nov. 1727; *Evening Journal* 11 Dec. 1727.
25. L. Hanson, *Government and the Press 1695–1763* (London, 1936); M. R. A. Harris, *The London Newspaper Press c. 1725–46* (unpublished London Ph.D., 1974).
26. Black, *Foreign Policy* p. 388.
27. *British Journal* 14 Dec. 1723; *Flying Post; or Post Master* 6 Feb. 1729.
28. Chesterfield to George Tilson, Undersecretary of State in the Northern Department, 2 Feb. (ns) 1731, Public Record Office, State Papers, 84/311 f. 75.
29. *Daily Gazetteer,* 2 July 1735, 18 Oct., 8 Dec. 1740.
30. *London Journal* 10 Feb. 1733; 'The Journalists Display'd. A New Ballad' in Read's *Weekly Journal or British Gazetteer* 6 Feb. 1731.
31. *Craftsman* 2 Dec., *London Evening Post* 2 Dec. 1738.

D.H. LAWRENCE AND SCIENCE

by LEO F. SALTER

In his preface to the letters of D.H. Lawrence[1] Aldous Huxley refers to 'Lawrence the hater of scientific knowing', and this classification of D.H. Lawrence's attitude to science seems to have become the dominant critical opinion.[2] However, upon closer examination, D.H. Lawrence's approach to science in his writings indicates a more complex response than Huxley's preface suggests.

Lawrence was prepared to use the language and ideas of science in an imaginative and constructive way, and he also tried to introduce the contemporary ideas of biological and evolutionary processes into the development of his own theories of 'blood consciousness'. What dislike of science there is in his work is directed chiefly against the apparent rigid and mechanical nature of Newtonian physics. The fundamental changes in approach which produced twentieth century quantum physics seemed to provide a more attractive alternative.

Although he is consistent in his criticism of technology and the effect that industrialisation has on the individual, Lawrence's use of scientific imagery is rather novel. In the famous letter on *Women in Love* amongst an abundance of chemical terms he uses Chaldni's figures to describe the processes by which he constructs the characters,

> . . . the characters fall into the form of some other rhythmic form, as when one draws a fiddle bow across a fine tray delicately sanded, the sand takes lines unknown.[3]

In *Women in Love* itself he uses some of the language of classical kinetic theory to illustrate the manner in which Gerald Crich approaches the reorganisation of the mines,

> . . . kinetic, dynamic, a marvellous casting of myriad tiny wholes into one great perfect entirety. (The Industrial Magnate)[4]

The Rainbow has three 'scientific' characters—Winifred Inger, Tom Brangwen and Dr. Frankstone—and although the characters are drawn negatively, the illustration of their negativity through their approach to science is a constructive achievement. *The Rainbow* is also somewhat unusual in its quotation of a mathematical formula, $x^2 - y^2 = (x + y)(x - y)$.[5]

Lawrence's early contact with science seems to have stimulated rather than oppressed him. During his time at Ilkeston Training Centre he is described by a contemporary as being 'a brilliant mathematician'[6] and a testimonial from the Davidson Road School refers to him as having 'to a great extent influenced the science

teaching of the whole school'.[7] There seems to be little indication of a 'hatred' of science at this stage and Lawrence's later interest and concern with science probably finds its foundation here.

Lawrence was apparently familiar with the works of Darwin, Huxley and Haeckel at an early stage in his life.[8] His friendships with Bertrand Russell, Aldous Huxley and David Garnett would have allowed him to remain in contact with the developments in the biological as well as the physical sciences. In a letter to Russell concerning his own developing philosophy of 'blood consciousness' he writes,

> Do you know what science says about these things? It is very important: the whole of our future life depends on it.[9]

In his novels he often uses the language of the early evolutionists (Baumgärtner for instance)[10] and Freud[11] as a vehicle to express his ideas of human relationships. Ursula reacts to Birkin by establishing,

> ... a rich new circuit, a new current of passional electric energy, between the two of them, released from the darkest poles of the body and established in perfect circuit. (Excurse)[12]

In *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious* these ideas are developed further,

> The great ganglion of the spinal system, the lumbar ganglion, negatively polarises the solar plexus in the primal psychic activity of a human individual. (The Birth of Consciousness)[13]

or again,

> When the child sucks, there is a sympathetic circuit between it and the mother, in which the sympathetic plexus in the mother acts as a negative or submissive pole to the corresponding plexus in the child. (The Child and his Mother)[14]

Dubious though these concepts may be, they certainly represent an imaginative and constructive use of scientific ideas — even though they represent an attack by Lawrence on the rigid way in which contemporary physiological and psychological theories seemed to destroy man's individuality.

In both *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious* and *Fantasia of the Unconscious* Lawrence restates again and again his belief in the individual and the existence of some unrecognised form of consciousness essential to man,

> ... the first naked unicellular organism is an individual. It is a specific *individual,* not a mathematical unit, like a unit of force. (The Incest-Motive and Idealism)[15]

Many of these ideas expressed are confused, a result of Lawrence's attempts to remain within a scientific framework which had not yet developed sufficiently to contain his theories of human nature. But Lawrence expresses a dislike only of the rigidity and direction of science, not of its fundamental goals and achievements:

> Having begun to explore the unconscious, we find we must go from centre, chakra to chakra, to use an old esoteric word. We must patiently determine the psychic manifestation at each centre, and moreover, as we go, we must discover the psychic results of the interaction, the polarized interaction between the dynamic centres both within and without the individual. Here is a real job for the scientist . . .
> (*Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious:* The Lover and the Beloved).[16]

> The soul must take the hint from the relics our scientists have so marvellously gathered out of the forgotten past, and from the hint develop a new living utterance. (*Fantasia of the Unconscious:* Foreword).[17]

In June 1921 Lawrence writes to S.S. Koteliansky,

> I will send you Einstein (on Relativity) when I leave Germany . . . Einstein isn't so metaphysically marvellous but I like him for taking out the pin which fixed down our fluttering little physical universe.[18]

The book referred to is almost certainly *Relativity: The Special and the General Theory*.[19] The text is mathematically and conceptually complex. Although Lawrence may have been carried along by the wave of populism which followed the experimental verification of the theory (1919), his background may have allowed him a greater degree of comprehension than most. In *Fantasia of the Unconscious* amongst a section of extended but oblique references to Einstein's General Theory of Relativity, he writes,

> We are all very pleased with Mr. Einstein for knocking that external axis out of the universe . . . now that the multiple universe flies its own complicated course quite free, and hasn't got any hub, we can hope also to escape. (The Holy Family)[20]

The methods and ideas of Newtonian physics implied a rigidity for mankind, a negation of the individual, a philosophy illustrated by Dr Frankstone in *The Rainbow*. The changes which occurred at the turn of the century due to the efforts of Einstein and others produced theories which related events to matters of chance and statistics. In his use of expressions such as,

> the chemical decomposition of one's blood by the ultra-violet rays of the sun,[21]
> the sun's radio-chemical action on the blood[22]

and by his use of words such as 'radium', 'star equilibrium' and 'nodality', Lawrence indicates at least some awareness of the developments in physics which paralleled those of Einstein. However superficial his understanding may have been, his inclination towards the modern physics seems fairly obvious. Certainly it seems less than generous to state that

> . . . he would simply assert against the 'facts' of science a separate and higher reality based on his immediate sense of the way things were.[23]

In conclusion it would appear that some reassessment is necessary with respect to the Lawrence whose 'dislike of science was passionate'. Whilst his primary concern was to avoid the negativity implicit in Newtonian science, he demonstrated an awareness of the changes which science was undergoing and also an interest in the direction and aims of those changes. Aldous Huxley writes,

> The twentieth century still awaits its Lucretius, its new Goethe, its Donne, even its up-to-date Laforgue. Will they appear? Or are we to go on producing a poetry in which there is no more than the dimmest reflection of that busy and incessant intellectual life which is the characteristic and distinguishing mark of this age?[24]

Lawrence's knowledge and concern about science is often obscured by his critical stance, but beneath his criticism lies an approach which goes a long way to answering Huxley's question. In the final analysis his reaction to the priorities and achievements of the scientific establishment was a plea for a reassessment of direction,

> . . . we are in sad need of a theory of human relativity (*Fantasia of the Unconscious:* The Holy Family).[25]

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NOTES

1. *The Collected Letters of D.H. Lawrence,* ed. H.T. Moore (Heinemann, 1962) Vol. III, p.1247. (Introduction by Aldous Huxley to the Letters of D.H. Lawrence published 1932).
2. See for instance,
   (a) 'I.A. Richards attacked him too for holding magical beliefs in an age of science . . .' Introduction, Mark Spilka p.2, from *D.H. Lawrence: A Collection of Critical Essays* ed. Mark Spilka, Prentice Hall (1963).
   (b) '. . . this is the living, vital faith he offers as an alternative to the lifeless faith of science concerned with death, with fact and phenomena . . .' *The World of Lawrence: A Passionate Appreciation* Henry Miller p.221 Copra Press, Santa Barbara, (1980).
   (c) The contributions by Alyse Gregory (p.220), Edward Sackville West (p.259), E.M. Forster (p.343) and others in *D.H. Lawrence: The Critical Heritage* ed. R.P. Draper, Routledge and Kegan Paul (1970).

3. Moore Vol. 1 p.292 (To Edward Garnett, from Lerici, per Fiascherino, Italy, 5th June 1914).
4. *Women in Love* p.257, Penguin Books (1974).
   Also worthy of note, '. . . I provided the speck of dust on which you formed your crystal . . .' Moore Vol. III, p.1154
   and,
   '. . . the laugh of the woman is the same as the binding of the molecules of steel or their action in heat . . .' Moore Vol. I p.282.
5. *The Rainbow* p.269 Penguin Books (1970).
6. *D.H. Lawrence: A Composite Biography,* ed. Edward Nehls, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, (1957–1959) (Richard Pogmore writes).
7. Ibid. p.150 (Philip F.T. Smith writes).
8. Ibid. Vol. III, p.609 (The Chambers Papers).
9. Moore, Vol. I, p.394. (To Bertrand Russell, from Byron Villas, Hampstead, 8 December, 1915).
10. K.M. Baumgärtner, *Schöpfungsgedanken.* Physiologische Studien für Gebildete. p.326 ff. Freiburg: Wagner, 1859.
11. Sigmund Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (Transl. James Strachey). Imago Publishing Co. Ltd., London. First English Edition 1949 p.42.
12. *Women in Love* p.353 Penguin Books (1974).
13. *Fantasia of the Unconscious and Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious* p.223 Penguin Books (1971).
14. Ibid. p.229.
15. Ibid. p.213.
16. Ibid. p.234.
17. Ibid. p.14.
18. Moore, Vol. III, p.656. (To S.A. Koteliansky, from Hotel Krone, Ebersteinburg, 16 June 1921).
19. A popular exposition by Albert Einstein, published by Methuen and Co. Ltd, August 19, 1920.
20. *Fastasia of the Unconscious and Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious* p.25 Penguin Books (1971).
21. Nehls, Vol. II, p.131 (30 April, 1922), R.M.S. Orsora to Fremantle.
22. Moore, Vol. II, p.644. (To Rosalind Popham, from Fontana Vecchia, Taormina, 2 March, 1921).
23. *D.H. Lawrence's Nightmare* by Paul Delaney, p.367. The Harvester Press 1979.
24. 'Subject Matter of Poetry' p.38 from *On the Margin* Notes and Essays by Aldous Huxley, Chatto and Windus, London, 1948.
25. *Fantasia of the Unconscious and Pyschoanalysis and the Unconscious* p.25, Penguin Books (1971).

CAPITALISM OR PATRIARCHY AND IMMORTAL LOVE: A STUDY OF 'WUTHERING HEIGHTS'

by MARGARET LENTA

Criticism of *Wuthering Heights* has often tended to seek a solution to the novel, a single explanation which will account for all its elements and their relative positions. The enigmatic quality of the novel itself serves as an invitation to this kind of activity, as does the fact that it is the only novel written by a recluse who left almost no letters, and none at all of literary interest. Even Emily Brontë's verse does not really throw light on the novel, since we do not know and shall probably never know which, if any, of her poems express her own sentiments and which belong to characters of the Gondal saga. Winifred Gérin has argued that the Gondal poems show interests which reappear in *Wuthering Heights*,[1] but so long as no Gondal narratives are available to us, this can mean little more than that the woman who wrote part of the Gondal saga decided, very little later in her life, to write a novel set in Yorkshire which nevertheless displayed some of the same interests. The poems as we have them now, unplaced in narrative, cannot help us to decide on Emily Brontë's attitudes to the characters of *Wuthering Heights*, their actions and their opinions. F.R. Leavis's comment, 'that astonishing work seems to me a sport,[2] that is to say that it is unique of its kind, having no direct ancestors or descendants, points to a further difficulty: although Emily Brontë was interested in and influenced by the fiction of her day, she belonged to no school; her work stands in no single clear line of descent which might help us to understand her intentions.

Of the critical essays which offer us a single key to the novel, one of the most interesting is still Arnold Kettle's, published in 1951.[3] It ends with the claim that the novel is

> an expression in the imaginative terms of art of the stresses, tensions and conflicts, personal and spiritual, of Nineteenth Century capitalist society...The men and women of *Wuthering Heights* are not the prisoners of nature; they live in the world and strive to change it, sometimes successfully, always painfully, with almost infinite difficulty and error.

This emphasis on the seriousness of the book is necessary and valuable; Kettle is right to insist that its subject is life in this world, rather than the fantasies of a recluse. It is proper too that we be reminded that Emily Brontë, though she lived on the edge of the moors, lived at the same time close to the industrialised areas of Yorkshire, and that though Nellie Dean calls the child Heathcliff a

goblin and the man Heathcliff a devil, he is neither of these things. He is a slum child, first adopted and then rejected by a well-to-do farming family.

Although the reminder which Kettle's essay gives us that Emily Brontë's consciousness was formed by her world is timely, his insistence that the class struggle of the 40s is her only subject seems to me inaccurate. A colleague has written persuasively of the dangers inherent in the unitary theory of a novel,[4] that is to say the selection of one particular condition of the author's life as the sole determining influence on her novel. The most serious danger seems to be that the critic's selection of the crucial determinant tends to be influenced by his or her own interests rather than by the shape or content of the work. Thus Kettle's Marxist critical interests lead him not only to focus on the social injustice which undoubtedly forms part of *Wuthering Heights's* subject matter, but to dismiss the other elements in the novel. He is scornful of the idea that the feeling between Catherine and Heathcliff is 'romantic', without examining the meaning the word has for Emily Brontë. His account of the feeling that the two have for each other, which is probably the most important value of the novel, is not only unsatisfactory but inaccurate, since it claims that 'This affinity is forged in rebellion'.[5] The suggestion is that Cathy and Heathcliff, both oppressed by Hindley who has succeeded his father as head of the house, love each other because of their shared sufferings. No doubt their sufferings strengthen their love, but it existed before Mr Earnshaw's death as Nellie Dean, a servant in the house in this period, points out: 'She [Cathy] was much too fond of Heathcliff. The greatest punishment we could invent for her was to keep her separate from him'.(52)

The child Catherine is usually at odds with her father, so that her intense feeling for his protegé is strange. Nelly Dean who always resents threats to the established order, disapproves of the fact that Earnshaw has established him in the house, not as a servant but as a son. The old man's behaviour makes it clear that this dark, ugly little boy inspired intense feeling in him as soon as he saw him in Liverpool. Both Hindley and Catherine recognise and resent this at once, but Catherine who will not in any case be her father's heir, does not feel seriously threatened by his love for Heathcliff. Very soon she loves him herself.

We shall look later and in some detail at this love: the reasons for the distortion involved in Kettle's claim that the two feel for each other as do members of a rebellious group, must first be understood. It may be compared to the error of a later critic, F.A.C. Wilson,[6] who claims that Catherine's rebellion is against patriarchy, that 'the defensive formation of her character is such that she will not accept men save as inferiors' and that her feeling for Heathcliff

continues into adult life because he 'persists in this subordinate and essentially masochistic alignment to Cathy'.[7] When the claim is made that Cathy's love for Edgar is 'narcissistic' that it is 'love for a being not too remote from her own sex' we recognise that the critic has allowed her theory to come between her and the text. Cathy knows how utterly different Edgar Linton is from her: she says so, and it is not a matter of sex. But we must not miss in the essay of F.A.C. Wilson, as we did not in the far more important one of Kettle, the element of truth: patriarchy and rebellion against it *are* subjects in *Wuthering Heights*.

The fact is that unitary explanations of the novel, whether that Heathcliff was created under the influence of Byron,[8] or that he comes from Emily's memories of rebellious working men of the hungry forties,[9] or that the whole book is the result of the 'Gothic' reading matter available to the Brontës,[10] or that it is the result of Emily Brontë's observation that the law favoured men at the expense of women in the disposition of wealth and power — all these are possessed of valuable, if partial truth, but to regard any one of them as the whole truth is absurd.

The account which I should like to offer makes no such claim, though I should like to think it places a corrective emphasis on one or two matters which tend to be ignored. I shall begin by talking about the background to the novel which is certainly not, despite the claims of Kettle, one of industrial strife.

Charlott Brontë's novel, *Shirley,* published in 1849 and Mrs Gaskell's *Mary Barton,* published in 1848 deserve the label 'industrial' because they deal with the problems of industrialisation and specifically with labour unrest. Looking at them, we can see that her own knowledge of this unrest has influenced Emily Brontë in the portrayal of Heathcliff and Hareton: in order to see them as degraded by their positions as labourers rather than family members, she had to have observed that labourers in her own day were harshly treated and felt indignant at the condition to which they were reduced. Nevertheless *Wuthering Heights* is a novel of rural, not urban, life though there is no absolute division between the two, as there is none nowadays, and people in the novel pass from country to town and back again. When they are in town we can only hear of them from a distance because the novel's two narrators, Lockwood and Nelly Dean, speak to us from the country. Heathcliff appears as a seven-year-old child at Wuthering Heights, brought there from Liverpool; he runs away as an adolescent and makes his fortune, presumably in town. Isabella Linton leaves him, and Wuthering Heights, to live in a city in the south but we know nothing of her life there. The Earnshaws live on the produce of their farm; it may be that the Lintons have other sources of income which may include the profits of industry. Certainly they seem richer than

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the Earnshaws, or at least more influenced by new ideas about the degree of comfort and the behaviour patterns appropriate to the well-to-do. What we know of them, however, is their life in the country where Edgar and Isabella appear weaklings because they are physically feeble and unsuited to the rural outdoors where Heathcliff is strong. Catherine Earnshaw is equally vigorous until she separates herself from Heathcliff and the life she leads with him.

Emily Brontë drew on her own experience in order to give Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange specificity of detail; and the two houses on which she based them, the one a Tudor hall unmodernised (High Sunderland Hall) and the other adapted to early nineteenth-century ideas of comfort (Shibden Hall) made suggestions to her about the lifestyles of the Earnshaws and the Lintons. Both families are affluent; at the moment when we see them encounter each other in the novel, they seem to have made a different choice of lifestyles though it would be truer to say that Hindley Earnshaw who is at that point the owner of Wuthering Heights, has not reversed the choice that his father made of a simple, perhaps crude but healthy life, that of the head of a rural 'family' in the eighteenth-century sense, when a man's household comprised his resident employees as well as his relatives.

Q.D. Leavis, in her essay 'A Fresh Approach to *Wuthering Heights*',[11] writes of 'the opposition between Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange, two different cultures of which the latter inevitably supersedes the former'. Emily Brontë certainly sees the lifestyle of Mr Earnshaw, Catherine and Hindley's father, as belonging to the past, and there is never any chance that Hindley will effectively continue in it, nor alter it for the better. There is no inevitable supersession of it by the Linton lifestyle, however, and Emily Brontë seems to regard the Lintons, all except Catherine, as feeble and corrupt despite the fact that Edgar has some merits. What happens in the novel is that the Linton and Earnshaw lifestyles, in the forms which they have at the beginning of the novel's time-span, both die out and what survives in the marriage of Hareton Earnshaw and Catherine Linton is a hybrid variant on both.

There can be no doubt that Mr Earnshaw belongs to the patriarchal, authoritarian rural culture of the eighteenth-century; his insistence that his wife agree to his whim and accept Heathcliff as a son of the house, his relationship with Joseph and Nelly who are members of the 'family' in the eighteenth-century sense of the word, his apparently unfeeling attitudes to his children — all these traits belong to the age which is waning. Nevertheless it is he who, in defiance of the patriarchal system, establishes Heathcliff in the house as his favourite son, loving him apparently for his honesty and toughness. He certainly sees, as the prejudiced Nellie will see later,

that Hindley is a bully and a weakling and that to allow him to inherit is to ruin the family. He dies too early to transfer the Heights to Heathcliff, if that is what he intends;[12] his verdict on his son that 'Hindley was naught, and would never thrive as where he wandered' (50), suggests that he does.

Hindley, however, does inherit as eldest son and immediately down-grades Heathcliff, once his rival, to the position of a labourer. He himself has difficulty in sustaining the role of patriarchal family head; he can oppress but he can achieve nothing positive. He has married a penniless wife, without family, without even health, in defiance of the family good which the patriarch ought to serve. When she dies, he collapses into drunkenness, unable to care for his child or protect his inheritance. The patriarchal household collapses, not so much because Heathcliff plots against it but because it needs a head possessed of some strength. If Mr Earnshaw's attempt was to revitalise the family by bringing Heathcliff into it, he was probably doomed to fail — a system cannot be strengthened by those who break its rules and the rule that property and power descend in the male blood line is the basis of patriarchy.

Against the background of the eighteenth-century patriarchal household, Wuthering Heights, which alters from decay under Mr Earnshaw to ruin under Hindley, and the nineteenth-century gentleman's residence which is Thrushcross Grange, the narrators tell their story of a passion which neither of them understands, and with which neither of them can sympathise. I think it important at this point to insist that the novel's main subject, from which all other events radiate, is the love between Heathcliff and Catherine. The cultures of Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange must be recognised as background only, fascinating though the differences between them are, because Emily Brontë does not ask us to recognise either as right or appropriate in the novel's own time. We are not even asked to welcome unreservedly the cultural compromise represented by Hareton and the younger Catherine. Our great involvement — and it is the success and failure of the novel — must be with the union which never occurs between Heathcliff and his Catherine, and the meanings it might have had.

Although Emily Brontë has served important purposes in creating her two narrators as they are, their characters, the cultures to which they belong, and above all, the limitations of their moral judgements as applied to the elder Catherine and Heathcliff, pose serious problems for the reader. The first narrator, Lockwood, is a wealthy stranger from the south who comes to live in the district almost at the end of the novel's time-span. The elder Catherine is dead, Edgar Linton is dead, the younger Catherine has married and been widowed and is living at Wuthering Heights. Heathcliff is close

to the end of his career. As a personality, Lockwood's interest for us is that he can perceive as an outsider the household at the Heights. His standards are very like those of the Lintons twenty-odd years before in that he is class-conscious, feels safer with the conventional, and is nevertheless fascinated by the freer, unconventional behaviour of the Wuthering Heights family. Unlike Edgar Linton, however, he is not to be drawn into involvement; we know from the beginning that he will not marry Cathy, since he identifies himself as afraid of passion by means of his anecdote about the girl with whom he fell in love, only to retreat in cold disgust when she showed that she returned his love.

Nelly Dean, who tells most of the story to Lockwood, is much more complex in her attitudes: Q.D. Leavis's story of 'a professor of English literature who had discovered that 'The clue to *Wuthering Heights* is that Nelly Dean is Evil',[13] is entirely credible because the reader naturally longs for her to be possessed of a single, consistent trait for which he can compensate in his reading. One fixed trait she does have, and as our sole source of information on most of the events of the novel, she must have; she is consistently truthful and does not misreport events. As to attitudes and motives, she is ignorant and partial. Her loyalties are strong and always colour her judgements but they are not always the same. In the time-period up to Catherine Earnshaw's marriage when Nelly is a member of the household of Wuthering Heights, she takes the attitude that Heathcliff is a cuckoo in the nest, an interloper whom all the rightful members of the Earnshaw household, of whom she is one, have an obligation to drive out. Her account of how she refused him a bed when he first came to the Heights and left him on the landing in the hope that he would run away, describes her childish attitudes: herself a dependant of the family, petted by Mr. Earnshaw, she wanted no rival. She feels strongly for her foster-brother Hindley to whom Heathcliff, once he is established in the family, really is a rival. The story she tells in Chapter IV of how Heathcliff forced Hindley to give him the better horse by threatening to tell Mr. Earnshaw of Hindley's ill treatment of him, is offered by her as evidence of Heathcliff's evil nature; the truth is that Hindley has beaten and bullied Heathcliff over a long period and Heathcliff, still physically the weaker, is learning to fight back. Nelly cannot accuse Heathcliff of consciously trying to ingratiate himself with Mr. Earnshaw, but she interprets the fact that he does not as sullenness and ingratitude. His stoicism when he is ill she describes as 'hardness, not gentleness' and she insists that 'from the beginning, he bred bad feeling in the house'(47) as though he was to be blamed for Hindley's jealousy. She is, of course, relating his childish behaviour to his actions after the elder Catherine's death when he consciously determines to destroy Hindley and corrupt his son; but

to do so is to ignore the fact that the loss of Catherine, first through marriage and then through death, is a turning-point in Heathcliff's life.

The story of Jack Sharp, of Law Hill, who supplanted his cousin in his uncle's affections and succeeded for a time in unlawfully possessing himself of his cousin's inheritance, must, as Winifred Gerin tells us,[14] have been known to Emily Brontë. So, no doubt, was the subplot of King Lear from which, Q.D. Leavis claims, was derived the plot of an earlier composition the fossil remnant of which remains in *Wuthering Heights.* But it is the ways in which Heathcliff does *not* resemble Jack Sharp or Edmund which makes us interested in him — it is his merits, the fact that he is lovable to Catherine Earnshaw, and that difficult though it is to define the reasons for their love, most readers sympathise with it and agree that marriage with him, whatever its social disadvantages, would have been a better thing for Catherine than the alliance she eventually makes with Edgar Linton.

The truth of Heathcliff's childhood, the six years which he spent at Wuthering Heights before Mr. Earnshaw's death, as Nelly grudgingly acknowledges, is that he was a brave, longsuffering, truthful boy, bearing the name of a dead son of the house (this last a very significant detail) and beloved of the master of the house and his daughter. We must remember that Emily Brontë would have felt entitled to draw on her reader's experience of the great eighteenth-century fictions: two very important ones, *Clarissa* by Samuel Richardson and Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones,* have plots which are set in motion by the resentment of an heir who fears that he may be supplanted. Emily Brontë felt no need to rehearse the whole debate about what entitles one to inherit property, nor to ask whether an eldest son in a patriarchal family is entitled to resent merit's being rewarded with wealth and power. Her readers could be expected to recognise a challenge to the existing system of property descent. The child Heathcliff does not of course *make* such a challenge: his position and qualities consitute one. Later, when he is a man and has lost Catherine to a 'legitimate' property owner and when Catherine has died of that loss, he will consciously turn the tables on Hindley and Edgar, heirs under the patriarchal system; and will take over the former's property by exploitation of his weakness and the latter's by skilful manipulation of the patriarchal laws of inheritance which reduced him to poverty and degradation and thereby deprived him of Catherine.

If we are to value the novel properly, if we are to see it as anything more than a Gothic tale of villainy, we must make ourselves independent of both narrators in our judgements of Catherine Earnshaw and of Heathcliff as a young man. The betrayal of Heathcliff which Catherine's marriage to Edgar Linton constitutes,

has to be seen as a personal disaster for her and a destruction to Heathcliff's potential for good, but we must believe too that a real and valuable possibility for a new way of life could have come out of their union. Nelly Dean is almost as disapproving of Catherine as she is of Heathcliff; she describes her as over-energetic, mischievous: 'her spirits were always at high-water mark, her tongue going — singing, laughing, and plaguing everybody who would not do the same'.(51) She adds that 'she liked, exceedingly, to act the little mistress', a statement which another critic[15] has taken to mean that she loved Heathcliff because she was able to establish over him a dominance which she enjoyed. I do not myself see this as true of the adult: Catherine is only twelve when her father dies and it is therefore her prepubertal behaviour which is being described. This trait, matured into a young woman's pride, is what leads her to say, 'It would degrade me to marry Heathcliff now; so he shall never know how much I love him'.(100)

The relationship between the two in adult life is completely equal and Catherine insists that her husband and sister-in-law acknowledge him as their social equal. She makes clear, from the moment of their reunion, that she values him more than anyone else on earth. He in return acknowledges her value by refusing to tell her comforting lies when she is dying. Her famous statement, 'Nelly, I am Heathcliff',(102) implies equality as well as much more.

Catherine and Heathcliff resemble each other and are distinct from Hindley in their energy, and both love their life at Wuthering Heights and on the moors outside. Both know — though Catherine for a period tries to forget — that their lives are superior to the life of middle-class comfort led by the Lintons who show their refinement in their unfitness for hard living and their emphasis on distinctions based on rank. Heathcliff and Cathy presumably resemble the Earnshaws of the past in their feeling for the land, wild or cultivated, and in their ability to love and value across the barriers of class. They are rebels, as I have suggested, against the patriarchal organisation of the age, more because of their strongly individual energies than because of the injustice which they suffer up to the period of Catherine's marriage. Kettle lays a good deal of emphasis on their rejection of Joseph's Methodist sermons and reading but this seems to me a part of their rebellion against Hindley's oppression rather than a rejection of conventional religious beliefs; everyone in the household knows that Joseph is a canting hypocrite but it suits Hindley at that moment to use him against the children.

Margaret Homans has pointed out that we hear little directly about the outdoor life which Catherine and Heathcliff share as children and young adolescents because both Nelly and Lockwood prefer indoor living, the one being a housekeeper and the other an invalid during much of the narrative.[16] Nature is always present in

the speech modes of the two chief characters: Catherine especially uses it tellingly when comparing Edgar Linton, Heathcliff and herself. Nevertheless, although we are aware that she and Heathcliff share valuable areas of their lives of which Nelly cannot speak and to which if she could, she would be hostile, it is in this area of the novel that we are obliged to admit that we need to know more than we are told; Catherine's descriptions of her feelings for Heathcliff are simply not enough, though we can learn about him negatively from what he dislikes or despises and about Cathy too in the same way before her desertion of him.

A good deal of attention has been given by critics to Catherine Earnshaw's assertion to Nelly that marriage to Edgar Linton will not oblige her to give up Heathcliff: she intends to remain his friend and to help him more effectively, presumably with her husband's money. Q.D. Leavis writes that 'so attached to him by early associations and natural sympathies, Catherine never really thinks of him as a possible lover either before or after marriage',[17] and claims that this is because Emily Brontë originally conceived of the two as half-brother and -sister. Wayne Burns claims that what they feel for each other is 'immaculate love'.[18] Certainly at the age of fifteen, when her understanding of her love for Heathcliff is passing beyond, but has not yet totally outgrown the notion that he is her brother, Catherine's claim to Nelly that she will marry Edgar and still keep her intimacy with Heathcliff does seem to imply that her feeling for both is non-sexual, at least as far as she understands it. I agree with Kettle that the scene between her and Heathcliff when she is dying makes it clear that their understanding of their love for each other has matured and is now strongly sexual. Catherine's desperate efforts after Heathcliff's return to find a basis on which Heathcliff, Edgar and herself can coexist, make, in her obvious refusal to face the facts of the situation, the same point. Again, our curiosity is thwarted by the fact that our informant is Nelly, now a loyal member of the Linton household, who will not suggest the presence of sexual feeling between the two. Isabella Linton's jealousy of her sister-in-law suggests it strongly, however, and Catherine herself makes it clear that Heathcliff's absence has revealed to her the nature of her own feelings. She awakens Nelly at midnight after his return, full of an excitement which her husband bitterly though ineffectually resents:

> 'The event of this evening has reconciled me to God, and humanity! I had risen in angry rebellion against Providence—Oh, I've endured very, very bitter misery Nelly!'(123)

Far from attempting to keep up equally good relations with husband and lover in this period, Catherine frequently treats Edgar with contempt and always makes amicable relations between them

conditional on Edgar's acceptance of Heathcliff as her intimate friend.

The fact that Heathcliff and Cathy's feeling for each other eventually becomes intensely sexual is not, however, the basis of Emily Brontë's claim, felt by most readers of the novel, that it is in itself admirable and that their union, had it ever taken place, would have been a great achievement. The notes to the Clarendon edition of the novel draw our attention to the fact that the love between Catherine and Heathcliff which is portrayed as an irresistible affinity, beginning almost as soon as they meet, resembles a familiar Romantic concept, expressed in prose by Bulwer Lytton.[19] The Romantic idea of brother-sister incest, the completion of oneself by union with one's counterpart of the opposite sex, is closely related to this notion, and both inform Emily Brontë's sense of the 'rightness' of a union between Catherine and Heathcliff.

Did she understand that she was suggesting that Catherine did wrong in resisting union with her male self? The words of both lovers make it clear that she wanted us to regard them, once they are permanently divided, as fatally incomplete. Heathcliff's question to the dying Catherine, claiming that his miseries are the greater, is: 'O God! would you like to live with your soul in the grave?'(192) And when he hears of her death, he cries, 'I cannot live without my life! I cannot live without my soul!'(204) Catherine's famous description of her feeling for Heathcliff must be quoted here:

> 'I cannot express it; but surely you and every body have a notion that there is, or should be, an existence of yours beyond you. What were the use of my creation if I were entirely contained here? My great miseries in this world have been Heathcliff's miseries, and I watched and felt each from the beginning; my great thought in living is himself. If all else perished, and *he* remained, I should still continue to be; and if all else remained, and he were annihilated, the Universe would turn to a mighty stranger. I should not seem a part of it. My love for Linton is like the foliage in the woods. Time will change it, I'm well aware, as winter changes the trees — my love for Heathcliff resembles the eternal rocks beneath — a source of little visible delight, but necessary. Nelly, I *am* Heathcliff — he's always always in my mind — not as a pleasure, any more than I am always a pleasure to myself — but, as my own being — so, don't talk of our separation again — it is impracticable; and — '(101–102)

The phrase which stays in one's mind is 'an existence of yours beyond you,' and it suggests what the lovers might have found in one another and what they lost. But can we go so far as to ask whether the wider existence which they might have found would have been creative of a new lifestyle to replace the eighteenth-century pattern which had decayed, or would have shown itself obviously superior to the decadent though distinctively nineteenth-

century pattern of the Lintons, with their narrowing sense of propriety and rank? There is no positive suggestion within the novel that we are to regard their love as containing this possibility, though there are plenty of indications that Emily Brontë regards both the male Earnshaws and the Lintons as insufficiently vital to produce an acceptable lifestyle.

The two lovers are parted finally, so far as concerns any real possibility of a happy union, when they are fifteen and sixteen respectively and such is Nelly Dean's disapproval of Heathcliff and her loyalty to the man Catherine does marry, that she does not contemplate the possibility that marriage to Heathcliff might have been better for her. She cannot speculate on the kind of life which the union might have produced for both, because, separated so early, they are not fully aware of their own creative possibilities as yet, though the household at Wuthering Heights has taught them how they do not want to live. It is useless to ask ourselves how Emily Brontë saw their positive potential—the novel makes clear only what she disliked and expected them to sweep away. It seems likely that their passionate affinity was immensely valuable to her; just as Heathcliff experiences the most terrible agony when the last possibility of it is withdrawn at Catherine's death, and thereafter seems to feel nothing but destructive anger, so she seems to have felt that the highest pinnacle of human happiness would have been accessible to them had they achieved union.

Heathcliff without his other self can produce nothing which is good and new; he destroys the old, though it might be truer to see that he hastens its destruction. Hindley's death from drink is inevitable; Isabella Linton and her son are equally possessed of fatal tendencies of body and mind. Even Edgar Linton is too delicate physically to expect a long life.

Although the new possibilities which the older lovers represent never come to birth, the younger pair, Hareton and the younger Catherine, fuse all that is already good in both their families—the strength of the Earnshaws and their close relationship with the countryside and its people, and the intellectual interests and sensitivity which is the valuable part of the Linton inheritance. Most readers of the novel notice a change of tone when the younger lovers are dealt with; their symbol is primroses stuck in a plate of porridge, rather than a storm on the moors. Nelly Dean understands, and thoroughly approves of their relationship; it represents something new, in the sense that the best of their families' qualities have never been fused before, and presumably their posterity will continue them. It is nevertheless a continuation with its roots in the past. As Frank Kermode has pointed out, we have been receiving signals of it since Lockwood's first visit to Wuthering Heights at the beginning of the novel, when despite the

fact that the house belongs to Heathcliff, he notices the name 'Hareton Earnshaw' carved above the door. On his second visit, he notices that someone has been writing on the ledge by his bed— 'Catherine Earnshaw, here and there varied to Catherine Heathcliff, and then again to Catherine Linton'. Kermode points out that the names in order recapitulate the first Catherine's history: reversed they summarise the story of her daughter.[20]

The idea of a happy union between two individuals who possess the best of their families' traits and have learnt to control the destructive part of their inheritance, has therefore always been in the background of the novel as a partially satisfactory resolution to the plot. The younger lovers are by no means reincarnations of the elder ones and they do not promise, as their elders might have done, absolutely new possibilities of intenser happiness or more complete union than had ever been achieved before. Their marriage is a marriage of love but the fact that Nelly Dean wishes for it before it seems likely to occur, reminds us that it is also a 'good' marriage in the sense of being advantageous to both young people, as the elder Catherine's marriage was advantageous to her in a material sense.

It takes place partly because some elements of the relationship between the elder Catherine and Heathcliff survive in the younger pair and in their feeling for each other, for it is these elements which move Heathcliff to abandon the last part of his plan which is to destroy them as well as their families. Nelly Dean describes Heathcliff's finding them together when Cathy is teaching Hareton to read:

> 'They lifted their eyes together, to encounter Mr. Heathcliff—perhaps you have never remarked that their eyes are precisely similar, and they are those of Catherine Earnshaw . . . I suppose this resemblance disarmed Mr. Heathcliff: he walked to the hearth in evident agitation . . .'(392)

Heathcliff, as he tells Nelly almost immediately after this, has no longer any wish to destroy them. The disappearance of his urge to destroy is the result of his recognition that they possess many of his own Catherine's traits, but it also makes his death inevitable, since destructiveness has been since Catherine's death his only vigorous urge. He is moved by the way in which Hareton's position resembles his own when as an adolescent he loved Catherine who was becoming a young woman and being attracted by the values of Thrushcross Grange. 'Well, Hareton's aspect was the ghost of my immortal love, of my wild endeavours to hold my right, my degradation, my pride, my happiness, and my anguish—'.(394)

This claim must not be misunderstood; Heathcliff has reduced Hareton Earnshaw from a son of the house to a labourer, a state equivalent to his own under Hindley. He does not imagine that

Hareton's feeling for the younger Catherine is anything equivalent to his own for the elder, but he realises that the same social and economic factors may intervene to separate the younger lovers as came between him and his Catherine.

What survives in the the younger lovers is valuable and is dealt with in a way which places their value — the wedding on January 1st, the move to Thrushcross Grange, the installation of their dear old nurse as housekeeper once more — all these emphasise renewal, but the renewal of something old. More significant still is their decision to leave Wuthering Heights, 'for the use of such ghosts as choose to inhabit it',(413) as Lockwood says. They are moving out of the shadows of Heathcliff and the elder Catherine, giants of the past, whose energy to initiate was lost and survives only as a memory of an enormous force which was frustrated.

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NOTES

Quotations from the novel are taken from the Clarendon text, ed. by Hilda Marsden and Ian Jack, Oxford 1976. Page numbers of this edition are given in parentheses in the text of the article.

1. Winifred Gérin, *Emily Bronte* (Oxford, 1971) pp. 188–191.
2. F.R. Leavis, *The Great Tradition* (Peregrine, 1962) p. 38.
3. Arnold Kettle, *An Introduction to the English Novel* (Hutchinson, 1951) pp. 139–155.
4. Margaret Daymond, 'Was It Fear of Violence?' Unpublished essay, 1982.
5. Kettle, p. 143.
6. F.A.C. Wilson, 'The Primrose Wreath: the Heroes of the Brontë Novels', *Nineteenth Century Fiction,* June 1974, Vol. 29, 1; pp. 40–57.
7. Ibid. p. 51.
8. See notes to the Clarendon edition of *Wuthering Heights,* pp. 419, 420.
9. David Wilson, *Modern Quarterly*, Miscellany No. 1, 1947 quoted by Kettle.
10. I am indebted to Mr Brian Wilks of the University of Leeds, who pointed out at the Seventh Annual Brontë Conference that the 'Gothic' tone was not in the 1840s confined to fiction and that both the *Leeds Mercury* and the *Leeds Intelligencer*, newspapers available to the Brontës, contained much reportage which emphasized the sinister and sensational aspects of incidents.
11. F.R. Leavis and Q.D. Leavis, *Lectures in America* (Chatto and Windus, 1969) pp. 85–138.
12. Eric Solomon in 'The Incest Theme in *Wuthering Heights*' (*Nineteenth Century Fiction*, Vol. 14, 1, June 1959) argues that Heathcliff is intended by Emily Brontë to be seen as Mr Earnshaw's illegitimate son, since Earnshaw's excessive partiality and Mrs Earnshaw's hostility can have no other explanation. Whilst it is impossible to find conclusive support for this view in the novel, it is nevertheless interesting as support for my contention that Earnshaw's behaviour to Heathcliff implicitly offers him the position and rights of a son of the house.
13. *Lectures in America*, p. 86.
14. *Emily Brontë*, pp. 76–80.
15. Margaret Homans, 'Repression and Sublimation of Nature in *Wuthering Heights*', *PMLA*, Vol. 93, Jan. 1978, pp. 9–19.
16. Ibid. p. 9.
17. *Lectures in America*, p. 189.
18. Wayne Burns, 'In Death They Were Not Divided: the Moral Magnificence of Unmoral Passion in *Wuthering Heights*', *Hartford Studies in Literature* Vol. V, 1, 1973, pp. 135–159.

19. *Wuthering Heights*, p. 423. 'I have read that in the very hour and instant of our birth, one exactly similar to ourselves in spirit and form is born also, and that a secret and unintelligible sympathy preserves that likeness, even through the vicissitudes of fortune and circumstances, until, in the same point of time, the two beings are resolved once more into the elements of earth'.
20. Frank Kermode, 'A Modern Way with the Classic,' *New Literary History* Vol. V, 5, 1974, pp. 415–434.

CORRESPONDENCE

'THE GREAT DIVIDE': A REPLY TO JEAN STEWART

The Editors,
Theoria.

The feminist slogan that 'the personal is political' is both a truism about social reality, and an indictment of mainstream academic psychology. Through the dual domination of positivist and neo-positivist philosophies of science, and the uncritical acceptance of bourgeois ideology as 'the way of the world', psychology and the other social sciences have been concerned to keep politics out of their 'scientific' work. This work has been approached from a strong belief in the power and 'neutrality' of the scientific method in distinguishing *facts* from *values*.

Within most discussions on the history and philosophy of the social sciences the theoretical and practical problems of positivist and idealist epistemologies have been seriously criticised and challenged (cf. Keat and Urry, 1982). It is important therefore that a journal like *Theoria* (A journal of studies in the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences) is concerned to promote work which on the face of its title at least is trying to articulate politics as well as psychological processes. That is Jean Stewart's article, *The great divide: Personality, psychoanalytic theory, and politics* in *Theoria,* volume *LXI*, 1983.

However, a detailed study of her article brings to the fore some major problems of a political and psychological nature. I wish to challenge the fundamental tenets of her argument as being basically incoherent with regard to an articulation of psychological processes and political reality. I use 'coherence' and 'incoherence' in the relatively technical sense that Hindess (1977, p. 164ff) does to refer to the problems of logic and irrationality in knowledge production.

Her argument can be divided into four parts for the purposes of my analysis. Firstly, she introduces her argument by saying that world social problems '. . . appear to be conflicts about difference and inequality' (p. 1). These conflicts manifest themselves in all sorts of struggles and tensions around the world. Stewart then offers a psychological, or rather what she refers to as a psychoanalytic explanation and theory of the basis of these conflicts. In both groups of people — the dominated and the dominating — there are destructive impulses which have not been successfully repressed during the person's (family) socialisation. These destructive aspects of aggression which because they are of a repressed psychological nature are socially invisible, and hence not taken seriously by politicians and governments. It is the emergence of these

uncontrolled destructive urges which result in what Stewart calls the 'great divide'. The thrust of her argument can be summarised in the following quotation: 'It is suggested, therefore, that the really important division of humanity which cuts right across differences of race, religion, language etc. and inequalities of wealth, status, education, ability etc. is *the invisible division between those individuals who are still naturally destructive, and those who have overcome destructiveness in the course of their emotional development* and so have become capable of healthy guilt and what could be called stereoscopic social vision, and the ability to see two points of view at the same time.' (pp. 3–4, emphasis in the original).

In the second part of her argument she makes the analogy between politics and parenting. Arguing for the basis of mature political relationships as established '. . . in the setting of the good family, that is, the family which is *both loving and firm.*' (p. 4, emphasis in the original) Stewart then details three '. . . irreducible variables of relationships' (p. 5) in the family, which she says can be applied to the social realm:

1. Equality in spite of difference.
2. Inequality with justice.
3. Exclusion with purpose.

In the third part she applies these three variables to South Africa which she says '. . . is one of the most complex societies in the world.' (p. 6). In this part she talks mainly about the 'great divide' that operates between white and black groups.

She concludes her article with some practical pointers of how to achieve the political government of and by the invisible, non-destructive, silent majority. She proposes a certain form of liberal (bourgeois) parliamentary democracy. She again links the family to the political process as the site of socialisation of these 'politically healthy' people, and for society, politically and emotionally mature subjects.

I shall now deal with some of the problems in this argument. While psychology and psychoanalysis have been relatively *theoretically* illiterate in the area of articulating their scientific practices with political processes and practices, a large literature has nevertheless developed around this area. It is cause for some amazement that Stewart makes no reference to this literature. The *Annual Review of Psychology* has consistently over the last ten years been promoting a theoretical understanding of the relationship between personality and social structure (cf. Rorer and Widiger, 1983). It is on this score that the basis of her argument is most problematic. It is not adequate *theoretically* to deal with the problem of politics and personality by simply making an analogy '. . . between the role of the family and individual development and the function of government in society by virtue of the relation

between the state and the citizens of a country.' (p. 4). Furthermore, it would be argued in most significant discussions in the social sciences that the order of determination is from political and social processes to individual socialisation and not the other way round as Stewart 'argues' (Hirst & Woolley, 1982; Geras, 1983). Stewart presents the (ontological) primacy of the individual, and does not seem to think it necessary to *argue* this position. This unfortunately is a rather arrogant liberalism of the individual. In short the articulation of political and social processes with the development and socialisation of individuals and individuality is a highly complex and urgent matter which is being seriously studied and discussed in a number of social science studies. Hence it is important not to turn our backs on this work without a clear account of why we neglect or reject this literature. The social sciences are *historical* sciences and hence must respond rigorously to (historical) social and political problems. Social scientific practice entails a theoretical and historical dimension to its empirical investigations of political, social, and psychological problems.

Again, the lack of theoretical and political self-consciousness manifests itself in Stewart's unproblematic acceptance of family life as the mediating site and socialising agent *par excellence* for healthy, mature, non-destructive, etc. individual development. Take just one recent text in a literature which dwarfs the previously mentioned area of politics and personality, that is, Barrett and McIntosh's *The anti-social family* (1982). How does Stewart respond to their argument that essentially the modern bourgeois form of the family — two parent heterosexual bond with children, usually (ideally) two, living in a separate(d) household — socialises us in an anti-social way? The political structuring of the family does not easily allow for the development of *social* and open relationships, but rather anti-social individuality (Barrett & McIntosh, 1982). The family has been one of the most frequent and vociferously discussed topics in the social sciences, significantly not that much in psychology, and hence it is incumbent on Stewart to say why she does not address this literature and discussion on the family. Or at least to justify the view she holds about the family, because she does hold a view (unacknowledged). The family is hardly a neutral terrain.

The criticisms which I have levelled at Stewart's argument thus far are not meant as some kind of underhand intimidation by bemoaning the absence of scholarship on this particular issue; but rather that in 'a journal of studies in the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences' — *Theoria* — one would expect a serious commitment to the advancement of scholarship and at the same time, especially in an area like this, hopefully the possibility of some improved political practice. It is therefore argued that whether we

(primarily social scientists—and Stewart's article is within that domain) like it or not, we cannot defiantly or ignorantly avoid the *history* of a problem (eg.—the 'great divide'), and the literature and discussions which have accompanied the theoretical and practical work pertaining to the particular problem at hand.

The final comment that I would like to make refers to Stewart's naive and one might argue, offensive characterisation of (black) South African political history. For example, Stewart says:

> 'Urban blacks enjoy the spin-off of a western technological society (an efficient infrastructure, goods and services of high standard).' (p.6)
> '. . . they' (whites in South Africa) 'have experienced the loyalty of black employees and their impressive adaptability to new ways, new languages, new social and industrial demands.' (p. 6)
> 'Constructive individuals try to set progress in motion again, but destructive individuals (black and white) are locked in an invisible battle of envy and greed.' (p. 7)
> 'Paternalism, originally an *appropriate* response to the black/white situation, has been unfairly discredited.' (p. 7—emphasis in original)
> And finally, 'If there were no blacks in South Africa, whites would still have achieved a high standard of living, as they have done elsewhere, because of their technological know-how. It is out of this heritage of recorded history that the white man has been able to carry technological advancement further and further. The black man is now beginning to record his history.' (p. 8)

These statements are not taken out of context. They form part of the consistent attitude which runs through Stewart's analysis. Some of these statements about South African history and politics are plainly incorrect, and worse, at times politically reactionary and socially elitist. Now these are very harsh and damning judgments and I do not make them for any other reason than a serious and committed concern with promoting scholarship and subsequent practice in areas of a political and social nature which face us in South Africa on a daily basis. I do not think that Stewart's article has advanced our understanding and action in this regard. My point is stronger in that I have tried to show that her argument is academically incoherent (Hindess, 1977) and politically regressive.

I don't doubt that Stewart intends a positive contribution to the social and political problems which she sees South Africa facing at the moment. For example, 'It' (her approach in her article) 'is not a "middle path" but rather, a stereoscopic view of two opposites into something which might lessen the negative aspects and enhance the positive aspects of difference and inequality.' (p. 1) However, there seems to be an important distinction between what people *think they are doing,* and what in fact they *are doing.* I have tried to show that in some senses Stewart thinks she is offering a liberal form of what Webster (1982) calls 'pragmatic realism', and in fact ends up

offering a reactionary and elitist political and personal practice. My main concern is to try to demonstrate that she may not have ended up promoting such a position — implicitly, and at times explicitly — had she attended to the current debates and literature in the field in which she intervenes. On the other hand Stewart may be fully aware of the consequences of the political position she has adopted and then my criticisms are even more pertinent.

In conclusion, my intention in this brief reply was primarily *critical,* that is, to challenge the substance and scholarship of Stewart's argument. I think this is perfectly in order in that she presents her argument in a public journal of the social sciences. The onus is not on me, but rather on Stewart and/or the editors of *Theoria,* if they so wish, to *substantively* 'correct' the political and epistemological misconceptions which abound in Stewart's article. And as I have tried to show there are many, and some which I have not directly addressed here. For example, her notion and presentation of psychoanalysis; and the form of government she proposes to deal with the 'great divide'; etc. Incidentally, some of my own work — published and unpublished — has been an attempt at a social scientific analysis of the articulation of political, social and economic practices with individual development and human attributes. However, I have intervened here critically, not substantively.

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