# THEORIA

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THE

NATAL WITNESS

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APART FROM an issue in 1960, this is the first time in eleven years that *Theoria* has been published without the wise and, on occasion, invigoratingly firm guidance of Professor Christina van Heyningen. She exercised her talent, as literary editor, for a longer period than anyone who has been connected with our journal since it began to appear in 1947. We take pleasure in thanking her for the depth of interest and the hours of care she gave to a pursuit where she has always moved spiritedly: the free exchange of comment on those subjects which are close to the life every human being knows at first hand. In some ways she was able to continue in *Theoria* what she had done for the independent periodical, *Trek*, of Cape origin and for a while well-known in all parts of the country.

We also wish to recognize how Professor van Heyningen advanced the healthy growth of *Theoria*. In 1958 it was at last possible to print two issues instead of the solitary annual volume. And before that, our ever-creative predecessor had made room for a series of letters which took up arguable points in articles or attacked them without reserve. This became a very valuable section of our pages and it is one which we would not willingly lose. Recent challenging articles have met with little response. Efforts to persuade (or even coerce!) likely correspondents have not been rewarded as we hoped. May we suggest to readers that they would pay due tribute to Professor van Heyningen's distinction as an editor by helping this feature of *Theoria* not merely to survive but to spread out and blossom again?

THE EDITORS

# THE COURAGE TO CHOOSE*

*by* D. V. COWEN

YOU WHO HAVE GRADUATED today have put behind you one important stretch of a road which winds uphill to the very end, and you are about to resume your journey on your own. It is right on such an occasion that you should pause to examine the equipment with which you will make your own unique encounter with reality; and remind yourselves of what may be needed if you are to make the encounter as authentic and complete human beings.

Our age puts a heavy burden upon the young; for we are witnessing profound changes in almost every field of human endeavour. Long established values and, indeed, whole systems of thought, are under attack and many have dissolved without being replaced by others. There is, it would seem, a parallel between our own times and the later years of the Roman Empire; pleasure-seeking and material progress mark that age as they do ours, yet—to quote St Gregory—while superficially the world flourished, 'in men's hearts it had already withered'. Similarly, today, despite man's technological and scientific achievements, there is inner doubt and tension and an almost desperate groping for values and meaningfulness which mock at the achievements themselves. Men are starved for a new understanding, a sense of direction, and a belief in the worth-whileness of their daily lives.

Many of our ablest contemporaries are convinced that in every sphere of man's encounter with reality there is no room for absolutes; everything is said to be in flux; all values and concepts are seen as relative, provisional and ephemeral. For an influential school of existentialists, human life is absurd—'a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing'.

I would like to put before you another point of view. While it is necessary to debunk false absolutes, there are, I believe, firm principles of absolute and universal validity which make the human encounter with reality possible and meaningful. If we have the gumption to undertake the search, we can find what Paul Tillich has called 'guiding stars in the ocean of relativities'.

There are of course many functions of the human spirit, many fields of human endeavour—among them, for example, the cognitive, the ethical, the aesthetic, the political, the religious, and so on. And

*Address to the Congregation of the University of Natal at the Graduation Ceremony held in Pietermaritzburg on Friday, 25th March, 1966.

I could wish it that there were time for detailed discussion; because in most, if not all, of these areas it is possible to push analysis to the point of confrontation with the absolute. But there is not time; so I must be selective. I shall therefore concentrate on one field—but a vital one—namely, the courage to make decisions and the principles of ethical judgment which should guide us in making them.

At the outset, however, it is necessary to make a preliminary point so that we may keep our feet on the ground and find perspective. I would stress the importance of becoming involved and of finding meaningfulness in the particular environment where birth or choice or destiny has placed you. I am not, of course, suggesting a myopic and exclusive nationalism. For one thing, we in South Africa need to look beyond our borders and to take account of the world outside, if only because some of the major roots of our being are European, and we can be saved from withering only by allowing the life-giving sap to flow freely from its source. In a sense, therefore, internationalism means keeping the life-lines intact.

But, in seeking to avoid a parochial and chauvinistic nationalism, we must be on guard against the opposite extreme—namely, a rootless cosmopolitanism. In one of the most wistful of his philosophical essays, Sartre observes how in New York you can get your bearings at a glance. 'You are', he says, 'on the East side at the corner of 52nd Street and Lexington Avenue. But this spatial precision is not accompanied by any precision of feeling. . . . I am simply anybody anywhere. . . . No valid reason justifies my presence in this place rather than in any other. . . . You never lose your way and you are always lost'. In these phrases Sartre—whose own roots are deeply and authentically French—has captured the desolateness of the cosmopolitan without roots: simply anybody anywhere, nobody everywhere.

And so I would say to you, if you are called upon to live your lives in Durban or Port Elizabeth or Pietermaritzburg or in any other smaller and humbler South African town or village, sink roots and try to find the universal by involvement in the particular around you; for you will find the universal in no other way. Do not scorn the humdrum and the familiar things about you, however disenchanting and unglamorous. Don't waste yourselves by fretting always to be elsewhere in some exciting place where, hopefully, you may fulfil your promise. Your meaningful opportunities are constantly at hand wherever you are. Your meaningful decisions will always be made within the context of the here and the now.

Nor need you feel shy or inferior about being homely—rooted, so to speak, in your own cabbage patch. When a South African poet like Uys Krige writes of the Cape Peninsula, where he was

born and raised, he speaks a language redolent of the local soil, but it can be universally understood; and this is so because he writes with local involvement and enthusiasm and insight. He has found and articulated the universal in the particular. I commend to you his poem *Vishoring* for a vivid example of what I mean. Totius, describing a mother's grief for the death of her child, uses half the length of a poem to evoke an awareness of the physical setting of the family homestead, 'verlore-klein in die Trekkersland'; and the picture comes through, even to a stranger. South African literature is full of such examples, and many will of course occur to you.

The point is that every true work of art expresses a particular piece of finite reality in such a way that an ultimate or universal reality shines through, in spite of all changes in tastes and styles of artistic creation. It is for this reason that great works of art have an inexhaustible meaning and are capable of universal appeal. The same is true of every moral decision that has captured the imagination of men. Socrates, for example, speaks and acts for all men with most immediacy when he speaks and acts as an Athenian facing up to specifically Athenian problems.

Here in South Africa all the major problems—political, moral, scientific, artistic, managerial, stand out in stark relief. The challenge is tremendous and exciting. General Smuts once said that he was constantly amazed that the experiment of planting Western culture should ever have been made in this remote corner of Africa and he was amazed, too, at its capacity for survival. Civilisation anywhere is rather like a patch of garden in a jungle. It must be constantly tended if it is not to be choked by weeds and encompassed by the chaos about it. It can be maintained only by real persons possessing the kind of courage and moral integrity about which I am to talk today.

And so I come to my main theme; the courage to affirm one's own essential being by facing hard problems and hard facts and taking moral decisions in the light of principle.

Many go through life without any committal, without any values which they have, so to speak, internalised and made their own; without the strength of will to face where the danger lies and put their beliefs and principles to the test. They are tossed about like corks on a sea. They remain at the threshold of the big things—the recognition or rejection of absolutes, atheism or belief, communism or capitalism, and the possibility of positions in between—without either daring to enter or go away. They never acquire any identity or any integrity.

This is a poor state to be in, and it brings no joy. Indeed, it may be said that one's education has failed if it has not developed

mastery over the will, as well as discipline of the mind. Let me give you an elementary illustration drawn from a field which may still be fresh in your own experience. There always comes a moment when a university student confronts a problem unaided. He has then to bend his will and focus his attention to the exclusion of all else. If he does not finally acquire a decisive insight, his education has failed. What he has learnt, he has learnt by rote. He may have acquired familiarity with neat formulas and other men's words, but the process has been wooden and mechanical. Nothing has been internalised. If, on the other hand, he succeeds, he will experience the exhilaration of having been responsible for a discovered truth, of having affirmed his own being. What he achieves is seen to be the product of his own deliberate willing, his own application, his refusal to be distracted or hurried, the fruit of the undivided attention of his mind and will to the radical exclusion of all external forces. This calls for a particular kind of courage akin to the courage needed to make moral decisions; and it is about that particular kind of courage that I would now speak.

Poets and philosophers and theologians have long recognised that the making of decisions calls for a special kind of courage which has a central place among the virtues. Plato devoted his dialogue, Laches, to the topic. Paul Tillich wrote one of his most compelling books, *The Courage To Be*, on just this subject. And some of you may recall the lines of James Russell Lowell:

> Then it is the brave man chooses
> While the coward stands aside,
> Till the multitude make virtue
> Of the faith they had denied.

What is there about this business of decision-making that has held the attention of philosophers from Plato to the present day? The word decision comes from the Latin 'caedere' meaning 'to cut'; a decision involves the cutting away of other possibilities. It involves making a choice, and only brave men choose. Let us see why this is so.

Choices face all of us daily. Some of them are big, others small. Many of them are comparatively easy; the social mores with which we have grown up, conventions and laws which have become second nature, may supply the answer as soon as the problem is faced. But, sooner or later, every one of us is confronted with a major moral decision; and for the first time we may find that we get no decisive guidance from the books of wisdom or the advice of friends or even from the church.

In these circumstances, many run away and refuse even to face the problem, in which event they merit the indictment written by

Charles Péguy: 'The worst of partialities is to withhold oneself, the worst ignorance is not to act, the worst lie is to steal away'. The refusal to run away in these circumstances, the determination to face up to the problem, to look at the facts as they are, calmly and honestly, is itself an achievement. It demands courage. The very word reveals something of what is needed, for it comes from the French 'coeur', the heart or personal centre of one's being.

Having got as far as facing the problem, the more sophisticated may turn to a philosophy of self-interest and attempt to assess what course of action will bring the most personal advantage; or, adopting a more pragmatic approach, they may weigh their own personal advantage and try at the same time to accommodate it with the least disruption to the society in which they live. But there is something unsatisfying and inconclusive about such calculations. They do not speak with unconditional validity. The facts too often outsmart the cleverest calculator. As a Greek Cypriot leader said recently to a Prime Minister of England: 'Events move so fast today, and on such a global scale, that no man is any longer clever enough to calculate the expedient thing to do'. The more devout may turn to the Ten Commandments or the Sermon on the Mount, or other canons of other great religions; and yet find no immediate, tailormade answer. Even prayer may fail to bring a ready answer written up in the sky in neon lights; for things just don't happen that way.

Why is it that moral decisions are often so difficult? There are, I think, two fundamental reasons why this is so. First, moral decisions are often complex in the sense that we may be faced with a conflict of duties, with the often contrary pull of two divergent rules each of which is relevant to the situation. A doctor, for example, may have to decide whether to conceal the truth from a dying patient because of compassion and the desire to avoid further hurt; or disclose the truth out of respect for the human dignity of his patient. Or, again, consider the awful conflict that faced a Jewish mother with an infant in her arms, hiding in a cellar with her family and a number of friends while Nazi troopers searched the rooms above: was it her duty, for the sake of the others, to smother and kill the infant when it was about to cry and disclose their whereabouts?

No commentary, no set of books can give the answer in specific concrete situations such as these—can give the answer, for example, to you as the doctor with this particular man as your patient. You must decide. You must affirm your own essential being.

Secondly, rules of conduct, such as the Ten Commandments or the great truths of the Sermon on the Mount, are expressed in general terms, but moral decisions have always to be taken in the

context of a specific concrete situation. Indeed, in a sense, rules for action are a contradiction in terms, for rules are general and abstract and action is always concerned with the concrete and the existential. In this regard you will recall that earlier I said that it is necessary to debunk false absolutes. What I had in mind was this. It is impossible to derive by any process of argument or reason a detailed set of rules adequate for all the concrete situations of real life. The variables of time and space alone rule out the possibility. The sort of thinking which would attempt to give you a slot-machine facility for solving all problems by logical deduction from a few simple premises such as 'Thou shalt not kill' or 'Thou shalt not bear false witness' has long been discredited. And rightly so. Only disservice to the idea of the absolute can be done by those who fail to recognise that alongside of our recognition of the importance of absolutes, we must come to terms with the facts of life and the relativities of time and space. No amount of rational deduction from first principles can ever dispense with the qualities of courage and wisdom, which are matters of the heart and the will grappling with existential facts, and not merely matters of the intellect.

Paul Tillich has summed up the dilemma in this way: The rules of the Decalogue and of the Sermon on the Mount, he says, are often both too general and yet not general enough. This is the language of paradox but it is very illuminating. We have seen why it is that rules of conduct may be inadequate for the concrete existential situation; they are too general. But when Tillich goes on to say they are not general enough, what more general rule or rules did he have in mind? He offers, and I would offer to you, as the first step in ethical judgment, the Kantian principle: Never treat a person as a thing. Never use a person as a means to an end. The source of moral conscience, in other words, is the encounter of one human being with another. We can use everything in the world. Suddenly we encounter a person whom we recognise to be a person—a being who says without words by the mere fact of his existence: 'Up to this point and not beyond it. You cannot use me as a thing, as a means to an end'. At this point there is mutual acknowledgment. I myself, encountering somebody whom I acknowledge as a person, demand to be acknowledged as a person by him also, and this demand is as unconditional as is the demand on me to treat him as a person.

If you use a person as a thing, not only do you deny his humanity but you abuse your own as well. Indeed, once you recognise another as being a person like yourself, you cannot treat him as a thing without inner contradiction and a sense of guilt. Of course, the cynic may ask: 'Why should I not destroy myself; why should I not deny my own humanity by treating people as things?' The

question is a valuable one for it throws one back to ultimates—to one's experience, if one is fortunate enough to have it, of the sacred or the holy; the sacred or the holy being that which grips you as being of ultimate concern. It it be true that you are given your life in trust to develop your faculties to the full of their potential, if it be true that all may be lost by abusing this trust, then you may stand in awe before the prospect of self-destruction.

The Kantian imperative is the first of two great principles, both extremely general, which Tillich offers; and the second principle, equally important, is equally general. It is the great principle of love or 'agape' in the Christian sense, which is capable of self-sacrifice for the person loved.

Now I would like to stress that there is nothing sloppy or sentimental or unpractical about this thinking. Love, for example, includes, while it transforms, justice, which is giving to people their due according to their merits. There would be no point in telling a person that you love him very much but that you cannot see your way clear to be just towards him. Nor is love some vague sentiment divorced from the facts of a concrete situation. In this regard it has a particular characteristic which Tillich calls 'listening love', a readiness to face all the relevant facts honestly and in the stillness of humility. Nor is one called upon to approach each great decision afresh, ignoring the wisdom of the ages. But, and here is the essential point, after you have consulted the books of authority; after you have taken into account conventions and traditions and the best advice you can get; after you have faced the situation with 'listening love', you may feel absolutely and unconditionally compelled to follow a line of your own because you know it to be right. And it is here that your highest courage is needed. You will not lightly abandon accepted ways. You will not lightly reject the wisdom of the past, you should not take decisions blindfold, leaping in, so to speak, in the dark. But if, with the best light that is in you, you feel impelled to take a decision because, in Luther's phrase, you can do no other, then the only moral course is for you to affirm you own being, your own identity, by taking that decision. Your action might of course invite personal tragedy; and you may know it. But he who takes such a decision in honesty and sincerity may be comforted by the fact that there seems to be a quality whereby life accepts the truly courageous, because by affirming their own being they seek to identify themselves with 'being' itself.

I began by calling attention to the difficulties of our age. I would like to end by emphasising the excitement and vital promise which it holds. No doubt we live in dangerous times, full, too, of suffering and anxiety for many; no doubt much of the old order is passing never to return; but it would be a mistake to think that a new and

better world is powerless to be born. Surely no one could believe that, who has seen, as many of us here have seen, the rebirth of Coventry Cathedral—that joyful and glorious symbol of reconciliation and hope; or West Berlin risen from the ashes; or the beauty of a modern jet aircraft in flight; or the annual miracle of spring in places where winters are hard—as in Basutoland or the American Middle West. There is still great excellence in the world, in music and art, in literature and science; still great opportunities in every field; the power of regeneration and of human invention is everywhere manifest. Already it is possible to discern in many functions of the human spirit signs of a new synthesis—and this is especially true, and I believe most hopefully true, in the current ecumenical movement in religion. For us in South Africa, too, somewhere ahead there beckons a new order—a new synthesis. It probably will not be exclusively black or exclusively white; but whatever the source of its component elements, it will be distinctively South African; and it may well be great. In the making of a greater South Africa you will play a decisive part if only you have the courage to choose; and to do so with justice and with love.

# THE STUDY OF HISTORY AND POLITICAL SCIENCE TODAY *

*by* M. F. PRESTWICH

IT IS A WELL ESTABLISHED academic custom that a new—or as in my case, fairly new—Professor should be submitted to the ordeal of delivering a public Inaugural Lecture, somewhat analogous to the ordeals which, in many primitive tribes, mark the stripling's entrance into manhood. On that occasion his learned colleagues may enjoy one of what Jeremy Bentham called the pleasures of malice—the pleasure of noting his superficiality, his abysmal deeps of ignorance, his deficiencies in oratory and power of reasoning. Then, too, his students may savour their sweet revenge for all that he has done or will do to them, as they observe the uncouth flounderings and arch whimsicalities to which he is reduced by his pathetic attempts to woo a non-captive audience. There the lay public may confortably conclude that here is yet another specimen of Belloc's 'remote and ineffectual don'. The purpose, I take it, is to ensure that he will not become too big for his boots, by luring or coercing him into a public display of his academic nakedness. And the perils of an inaugural lecture—or indeed of any lecture—may be direr still. I recall with trepidation the fate of the ninth-century philosopher Johannes Scotus Erigena, who, according to a tradition preserved by the twelfth-century William of Malmesbury, so exasperated his audience at a lecture that they rose and slew him with their styluses—the sharp-pointed instruments used for inscribing letters on wax tablets. I bethink me also of Nicolas Cop, son of an eminent Swiss physician at the French Court, who was compelled to flee for his life after his Inaugural Lecture (suspected of political and religious heresy) as Rector of the University of Paris in 1533; and of Ernest Renan, whose Inaugural Lecture as Professor of Hebrew in 1862 led to his instant suspension from his Chair. Perhaps I may hope that Natal fever, super-imposed upon kindly good humour of the public of Pietermaritzburg (together with the merciful difference between the modern fountain pen or biro and the ancient stylus) may save me from the fate of Erigena or Cop. The fate of Renan, however, may remain a nearer peril.

As a preliminary to this ordeal, it is at once a duty and a delight

* *Inaugural lecture of the Professor of History and Political Science in the University of Natal.*

to pay an all-too-inadequate but richly merited tribute to my predecessors in this Chair. Alan Frederick Hattersley, who had the longest tenure of the office, established the foundations of the Department so well and truly that it would take a most uncommonly inept or undutiful successor to shake them. Further, as my immediate predecessor remarked in his Inaugural Lecture in 1959, 'he has made Natal's past live vividly for us. Natal will owe him a perpetual debt of gratitude for work which must of necessity be part of the equipment of any future historian of Natal and of Southern Africa generally'. I cannot improve, and would not try to improve, on those words. But I would add a little to them. I would pay tribute, for example, to the high standards of rigorous accuracy which have marked all his work, and to the mellow, genial and humane spirit which has equally inspired it all. And I would like to add a more personal note, and speak of the special bond which exists between us (if he will allow me to say so) in three respects. First, it was he who with an audacity perhaps not easily paralleled in his otherwise blameless career, first imported me into the University of Natal—or as it then was, the Natal University College. Secondly, we are both North of England men. And thirdly, we are both products of the same Alma Mater.

Arthur Keppel Jones and Edgar Harry Brookes in turn succeeded to the Chair, and each alike worthily maintained the traditions established by the first incumbent, whilst each added to the tradition some individual element derived from his own special, stimulating gifts and personality. And with regard to the latter, may I in passing mention what I trust may be regarded as a most auspicious circumstance, and that is that the year in which it falls to me as his successor to deliver my Inaugural Lecture sees the completion, and I trust will shortly see the publication, of that single-volume History of Natal which he hinted at to us in *his* Inaugural Lecture of 1959, and to which he has devoted so much zeal, energy and scholarship?

It has been my singular good fortune to know, and serve under, each of my three predecessors, and I count it a most happy circumstance that not only are all three still active in scholarly work, but that one of them is present tonight. My highest hope and my great endeavour in my incumbency will be to live up to the standards which they have set.

To pay tribute on such an occasion as this to one's predecessors is usual; it is perhaps less usual to pay tribute to the Department, to the Headship of which one has succeeded, or to the University to which the Department belongs; yet I feel that it is proper for me to do both.

As to the former, may I say that not the least valuable of the achievements of my predecessors has been to create a Department

of which (I think I may truly say) the teaching members have all shown (and been free to show) marked individuality in their approach to and their interpretation of their subjects, and in which none the less this individuality has been perfectly consistent with harmony and mutual respect, a sort of unity in difference which is not invariably achieved in University Departments? To this all my colleagues, past and present, have contributed, but the chief credit must go to the three men who in succession have administered the Department before me. Long may this fortunate state continue!

As to the latter—to the University—it is a duty, at once pleasant and pious, to say that I am conscious of a debt to it as deep as the debt that I owe to my own University of Cambridge. I would not go quite so far as Dryden, a Cambridge man, who, when Oxford conferred upon him an honorary degree, expressed his gratitude in these terms—

> *Oxford to him a dearer name shall be*
> *Than his own Mother University;*
> *Thebes did his green, unknowing youth engage;*
> *He chooses Athens in his riper age.—*

Thebes standing of course, in classical proverbial idiom, for all that was bucolic, earthy, commonplace, Athens for refined amenity and intellectual light. (The compliment was graceful, even if Dryden had his tongue in his cheek but it was surely mean of Dryden to phrase it thus, for his own Mother University had done him much good and no harm.) It would be unfair and untrue if I were to apply these words to my own case. But the least acknowledgement I can make is to record that colleagues and students alike have made my many years here as much a time of learning for me as of teaching, and perhaps more profitably so.

There are a number of ways sanctioned by long tradition of meeting such an occasion as this, and each has its own justification. One may select a specific topic from one's field; or one may survey the general state of learning at the time in the subject which one professes; or one may say something of one's own beliefs about one's subject or subjects, and about the spirit in which one proposes to approach one's work. I have chosen the last course, and I propose to say something tonight, with your indulgence, about what I think are some of the principal needs at the present time in the teaching of History and Political Science, with some reference, of course, to our own local circumstances. In view of the limited time at my disposal and the wide scope of my subject, I can do little more than state and to some extent explain the main principles by which I shall be guided in my incumbency of this Chair.

I begin by observing that it seems to me to be specially necessary

to re-emphasise today that both History and Political Science alike belong primarily and essentially to the humanities, to the liberal arts or studies. To many of you this may seem a mere truism—something so obvious that it is not worth saying. But a platitude has been defined as a generally acknowledged truth that nobody acts upon. Not a few historians and political scientists certainly do not show by their practice that they recognise these subjects as belonging primarily to the humanities. It was once said (quite wrongly, I believe) by Walter Pater—that all the arts aspire to the condition of music. Certainly it seems to be true today that many academic studies such as history, political science and some others seem, in the idea entertained of them by some of their professors, to aspire to the condition of the natural or exact sciences. Many such practitioners of the two subjects with which I am concerned would, I think, doubt or even deny that there is any particular significance in describing them as belonging to the humanities. And some even of those of you who have never dreamed of questioning that they do may nonetheless have no very clear conception of what this implies.

I need not, I think, trouble you with any lengthy account of the history of the meaning of the terms humanities, or *literae humaiores*, and liberal arts or studies. When used by Cicero, for example, and other classical Latin authors, the term *humanitas* meant simply the kind of intellectual culture befitting a civilised human being, and in terms of the civilisation of classical antiquity that meant primarily, if not solely, what we should call literary and philosophical studies. When the term came to be revived in the Middle Ages it tended to be contrasted with Divinity, although it is already, perhaps, contrasted also with those two mediaeval practical studies, Law and Medicine. In more modern times, with the rise of the exact sciences, that particular principle of distinction, that particular contrast, has tended to vanish, and nowadays the distinction is commonly drawn between the exact sciences and the specifically professional and technological studies on the one hand, and the humanities on the other. Most of us today would without hesitation class Divinity (almost blasphemously paradoxical as it may seem!) among the humanities, and Physics (once a part of the territory of Philosophy) among the exact sciences.

Similarly, liberal studies or arts originally meant those arts and sciences considered worthy of the attention of a free (*liber*) man, as opposed to the servile and mechanical. (Of course, a whole vanished social and political order lies behind the formulation of this distinction.) In the past century or two, the term has been used to mean those studies which (to echo the Oxford English Dictionary) are designed to promote a general enlargement and refinement of

the intellect, without being narrowly restricted to the requirements of technical or professional training. (There is, you will note, a certain parallel here with Dr Johnson's well-known definition of good breeding, as 'a general elegance of manners, without the marks of any particular trade or profession'.) For all practical purposes I think, the humanities and liberal studies may be taken as having the same meaning today.

But for our purposes today none of this goes quite far enough. After all, the exact sciences, or some of them, may enlarge and refine the intellect, and they are not always narrowly directed to technical or professional training. It is necessary to particularise somewhat more definitely what are the distinctive marks of the humanities. And one of them, possibly the most distinctive, has been well defined, in my opinion, by the Regius Professor of History at Oxford, in his own highly interesting Inaugural Lecture, to which, as some of you may have noted, I am already indebted.

In his view, which I share, their distinctive mark is that their ultimate appeal is directed to a lay public. I use the adjective 'lay', or corresponding noun 'laity', to denote, of course, not those who are not clergy, but those who are not professional or specialist practitioners and students of the particular subject concerned. A humane subject, such as Professor Trevor Roper and I consider History primarily to be, finds its ultimate justification as much in its appeal to, and value for, people who are not themselves historians or teachers of history, and who have no intention of becoming so, as for actual or intending professionals. It is not merely a virtue in the humane studies—it is a requisite and necessary virtue—that they should interest, stimulate, enlighten and—let us hope—instruct men and women who are not trained in their special methods and techniques. In Professor Trevor Roper's own words:

> The fact that a branch of physics or mathematics may be quite beyond the interest or comprehension of an educated layman in no way invalidates it, because the validity of such subjects does not depend on lay interest or lay comprehension. Even if no layman can understand them, they will still be taught by professionals to professionals from generation to generation . . . But the humane subjects are quite different from this. They have no direct scientific use; they owe their title to existence to the interest and comprehension of the laity; they exist primarily not for the training of professionals but for the education of laymen; and therefore if they once lose touch with the lay mind, they are rightly condemned to perish.

To say this is not, of course, to deny that much of the work involved

in ascertaining historical fact is utterly dependent on highly specialised techniques, some at least of which are of a scientific or quasi-scientific character. Such are, for example, the evaluation of historical evidence, or the authentication (or otherwise) of the documentary raw material of history, such as mediaeval charters or early Papal diplomas; or the process by which historians, arguing from known facts, can sometimes deduce facts hitherto unknown. Nor is it to deny the immense contribution to history that has long been made, and is increasingly being made, by studies which approach much nearer than history itself to the character of exact sciences. Thus in his monumental studies of twelfth-century rural France, Marc Bloch, perhaps the greatest mediaevalist of our days, and incidentally a victim of the Nazi concentration camp, drew on an immense range and variety of material for his investigation, much of it quite remote from what had hitherto been commonly considered the proper material of history. Economics, sociology, anthropology, psychology, statistics, even certain rather specialised applications of botany, have all made in recent years invaluable contributions to historical knowledge and understanding, and some of them have opened up whole new prospects in the study. Very recently, the study of population figures, as exact and scientific as the often imperfect nature of the data permits, of climatic changes, of fluctuations in prices and wages, and of the history of disease have cast much light on dark places in social history and to some extent political history too. They may be expected to cast much more in the future.

No, I certainly do not wish to depreciate the value of these technical contributions. Nor would I cry down the work of those rather specialised historians who can hardly be said to write for a lay public, for their minute researches into such topics as mediaeval administration, or how every Member of the British Parliament in the eighteenth century was elected and how he voted in Parliament are indispensable for giving historians of more general interest an accurate understanding of their subject. How many long current theories have foundered on the rocks of a vast accumulation of hard facts of this kind! The works of the school of the late Sir Lewis Namier and the late Richard Pares — almost unreadable, many of them, to those who are not specialists in eighteenth-century English history —have completely transformed the professed historian's understanding of party in that age, of the rôles and relations of King and Parliament, and consequently of some of the foundations of the constitutional development of the English-speaking world of the last two and a half centuries. In much the same way, the work in recent decades mainly of American historians, laboriously accumulating often seemingly petty detail, has radically changed our

picture of the nature and causes of the American Revolution.

There are, in fact, as many legitimate ways of writing history as there are of writing tribal lays, according to a poet whom to quote gives peculiar pleasure to a Jingo like myself, Rudyard Kipling—

*There are nine and sixty ways*
*Of producing tribal lays*
*And every single one of them is right.*

But the value of these more specialised and technical studies is circumscribed in its range and they are almost sterile until they are absorbed into the work of historians who write for a lay public. Even today the views of the ordinary man, who is not a professed historian, on the political life of eighteenth-century England belong to the pre-Namier age, and in this particular instance at any rate such inadequate knowledge of history has its distorting effects even on our contemporary political outlook. Though some of our grimmer historical technologists are pained by what they regard as his distressing amateurism, Macaulay surely had the root of the matter in him when he aspired (successfully) to rival the popular appeal of the fashionable novel, even though we must regretfully note that his success imposed some erroneous views of history on many generations of readers. But it is not clear that if Macaulay had written only for a more specialised public his deficiencies would have been fewer and less harmful, whilst it is surely very clear that what is truly valuable in his work would have been much less fructifying than it has been.

I throw out in passing an idea that has often occurred to me recently, and that is that perhaps we are in a phase at the moment when historians should divert some of their energy and skill from the discovery of new knowledge, and devote a little more of it to putting the discoveries of recent years into a form in which they can be more readily absorbed by the educated layman. It has been said that the good statesman should be ahead of ordinary public opinion, but not so far ahead of it as to lose touch with it altogether. Similarly, though it is right that professional historians should be ahead of the lay public, it is unfortunate when they cannot keep contact with it. It would be well if in every field of historical study there were some well-qualified historians at work making the results of research and specialization more readily available for absorption by the lay reader. Are we not, perhaps, at present in a phase in which the great refinement of specialist and technical equipment, the increasing exploitation of great masses of the raw material of historical knowledge, and the organization of research almost along the lines of an industrial enterprise, have produced an enormous volume of new knowledge which has not become part of the intellectual awareness of the educated laity?

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And if that is so, is it not perhaps desirable, not indeed to call a halt to this work of accumulation, but that professed historians should give rather more attention to putting our recent gains into circulation, and rather less to heaping up new riches to lie sterile in the vaults of a sort of intellectual Fort Knox?

History, then, in my belief, belongs to the humanities, and it is the distinctive note of the humanities that their specific objective is to interest and enlighten a lay public. But I think we may go a little deeper. Buried away in one of the prose writings of Wordsworth, is a short passage which, though intended for a quite different purpose, seems to me to be most admirably applicable to define the ultimate aim of the humanities, and indeed of many other things beside. It is possible that even some serious students of literature are not acquainted with this passage, for it occurs in the postscript to the 1835 edition of Wordsworth's poems, and it is concerned not with literature but with public affairs. In that year, Wordsworth, in common with all England, was greatly concerned with what is commonly called the New Poor Law; more officially, the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1835. From many different points of view,—from that of social history, constitutional history, and the development of entirely new conceptions of administration—this was one of the most important legislative measures of the nineteenth century in England. In essence, it was the application of a bitter medicine to the admitted evils of pauperism, in place of the more easy-going and sometimes more human, but also more inefficient, old law for the relief of poverty. The measure evoked fierce controversy which cut across all party lines, and Wordsworth, by now a Tory, in common with many other Tories and many Radicals, was disturbed by what he regarded as its callous indifference to many of the claims of humanity, and pleaded for a more imaginatively humane and less coldly scientific approach to the problem. 'The principle contended for', he wrote, 'makes the gift of life more valuable, and has, it may be hoped, led to the conclusion that its legitimate operation is to make men worthier of that gift'. It is not Wordsworth's prose at its best, but isolate and adapt the crucial words. They are surely words of gold.

'To make the gift of life more valuable, and to make men worthier of that gift.' Can we better define the proper aim and ultimate value of the humanities? Of course, one may equally claim—I would myself—that we have here an equally valid statement of the proper end of political action and political thought, and many studies not technically classified among the humanities may serve the same purpose. But it is, I believe, among studies the special function of the humanities to subserve *equally* these two ends: to enrich the quality of life, and thereby make the gift of life more

valuable; to refine and enlarge the mind, 'to widen' (in Dr Johnson's words) 'the bounds of sensibility', and thereby to make men worthier of the gift. And if my profession of faith is valid, does it not strengthen the claim that history, in common with the other humanities, should be so presented as to enlist the intelligent interest of the educated lay public? To confine it to the task of teaching specialists, who in turn will look no further than to the rearing of a further brood of possibly yet more minute specialists, seems to me to be analogous to sinning against the light.

I turn now to consider Political Science, and at once, in addressing what is (as regards that particular study) predominantly a lay audience, I run into a possible mis-apprehension as to the actual meaning of the term. Science is one of those abstract words of long history which has developed its meaning in the course of centuries. The great prestige and the phenomenal growth of the natural and exact sciences has meant that nowadays when we speak of science we commonly think only of them, or of some study which follows the same methods as they do. But it was not always so. What we now call science used to be called natural philosophy, and Hegel notes somewhere with approval that in early nineteenth-century England a barometer was called a philosophical instrument. Science (*scientia*) formerly meant any organised system of thought or knowledge, art (*ars*) a practical activity based on theoretical knowledge; so that the mediaeval scholastics, for example, quite properly and logically spoke of the *science* of theology and the *art* of medicine, and this older usage has, as a matter of fact, left traces in our ordinary language. In the academic sphere it has survived in the term 'political science', in the Cambridge Tripos which is still called the Moral Sciences Tripos, and also perhaps in the widely current phrase the social sciences. I use the term political science in its older, inclusive sense, which is traditional in English custom, to include political philosophy or theory as well as those more factual studies such as the study of government, constitutions, the machinery of international relations, the new and rapidly developing study of psephology (the study of elections and voting behaviour) and so on. But modern usage is not uniform. In some languages, I believe it is customary to reserve political science exclusively for the more practical and factual studies. The whole question of terminology has been further complicated by the twentieth-century trend, especially marked perhaps in America, to convert the study of politics into a science, or a complex of sciences, similar in character to the exact sciences. This trend has been perhaps in some measure promoted by misunderstanding of the traditional implications of the word 'science'. In what I have to say, I shall be concerned principally with the speculative and theoretical rather than the

practical side of the subject, for it is there that my interest and such knowledge as I have mainly lie.

I am afraid, however, that I have not quite done with matters of terminology. Even in the speculative branch of the subject, there are certain variations of usage. The terms political philosophy, political theory and political thought are all in use. Often they are used as interchangeable. Personally, I usually find it helpful to reserve the term political philosophy for the great systems, purporting to give a complete account of, for example, the nature and purposes of political organization, and to supply the answers to such questions as, for instance, 'Why should any sane adult obey anyone else?' in terms of a complete philosophical system. Plato, Aristotle, St Thomas Aquinas, Hobbes and Hegel thus appear to me as political philosophers in the full sense. Political theory may usefully be given, in my view, a somewhat wider connotation, including political philosophy, but also including the work of men like Rousseau and Burke, and perhaps Machiavelli, profoundly interested in political speculation, but not systematic philosophers. Political thought I regard as the widest term of all. Shakespeare is full of it; so are Halifax, Swift, Johnson, Hazlitt, Cobbett, Sidney Smith, Walter Bagehot, to name but a tiny selection of those who have some extremely valuable reflections on and insights into politics to offer us, but whom no one would be disposed to classify as political theorists, still less political philosophers in any formal sense.

Not very long ago, in 1956 to be exact, in his introduction to a volume called *Philosophy, Politics and Society*, Mr Peter Laslett announced 'for the moment, at any rate, political philosophy is dead'. More cautiously, a few years later, Miss Murdoch said that 'political philosophy has almost perished'. But a second volume edited by Mr Peter Laslett in 1962 struck a somewhat different note, and more recently still Professor d'Entrèves has discerned signs of a revival of political philosophy. It would be an exaggeration to claim that

> The bright seraphim in burning row
> Their loud uplifted angel-trumpets blow

in celebration of a glorious resurrection, but at least a few cautious toots have hinted that a resurrection may be taking place. For my own part, I propose to speak and act as if the reports of the decease, as Mark Twain said about the reports of his own death, are greatly exaggerated.

It was, I think, the French philosopher and mathematician Henri Poincaré who noted that whereas the natural sciences seem to know clearly what they are about, the social sciences have come to be almost entirely preoccupied with questions of their aim, their

methodology, and their proper scope. Certainly political scientists have lately been much obsessed with questions of this nature. I cannot but feel that this has had a rather blighting effect on their true and fruitful activity. Sometimes contemporary political science seems to me to be almost in the position of the centipede, who

> . . . was happy quite
> Until the Toad in fun,
> Asked 'Pray, which leg goes after which?'
> Which worked him up to such a pitch
> He lay distracted in a ditch
> Debating how to run.

Among many different conceptions of the proper character of political science at the present time there are two in particular of which neither, I am strongly disposed to wish, will come to prevail. The first is most strongly entrenched in America, and it is an attitude of mind which some have called 'scientism'.

Two of the leading names in this group are the late Professor Charles Merriam and Professor H. D. Laswell. The two principal marks of this school are, first, their belief that a method which they regard as scientific, and the development of a specialised and highly technical vocabulary, will make political science an exact or technical science; and secondly, that from time to time before their minds there floats a vision of the new political scientist as a sort of Platonic guardian, moulding society, through his guidance, or manipulation, of its rulers along the lines indicated as desirable by the new science. Perhaps the fullest readily accessible statement comes from a book by Professor de Grazia, first published in 1952, revised and republished in 1962.

> The language of political science will continue to change . . .
>
> . . . A professional, operationally oriented language of political science is not far in the offing. It will take from logic, mathematics, sociology, and psychology, though probably not much from economics, which is also in the throes of moving from deductive to inductive formulations of its problems . . . .
>
> . . . It may be hoped that the new language of political science will be aided by a new mathematics of the social sciences . . . .
>
> . . . The future may well see a political mathematics, or, more likely, several types of social science mathematics, one or more of which will be adaptable to mathematical representations of political phenomena . . . .

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> . . . The machinery of political science will have become more complicated and prominent. Ten years ago, few political scientists had desk calculators and even fewer handled their data by means of punched-card counting and sorting machines. Within the next couple of decades, however, the rapid development of computer technology and audio-visual equipment will intrude upon the premises of political science with mechanically aided translation systems, automated teaching equipment, programmed textbooks, television classes, computer simulating systems that 'act out' possibilities of action in the real world, data-analysis computing systems, and especially information-retrieval systems to screen, sort, and provide classes and items of data on order. In some cases, the professor's office will come to resemble an engineer's cab . . . .
>
> . . . many political scientists, . . . came into political science for the good that might be done the world. If such a person is incapable of any alliance whatsoever with science, he will be edged out of the profession. Insofar as he can understand, employ, and adapt behavioral science to his problems of political action, he will have reason to applaud the changes that are in prospect. For the dependency of the world of action upon the work of social science promises to increase continuously. It has already gone farther than most people realize. A glance through the files of the *American Behavioral Scientist* magazine will amply reinforce this statement. In another generation, the highly trained 'intelligentsia' will be very close to all centers of decision and public policy . . . .

A point of view very different indeed comes from England, and it is well exemplified by Professor Michael Oakeshott and Mr Cowling, who may, I think, be described as a disciple of the former. The main statements of this point of view are Professor Oakeshott's essay of 1961 on *The Study of Politics in the University* and in Mr Cowling's book published in 1963 on *The Nature and Limits of Political Science.* If I have not misunderstood this trend of thought, its main characteristic is the denial that political science has, or should be regarded as having, any bearing on political activity, or even that it should concern itself at all with the study of principles conceived as guides to practice. The work of political science as an academic study they regard as purely explanatory, and unless I misinterpret them, hold that it ought never to seek to persuade to any particular course of action.

Now Professor Oakeshott in particular has extremely formidable resources which make one wary of openly dissenting from him. I feel at times in his writing that

*he only does it to annoy*
*Because he knows it teases.*

But the dazzling agility of his dialectic is undeniable. Nevertheless, what seems to me to be the 'turned-inwardness' and passivity of this conception of the subject brings to my mind a strange sect of monks, originating in the Monastery of Mount Athos in the fourteenth century, who were known as the Omphalopsychites, from their curious mystical habit of contemplating their own navels until they saw a bright light emerging therefrom which they identified with the soul. And when I contemplate on the one hand the state of most men's thinking about politics, and the manifest consequences of that state, and on the other hand observe the blend of remoteness and subtlety which seems to me to characterise this school, I am reminded of certain *literati* of Toulouse recorded (or invented) by that baffling figure of the Dark Ages, Vergilius Maro Grammaticus. These subtle intellectuals were, according to him, deep in discussion of the vocative of *ego*, and coming almost to blows over the frequentative of the verb *to be*, whilst the Roman West fell to pieces about them from internal weakness and barbarian invasion.

Faced with this antithesis of a grimly earnest phalanx of technocrats on the one hand, and on the other the tricksy sprites who play elaborate intellectual games or whisper sweet nothings to each other in a comfortably appointed Ivory Tower, I find myself in the position of the Church to which I belong, as defined in the urbane phraseology of the 1661 preface to its Book of Common Prayer: 'It hath been the wisdom of the Church of England, ever since the first compiling of her Publick Liturgy, to keep the mean between the two extremes . . . ' I do not believe that political science can ever become as 'scientific' as Professor de Grazia claims, and I doubt whether it would be a good thing it could. I do not believe that the academic study of politics should detach itself so completely from the interests and needs of ordinary intelligent human beings, should universally become so fugitive and cloistered, as Mr Cowling seems to me to require. I trust that, though it may draw nourishment both from skilfully organised scientific investigation of social phenomena, as with the school illustrated by Professor de Grazia, and from the abstract academic analysis advocated by Mr Cowling, the main stock will remain rooted with the humanities, and that political science will aim primarily at interesting, enlightening and instructing the ordinary intelligent layman; at making for all who are willing to listen the gift of life more valuable, and men more worthy of that gift.

We are all, all the time, in public and in private affairs, passing judgments whether in speech, in writing, in thought or in act: 'this

is good, and I would like to keep it as it is; this might be improved; this is bad, and I should like to see it changed for something else'. Fortunately for our civilisation, there are still those who do not automatically make such judgments in public affairs, solely on the grounds of their own personal, material interests. One of the main tasks of the academic teacher of political science, it seems to me, is to offer such enlightenment, advice and guidance as he can to those who abstain from succumbing to this obvious temptation, and perhaps to attempt to increase their numbers. He can do this by the critical examination of the works of those who have enunciated and intelligently discussed political principles and issues in the past, and by relating them, where they can be related, to contemporary issues and interests. He can do it also by the critical examination of the practical political experience of the past, as well as of the political institutions and issues of the present day. Not least, he can do it by bringing to bear upon the vocabulary of public political discussion something of the same integrity of judgment and discriminating scrutiny that what is sometimes called the New Criticism has brought to bear upon literature and literary appreciation. How much current discussion of public issues is bedevilled by the fact that neither those who speak nor those who listen have any clear idea of the complexities and variety of meaning of the leading terms of the discussion! Words like 'democracy' (the Norwegian philosopher Naess has examined some three hundred uses of the term, many closely similar in substance, some varying greatly) and terms like liberal and liberalism, nationalism, justice, the rule of law, and so on, have complex and varied meanings. It is idle to complain that the same word has many meanings, because this is inherent in the developing and living nature of thought and language. But we shall have contributed something to the quality of our civilisation if we can help to build up a considerable body of people capable of examining the sense in which others may be using such words, and careful always to be clear and explicit about the sense in which they themselves use them.

So I conceive one of the main tasks of academic teachers of Political Science to be to reflect as reasonably as they can upon the whole body of political principles which has come down to us from the past, and likewise upon the practice and experience of political action, and to relate all this to the needs and interests of the present. And having done this, it is their legitimate task to communicate their conclusions to all who are willing to listen, immediately to their own students, but also to a wider public beyond them. In this way, it may be hoped that, however modestly, we may contribute to the improvement of political discussion. And few improvements are more needed than that.

I am well aware that there is nothing novel in this. It has, indeed, been the aim of most of those who have written upon political themes with any other end in view than propaganda. Long before Political Science became officially a distinct academic subject of study (it seems first to have done so in Sweden in the seventeenth century, then in America immediately after the American Revolution, and only rather later in other countries) it was written and read in this spirit. My point of view in this matter is essentially conservative. It is so, not because I wish to strangle new developments in their cradle, but because I believe that some contemporary approaches hold less the promise of advance than the threat of loss. I am tempted to apply the words of Lewis Carroll to this aspect of the present condition of the subject: 'Now *here*, you see', said the Red Queen, 'it takes all the running *you* can do to stay in the same place!'

Clearly, such a conception of the primary aim of the teaching—and study—of Political Science raises the important question of the impartiality of the teacher. It is too large a question for me to discuss in detail, but it is one that presents itself to us in South Africa today with special urgency, though it is everywhere relevant in some degree. To my mind, my conception of the nature and purpose of political study—and for that matter, *mutatis mutandis*, of historical study—implies that the teacher is free to communicate his opinions and his judgments of value, whether on matters of political principle or political practice, and that indeed he ought to do so. His position seems to me partly analogous to that of his colleague in Divinity, whom we should hardly expect to remain austerely impartial as between Christianity, Mohammedanism, Buddhism, fetish worship and the cult of Juggernaut. But he must never allow conversion to become the sole or even dominant end of his teaching. Above all, he must observe certain rules: his opinions and value-judgments should be as reasoned as he can make them and based on the widest examination of relevant facts or considerations; he must be ready to state, whenever possible, the grounds of his conviction; if he is prejudiced (as to some extent we all are) he should study to be aware of his prejudices, and be ready openly to declare them; and above all he should not seek to suppress opposing views. And by this last I mean two things. He should not seek to keep from his students knowledge of such opposing views and of the grounds on which they appear to be held; equally, he should not use his authority to repress any attempts that his students may make to voice opposing views.

In the light of what I have said just now, it is clearly my duty to define my own approach—if you prefer to call it so, my own prejudice, though I myself consider it a reasoned conviction. I must

frankly state that my own approach belongs in the main to the tradition of English liberalism. The term is a comprehensive and a complex one, and it is capable of much confusion—indeed, an interesting and valuable study might be written of the history of the use of the terms 'liberal' and 'conservative'. I do not use it in the party political sense, whether British, European or South African. In the sense in which I am using it, it far transcends any party political boundaries. The tradition of English liberalism, as I understand it, is a component of most English schools of political thought and of almost all English political parties, and has been for some two centuries past. It was no Whig or Wilkite Radical, but the Tory Johnson who was so passionate in his hatred of an imposed servitude for men of any race or class that he once proposed a toast to the next negro insurrection in the West Indies. As I see this tradition, it has three abiding elements. The first is the belief in the value of freedom, especially for the individual, but also for the group, and for the largest group of all, the organized body politic; especially also, perhaps, that type of freedom which we speak of as civil liberties. (Most would add, as I would, with Edmund Burke that liberty must be limited in order to be possessed.)

The second element is the belief that all those who exercise power, whether they be Kings, nobles, plutocrats, bureaucrats, a monopolistic political party, the representatives of the people, however freely chosen, or even the people themselves, are dangerously liable to abuse power, and therefore all power should be subject to limitations and checks.

The third element is that principles of right should count at least as much as power or expediency, that moral issues and the imperatives of conscience cannot be excluded from political discussion and decision. To ignore power and expediency, in the world as it is, is disastrous; to ignore principle, conscience, morality is, in another way, not less so.

Such I take to be the abiding characteristics of this tradition, and it is from the standpoint of one who accepts it as still valid today and as being valid universally—even though it is widely ignored or flouted or denied, and even though the practical arrangements for giving effect to it may not be attainable in some societies—it is from that standpoint that I shall continue to teach.

I end this somewhat discursive discourse with some remarks, all too sketchy, on our situation here with regard to my subject, and more especially with regard to Political Science. First let me say that I hope to be able to introduce more study, at least in the more advanced years, of the great tradition of English political thinking. Despite recent constitutional changes (with which I am not in sympathy) the fact remains that most of us in this University are

the heirs of the English tradition in language, literature, thought and way of life. And a part of that tradition that is hardly of less value and significance, though less widely known, than its literature is the discussion of political issues which has been going on continuously since the sixteenth century, first only in England itself, then in some degree in other English-speaking communities beyond the seas In duration, continuity and range of topics discussed this aspect of English thought is, I believe, unique in the history of civilization; to ignore it would be gravely to impoverish our spiritual and intellectual heritage.

There are two facts, also, to be noted about this tradition. First, it has tended to keep equally in touch with the world of quotidian reality on the one hand and the world of acknowledged principle on the other. When it has philosophised, it has not forgotten that the conclusions of political philosophy have, after all, to be applied to a very everyday world of stubborn, brute facts. When it has dealt with some concrete political issue, it has rarely forgotten that after all principles of abiding value must play some part in political decision.

The second fact, not unrelated to the first, is that much that is most valuable and most stimulating in this tradition of thinking is to be found, not in the work of the acknowledged classics of political philosophy, such as Hobbes and Locke and T. H. Green, but in the work of men whom I defined earlier as political thinkers in the broadest sense rather than political philosophers, and who were often primarily devoted to some other activity, whether as statesmen, men of letters, or men of affairs, but who, in dealing with contemporary problems, sought to do so in the light of reasoned principles. Halifax, Swift, Johnson, Fox, Hazlitt (who has, for instance, a more suggestive discussion of patriotism than any professed political philosopher I know), Wordsworth, Macaulay, Bagehot, Gladstone, Disraeli, to name but a few out of many, have much to teach us in our field—scarcely less than the acknowledged political philosophers.

Because of these two characteristics of the English tradition, I particularly welcome the connection between History and Political Science, which is still maintained at this University as well as at my own University of Cambridge and a few others. I have not the time, however, to amplify this reference to a topic which could occupy a whole lecture in itself, and which in any event was so admirably treated by my predecessor in his own Inaugural Lecture.

Finally, I would say that South Africa offers a most stimulating environment to the student and teacher of Political Science in at least one respect, and a potentially most unfavourable environment in at least two.

The environment is stimulating because the day-to-day realities

of the political arena—not only in Parliament but over the whole of public affairs—give life and a vivid actuality to many concepts which elsewhere have come to seem academic, even dead, or else have fallen into the limbo of things taken comfortably for granted. Here those of us who think at all about public affairs as a field for the application of principle are forced to examine our principles and our concepts not as a historical academic exercise, but as guides to conviction and perhaps even action. We are forced to consider what we mean by (say) the Rule of Law, and why value is to be attached to it; what we mean by (say) civil liberties, and why we regard them as overwhelmingly important. I myself have found (though this may puzzle many of you) that my observation of South African affairs in recent years has made me see Burke in a new light, whilst conversely the re-reading of Burke has illuminated some aspects even of current politics for me. Even the Aristotelian discussion of whether the good man and the good citizen are identical or not has an actuality, a concreteness, for us that it can hardly have for the political student in (politically) more comfortable lands.

But the unfavourable factors are not less obvious than the stimulus. I hesitate to do more than touch upon a matter which I know must be acutely controversial, and this is hardly the occasion for controversy. But I cannot refrain from saying that there seems to me to have arisen in recent years a marked and widespread aversion to bringing any kind of critical reflection to bear upon the sort of topics that political thought concerns itself with. Reasoned discussion is becoming more difficult. The very capacity to reason logically and clearly on public issues—never at any time or anywhere very generally diffused—seems to be diminishing. There seems to be a certain fear that to look beneath the surface at all may fatally impair our ability to remain reasonably at ease in our situation. The almost universal conviction seems to be that in politics the first, and the great and the only commandment is that so long as a government maintains public order and does not forcibly redistribute wealth, its commandments are right and always to be obeyed, and that any further discussion is either academic trifling or potential subversion. One would be tempted to say that Hobbesism has triumphed, were it not that recent discussions have suggested that even Hobbes himself would have raised a quizzical eyebrow at such an attitude.

In this respect, the atmosphere at present is certainly unpropitious to the health of political thought—unpropitious almost to the point of asphyxiation.

There is also, however, the possibility that pressures of a more systematic kind may be exerted to curtail the freedom of teaching and studying. Already some books, of interest to the student of

politics, are banned; already there are prohibitions against even quoting—even against quoting to criticise—the words of certain persons; already people, including some University teachers, have been condemned to a sort of civil death or half-life, without charge or without trial, and therefore for no known reason, but presumably sometimes because their words or views were offensive to someone in authority. It is a matter of astonishment to me that such things are not actively resented, almost as a personal affront, and certainly as a threat to academic freedom, by every academic person, regardless of his political views. In such a situation as this, the position of all academic professors of the humanities, and particularly perhaps of the historian and political scientist, may become highly vulnerable. It is my hope that I and others who share my convictions will not compromise if the evil day of interference with the freedom of teaching comes. To do so would be to deserve the scornful verdict of Dante on him.

*Che fece per viltate il gran rifiuto.*

Mr Chairman, I began with some references to sundry unfortunate lecturers—though it is perhaps rash of me, at this stage, to remind you of that fact. I end with one of the most fortunate. Of Thomas Gray, author of the famous Elegy, Regius Professor of Modern History in Cambridge and one of the most learned men of the eighteenth century, it is recorded that he once got so far as to draft the outlines of a lecture, but never actually delivered one. How often, as I have rushed, with gown a-flying, from analysing the politics of Plato to examining the policies of Peel, thereafter to expound some portion of the history of the Papacy—how often have I wished myself in the easy-going Cambridge of his day! And how you must now be wishing that I had emulated his admirable and enviable example!

# THE CHILD IN DIFFERENT CULTURES

**Some impressions gained on recent visits to the U.S.S.R., the U.S.A. and Israel**

*by* W. H. O. SCHMIDT

In April, 1965, I had the privilege of being allowed to join an educational tour to the U.S.S.R. organised by the Institute of Education of the University of London. For two nights and two days I sat couped up in the coach of a train, together with about 30 other members of the party, consisting of students, teachers, professors and lecturers from various parts of the world. We all knew, in a vague and abstract way, something about the vastness and flatness of the country we would be passing through on our way to Moscow. The actual experience of passing through it transformed the vague and abstract knowledge into a reality that continued to occupy our minds: here were we setting out to see something about education in the U.S.S.R. and yet one of the Republics comprising it (Russia) is in itself so vast that one would need years to obtain a valid picture of the relation between the ideals and the ideology of Soviet education, about which we would be told a great deal, and the realities in the homes and the schools of this multiracial and multicultural Union of Republics extending from the Baltic to the Pacific. We were to spend a week in Moscow, a little less in Leningrad, and three days in Riga, the capital of the Latvian Republic, incorporated into the U.S.S.R. in 1939. But some impressions we were able to form, at least in the three towns visited. As anticipated, at first we heard a great deal about the ideal and the ideology and the official party line, but gradually, through questioning and by speaking to teachers and students and children, and by visiting classrooms and youth centres and even, in the case of a few of us, by visiting night clubs —and not all these visits had been planned by officials—we were able, I think, to sense some of the relation between the ideal and the reality.

We were received, on the first morning after our arrival in Moscow, in the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences, with a considerable number of the academicians themselves present to welcome us and to speak to us. In the course of the following days we visited several of the research institutes that form part of the Academy. The Academy for Pedagogical Sciences, founded in 1943, i.e. during World War II, is a vast and impressive organisation that conducts educational research, spreads educational information throughout the U.S.S.R.,

and trains postgraduate students and teachers for the pedagogic institutes at which teachers are trained (some 215 in the U.S.S.R.). It is the top organisation of its kind, having links with other research institutes spread over all the Republics. To be an academician is a great honour, something comparable to being a Fellow of the Royal Society in England, and there are only about 35 academicians in the Institute itself, and some 70 corresponding members. These academicians are assisted by some 650 scientific workers, conducting research into all aspects of education or, as they always call it, Pedagogics. The Academy has eleven separate research institutes, which, however, work closely together on many problems; in fact, co-ordination of effort as well as co-operation between several disciplines is always stressed. I shall list the institutes, in order to give you some impression of the scope of the research and of the close link of this research with the realities of school systems, and of politics and of economics:

1. The Institute of Theory and History of Pedagogics, which includes the following departments: (*a*) Philosophical Foundations of Education, (*b*) Theory and Practice of Moral Education, (*c*) History of Education, (*d*) Foreign Education, (*e*) Theory of School Administration and Planning;
2. Institute of General and Polytechnical Education;
3. Institute of Pre-school Education;
4. Institute of Industrial Training;
5. Institute of Aesthetic Education;
6. Institute of Psychology, with a particularly strong department of Educational Psychology and a close link with the schools;
7. Institute of Defectology, studying the educational problems of children with physical and mental defects (much of their work on mental defect is internationally known and books on it are available in the English language.);
8. Institute of Child Physiology;
9. Institute of non-Russian schools, dealing with problems of teaching the Russian language in non-Russian areas of the U.S.S.R. as well as with problems of teaching through the mother-tongue in those areas;
10. Institute of Evening and Correspondence Schools, conducting research into a part of the education and training organisation that plays a tremendous role in raising the standard of education and of technical and vocational skill of people of all ages throughout the U.S.S.R.;
11. Institute of Physical Education.

I know of no other research organisation anywhere in the world that is concerned with studying educational problems on quite such a scale. And whatever we may think about the Communist system of education and its purposes, this Academy exemplifies and symbolises something which is most striking: a faith in the power of education to mould human lives and to create a better society—as they see it. In every one of the research institutes and schools that we subsequently visited, we were struck too by the tremendous enthusiasm of the research workers and teachers. And idealism too: however misguided and evil we may think Communist aims to be, the paradox exists that in a country that bases all its thinking on dialectical *materialism*, educationists are imbued with an idealism that is not easy to match. (For this last formulation, which I think is quite neat, I cannot claim authorship: I have taken it over from a West German visitor to Russia who, like me, would certainly not like to live in any Communist state; the idealism of the educators in Russia is something that has impressed many visitors.)

As an educational psychologist I was especially interested in the basic assumptions made by Soviet psychologists and educators regarding the development of a child's intellectual abilities. From the published literature I knew what these were, but I wanted to see for myself how these assumptions influenced actual practice in the schools and how the development of children is affected by the assumptions made about them.

In the 1920s and 1930s psychologists in Russia had introduced a great deal of intelligence testing into the schools, influenced by practice in other parts of the world, notably the U.S.A. On the results of such testing children were grouped in classes that were fairly homogeneous in ability, and these test results also influenced the selection of pupils for secondary education. The theory behind it was that the intelligence tests were testing innate abilities, and that it would be educationally sound to group children according to the level of this innate—or predominantly innate—ability, and to adapt the teaching requirements and methods to the different ability groups. This would ensure more effective teaching and enable each child to progress at the pace suited to his ability. Such ideas, widely prevalent in England, America, and in South Africa today, were not peculiar to Russia.

By 1937 it had become embarrassingly clear that this system of grouping and selection on the basis of intelligence-test results favoured the children of the former bourgeoisie; these children tended to be the brighter ones, who were then placed in the more advanced classes, received the more stimulating teaching, and thus had better opportunities. This was hardly in line with the intentions of a Revolution that wanted to give the working class a chance! The

whole theoretical basis of intelligence testing, as practised at that time, was challenged. It could not be denied that differences in intellectual ability exist; but such differences were now seen as the result of the child's past experience, upbringing, and education, and particularly of his language experience. Instead of the view that teaching in school must adapt itself to the level of the allegedly innate ability of the pupils, the view was expressed that it is the function of the school itself to raise and develop the potential abilities of children. I got some impression of the fervour and the missionary zeal with which this view is held and propagated on our very first visit to the Academy of Pedagogical Science. In the course of a discussion I asked whether this view had been modified in any way as the result of actual experience. I received a long and very passionate reply from an academician, who, in excellent English (he had recently been on an extended lecture tour of Canada), assured us that not only had they not had any reason to doubt the validity of this assumption, but that their conviction had been strengthened by a great deal of positive proof. It was obvious from the way he spoke that he was under the impression that neither I nor any of his foreign visitors shared his view, and so he was trying at the same time to convert us. It took me a long time to get a word in to explain that, in common with quite a few psychologists in Western countries, basically I agreed, with one proviso: that biology and genetics set *limits* to what the school can accomplish. The official view of Soviet psychologists and educationists would be that the genetic endowment does not even set limits.

This basic assumption now influences school practices in many ways. In the first place, there is no grouping of pupils according to ability. On the contrary, in the eight-year common school care is taken to ensure that every class contains the whole range of ability. When a class is subdivided into several smaller groups, as for the purposes of foreign language teaching, these groups are again so selected that they will contain weak, average, and able pupils. This is deliberate, not left to chance. Grouping according to ability, it is held, accentuates and widens the gap between the initially most intelligent and the initially least intelligent pupils. Mixing pupils of different initial levels of intellectual ability, it is held, stimulates the intellectual development of the least able pupils, and if the teaching is carried out properly, does not slow down the intellectual development of the most able; furthermore, it gives the able pupils a chance to help their less fortunate classmates and so provides for them an excellent training in social responsibility.

It is simply not accepted that there are things which a child, by virtue of the limits which his alleged innate endowment sets, cannot understand. It is the teacher's business to see that every child copes

with the work set by the school. The only limits that are recognised are those which are due to some demonstrable neurological or physical or sensory defect. If such can be demonstrated, then the teacher is exonerated from responsibility and the child is sent to a special school or institution. And the services for such children, at least in the Moscow area, are excellent. In the first year at school children are observed and, in the light of a medical screening, some pupils are taken out of the ordinary schools and given specialist attention at special schools and institutions. In the Moscow area services of the Institute of Defectology are also available to schools. But what if there is no demonstrable neurological or physical defect? The notion, widely accepted by English and American psychologists, that intelligence is distributed in the population according to the Gaussian normal probability curve, and that the teacher can do very little about it, is not accepted.

The result is that the teacher is under considerable pressure, for the failure of a child is held to reflect a failure of the teacher. The teacher in Russia does not have the easy way out of saying: 'Oh, he's just dull, he's got a low I.Q.', or 'What can you expect considering his poor home background?', for his job is to raise the level of effective intellectual ability of all his pupils and to influence as well as compensate for that poor background.

My impression was that teachers were very alert to the difficulties of individual children, and both in class and outside did a great deal to help individual pupils. Their reputation depended on this. Also, they probably had more time to do this than teachers in South Africa have, because classes are smaller, and the teacher's regular teaching load is lighter; a teacher in the secondary school, we were told, normally teaches eighteen 45-minute periods per week—I believe in Natal it would be over thirty. In addition, the teacher is not responsible for sport and extra-mural activities, because most of these take place not at school but in youth organisations and clubs that cater for children from all the schools in the area.

Some self-deception about the abilities and achievements of children probably also crept in. At one eight-year common school with an enrolment of 928 pupils we were told, in reply to a question, that in the previous end-of-the-year internal examination only 12 pupils out of the 928 had failed, and these only in one or two subjects. Where the failure of the pupil reflects so strongly on the professional competence of a teacher, there must be a strong temptation to cover up failure.

Another common practice in dealing with the weaker pupils is to enlist the support of the abler or simply the older pupils. Again and again teachers in Moscow, Leningrad, and in Riga told us spontaneously about this. They asserted that in every class you find

children who are only too eager to give this help, even to the extent of giving up afternoons and evenings for the purpose. And though these teachers were probably idealising the generous impulses of the abler children, it became clear that the practice of enlisting the help of the abler pupils, which is not unknown in other parts of the world, is very much more general in Soviet schools.

But if there is considerable pressure on the teacher, the teacher also has considerable prestige and power. This gives the teacher much greater influence over parents than teachers in South Africa generally have, and he is expected to use this influence for the good of the child. All over the world teachers sometimes suggest to parents of a child having difficulties at school what the parents might do; I had the impression that in Russia parents would usually regard the suggestions of the teacher as instructions or commands rather than as an optional course of action. There is strong public pressure too that constantly reminds parents of the importance of scholastic success for their children.

I have spoken of assumptions of adults about the potentialities of children, and what, as a result, teachers do to and for children. But what of the children themselves? How do they respond? Do the Russian schools really succeed in developing the potential intellectual abilities of their children more fully than schools do in, say, England or South Africa? An answer must necessarily be based on conjecture rather than on empirical facts; it would be difficult, though not impossible, to carry out comparative studies, but they have not been carried out.

My own conjecture is as follows: the intellectual development of a large number of children of initially average and under-average ability, particularly from the lower and lowest social classes and from what one might call underdeveloped communities, where the general level of education in the adult population is not yet so very high, would indeed be furthered much more in schools in the U.S.S.R. than in ours, where we are much more inclined to see 'individual differences' as inevitable and, on the whole, unalterable.

But whether differences in ability are the result of innate endowment or of past experience and the challenge of the school, they are still very real. And in Russia, as elsewhere, you do find children who, although they have no demonstrable neurological or physical or sensory defects, nevertheless throughout their school career always and continuously find it hard to meet the demands of the school. Moreover, the social penalties for not doing well at school are great: membership of youth organisations such as the Pioneers —and later the Komsomol—is not open to children whose scholastic performance is not reasonably good. If all the time children are made to feel that success depends on effort, but if despite effort plus

a great deal of help and pressure there never is any success, and if, in addition, they are never fortunate enough to develop any demonstrable neurological or physical defects, such children must surely feel themselves to be hopeless misfits and outcasts. These children, assumed by Russian psychologists not to exist but for some strange and inexplicable reason nevertheless existing, would be much happier and better off in schools of most Western countries.

You may be surprised that I have spoken for so long on an aspect of Soviet education which in the international press is usually overshadowed by reports on the high standards and the selectivity of universities and high schools in the U.S.S.R. I believe that the one cannot be understood without the other. The assumption about the role of the school in developing—no, even creating—the intellectual abilities of all children, particularly of those from culturally and materially disadvantaged homes, creates a huge reservoir of ability, from which it is possible later to select. For at some stage in the development of the individual the effort to iron out the differences in intellectual ability must cease and selection must take place.

One striking example of how the development of intellectual abilities, for which we often assume a genetic basis, is in fact strongly influenced by what a society expects of children was a so-called special mathematical school which we visited. It was an 11-year school, in which from grade 0 there was a bias towards mathematics, which became very much intensified in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh grade. In these last three grades about one-third of the pupils' time was spent on mathematics, including work with computers. (English, incidentally, was regarded as the international language of computer science, and pupils therefore also had to acquire quite a good knowledge of English.) As far as we could see there was no selection for admission to grade 0. Pupils could also be admitted to this school at grade nine. We asked on what criteria pupils were admitted at this level. Did they have any entrance examinations, specially set for the purpose? The answer was 'No'. They relied on three kinds of evidence: (1) the previous headmaster's report; (2) the results of an examination not set specially for the purpose; and (3) an interview. The examination referred to is the so-called mathematical Olympiad; it does not test knowledge of any specific branch of mathematics. Every year large numbers of people—very many adults from all professions too—participate just for the fun of it during the school vacations. If a child has shown sufficient interest to give up part of its vacation to take the examination, it has obviously demonstrated an interest in mathematics, and if, in addition, it has done reasonably well, it will have a good chance of getting into the school. We were told that in the previous two years about one in seven of the applicants had been admitted. We then asked the

principal what the proportion was of boys to girls amongst those accepted. For a moment he seemed perplexed, for he did not usually think in terms of boys and girls when discussing mathematical ability, but then he replied: the number of successful applicants are almost exactly 50 per cent boys and 50 per cent girls. We visited classes and were able to confirm this. On the whole, he told us later, there was not much difference in the mathematical performance of the boys and girls. How different this is from what we usually find in our society and in most Western countries, where ability in mathematics is supposed to be—according to the inscrutable wisdom of Nature itself—a prerogative of the male sex, and therefore incompatible with the feminine role! The exceptions to the rule in our society only prove that there are brave—or foolhardy—girls who refuse to conform to the narrow image which our society has of women.

Before turning from the U.S.S.R. to the U.S.A., I should probably answer one question, which I am always asked by people when they hear that I visited Russia: to what extent are young people, especially students, accepting all the indoctrination to which they are exposed? About this indoctrination I shall not speak, except to confirm that it is indeed most powerful and all-pervasive, right from the nursery school to adulthood and the grave. I shall never forget the nursery school where a big and well-equipped playroom had one wall covered with delightful children's drawings and paintings, while the other wall had a huge mural painting of Lenin; at whatever angle one looked at him, he always seemed to be watching one. Of the actual reactions to the indoctrination which we were able to observe, or about which we were told, I shall mention three.

The first is the phenomenon of what we soon called the cigarette boys or the ball-point boys. These were young boys of probably fifteen years of age upwards, who sidle up to the foreigner and whisper: 'Do you speak English? Got any American cigarettes? Ball-point pens?', and they offer you cheap medallions or other trinkets in exchange. You meet them all over in the places frequented by tourists, much to the embarrassment of the Intourist guides—on Red Square, outside the walls of the Kremlin, in front of Lemonosov University in Moscow, even near the Palace of Pioneers, and in corresponding places in Leningrad. One can recognise them from a distance, though it is not easy to describe accurately what makes them recognisable: their posture, their gait, their furtive looks and studied nonchalance. The police and certain citizens with special powers to combat delinquency pick them up every now and then, but they always seem to pop up again. These boys have obviously 'opted out' of society, are not involved, and do not want to be involved.

There are other young people, not delinquents and not cigarette boys, who share this desire to escape from the ideology and the way of life around them. A Communist party official, with a son aged fifteen, said: 'My son left school as soon as it was legally possible. He doesn't want to hear of politics or of the party. He just wants to earn a decent living. My son is characteristic of many young people.'

And students? A prominent professor told us that students today were not what they were ten years ago. They resent ex-cathedra statements and political jargon. She told us then of an incident that occurred at Moscow university not so long ago. In the huge hall of the university students put up a large banner with the words 'DOUBT EVERYTHING!'. There was great consternation among the academic dignitaries and party officials, especially the older ones. Some of them were in favour of drastic measures, but they were prevailed upon eventually to call a meeting of the students to discuss the incident. The students listened patiently to the admonitions of their superiors, and when given an opportunity to explain their action, a student leader meekly said: 'If you want us to take the banner down, we'll do it. But we were merely quoting Karl Marx!'

Do not infer too much from these scattered impressions. I suspect that in Russia, as elsewhere, most of the youthful rebels in due course will become sedate and conformist members of the Establishment. But at least it is gratifying to note that, even in a society in which there is such overwhelming pressure towards conformity, the human spirit resists the straitjacket.

We come now to the U.S.A. Perhaps you all share the usual stereotype about American methods of child rearing and of American children: children must be happy, therefore they must be allowed just to grow; beware of the authoritarian teacher and of too much control and direction by the adults, for this kills individual initiative, which is the mainspring of progress, a better standard of living, and a democratic society; give children plenty of mother-love and of father's companionship on a basis of absolute equality—and stop worrying! Nature—and the desire to be popular with one's peers—will do the rest and produce well-adjusted, happy, go-getting adults in a free society with equal opportunities for all.

Like all stereotypes this is a gross oversimplification; but basically it is valid, though only for parents and children in a certain stratum of society, namely the middle class and among educated people. The most interesting developments in the field of educational research and practice in America today have to do with education and child rearing not in the middle classes but in what the Americans call 'culturally deprived' groups. Tremendous efforts are being made to improve the education of 'culturally deprived' or 'educationally

disadvantaged' children. Who are these disadvantaged children? By race and ethnic origin they cover the whole spectrum, though they are predominantly Negro; they are urban and rural, but mainly urban. The American conscience has been stirred (and the fears of Americans have been aroused) by the existence in their affluent society of large communities that do not manage to participate in the mainstream of American life; and they are determined to do something about it. In characteristic American fashion they are tackling the problem on a broad front: political, economic, and educational, and on a grand scale. I shall say a few words only on the educational efforts; more particularly, I shall speak about how the research that is being carried out on the intellectual development of children from different social and cultural backgrounds is helping to shape educational policy.

Notice that in what I have listed in describing the stereotype there was no specific mention of intellectual abilities. When children grow up in an environment and in homes where inevitably they pick up, from the adults and from the older children, the language, the modes of thinking (e.g. causal, rational explanation of natural phenomena), and the orientations towards reality that are also those which the school demands and tries to develop, it is easy to overlook the role of this environment in the shaping of the intellectual abilities that are necessary for success at school. There is nothing that is quite so difficult to identify as the obvious. The good middle-class home, with all that it offers the child in the way of language as an instrument of thought, conversation, toys, intellectual stimulation (mostly not deliberate), and orientation to the modern world of science and of literature and of art, has been called 'the hidden educator'; one might also call it 'the hidden developer of intellectual ability'.

The research on intellectual development of culturally disadvantaged children, which is being carried out in a number of places, and on a big scale, in America, is based on this premise. The Federal Government itself finances a large number of these research projects on an incredibly generous scale. The purpose of the research, however, is not merely to confirm or refute the premise, but to see which specific experiences contribute most to the development of a child's intellectual abilities, and in precisely what ways they seem to do it; this knowledge is then to serve as a basis for determining what can be done by the school to develop in the child the intellectual abilities and orientations to the world that are necessary for coping with the tasks set by the school. 'Compensatory education' is the great catchword at the moment. This idea that the school must compensate children for the deficiencies of their past experience and their present out-of-school environment is, of course, an old one. But what is new is the way it is being done, and the seriousness

of purpose with which it is being pursued. I can give only a few indications. (Perhaps I should also state that I did not visit any of the Southern states, and so cannot speak about developments there.)

A large number of nursery schools, with so-called enrichment programmes, are being provided for the children in the poorer communities. These schools are not simply replicas of nursery schools for middle-class children, for they set out much more deliberately to foster the intellectual development of the children. A great deal of time is devoted to providing the children with opportunities for having experiences that are known to be completely lacking in the homes from which the children come, and which at the same time are essential as stimulants to intellectual development. As the important role played by language in the development of intellectual abilities, and indeed of the intelligence tested by intelligence tests, has been re-discovered, the nursery school teachers, for instance, pay far more attention to language than is normally done in nursery schools of the traditional type. Altogether, the activities of these nursery schools are much more consciously geared to the development of intellectual abilities. As an emergency measure, the Federal Government made big grants available in the summer of 1965 to enable states to carry out an experiment in preparing children from poor areas to participate more profitably in the activities of the ordinary school: such children, just about to reach the compulsory school-entrance age, were enrolled six weeks before the new school year commenced and given special preparation for ordinary school life. In America every project must have a name to catch the public's imagination; this one was called 'Operation Head-start'.

In the second place, at the primary and secondary school level, there is a great deal of experimentation in trying to work out methods of teaching and teaching materials specially geared to the needs of the children from a particular community. The principle that more money, not less, should be spent on providing teachers and facilities for the schools that serve the poorer communities, is beginning to be accepted in many areas.

But all this is really just a beginning, and it is now realised that in the training of teachers too there will have to be some drastic changes, and that this is, perhaps, the crux of the matter. The usual training course just does not give the student-teachers the kind of experience and insight that enables them to make proper contact with these children from the poorest areas, and so to do effective work there. There are some very interesting experiments in training courses specially for work with disadvantaged children. Students who enrol for such courses intend to make this their life work, not to wait for the day when they will be transferred to a school in a good middle-class suburb.

And what of the children? How do they respond? It is too early to say. In carefully controlled experiments, such as those of Martin Deutsch at the Institute for Developmental Studies of the Department of Psychiatry, New York Medical College, it has been shown that pre-school children sometimes benefit enormously from the enrichment programmes and come to school really equipped to cope with its tasks. But the danger is that too many half-baked schemes, supported by large funds and implemented on a large scale, will misfire and so discredit the whole movement of 'compensatory education'. This is the fear of leading American research workers themselves. They would rather see a cautious step-by-step advance, and are suspicious of the exaggerated zeal of the politicians. For if disillusionment sets in, there will be plenty of people in America, particularly politicians, who will say: 'You see, you cannot change these people– they are poor because they are dumb, not dumb because they are poor'. But the efforts being made today are truly impressive.

Geographically and politically Israel is very different from the two giants, the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. You never have to travel very far to bump into one of its borders, and, if you are not careful, to find yourself in enemy territory—some part of the Arab world with which Israel is still, officially, at war.

We became very much aware of this, for in the Judaean hills not far from Jerusalem, and close to Jordan, we stayed in a kibbutz. At ten o'clock in the evening we were sitting in our bedroom, talking to the headmaster of the high school of the kibbutz, when heavy footsteps approached; there was a knock at the door, and in stepped a man with a machine gun over his shoulder. He noticed our surprise at the sight of the machine-gun, and said: 'Don't worry, I'm merely protecting you against the Arabs.' It was a member of the kibbutz, patrolling all night, for border incidents are liable to occur at any moment. Israel is a frontier society, ever endangered, but in the meantime building a country, and making the stony hills and parts of the Negev desert fertile to feed and to give work to its now two-and-a-quarter million inhabitants and to the tens of thousands of new Jewish immigrants who come from all parts of the world every year. It is a country where the people are alive and imbued with a sense of purpose that makes almost every minute of your stay there memorable. And then I have not even mentioned the saturation with history—of the country as well as the people you meet: a great as well as a tragic history—and a society, that had to be rebuilt from its very foundations.

In this rebuilding the kibbutz has played a prominent part and children are being reared and educated under conditions that make of the whole of Israel a fascinating laboratory for the study of human

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development. The kibbutz is a community of families engaged in agriculture, though today the big kibbutzim have branched out into industrial production as well. All of the kibbutzim started working on land that was neglected and extremely unproductive, and every kibbutz that we saw had been turned into a veritable paradise. The number of members of a kibbutz may vary from a hundred to something like fifteen hundred.

While kibbutzim differ from each other in many ways, three principles seem to be common to all: (*a*) they are Zionist, (*b*) they are socialist, (*c*) they are democratically run. Ownership of property is collective. The affairs of the kibbutz are controlled by all its members participating in the election of officers, in decisions with regard to the distribution of money for everyone's needs, in the allocation of duties, etc. Men and women must all work, which necessitates special provision of a collective kind for the rearing and upbringing of children. Families have their own flat or cottage. Children are housed separately, and separated again in dormitories according to age groups; they are in charge of specially appointed persons, but parents are expected to spend at least two hours per day with their own children, and the Sabbath. At a kibbutz where we stayed children from the age of two years of age slept in the home of their parents, but practice with regard to this seemed to vary greatly. Meals are communal, in a big dining hall.

A person wishing to join a kibbutz is accepted on probation for one to two years, during which the other members decide whether they want him, and he can decide whether it is the life that he really wishes to lead. Some of the kibbutzim have quite a high proportion of intellectuals, others not. Politically the kibbutzim have been very influential; we were told that four members of the present Israeli Cabinet were members of kibbutzim—and over the weekend one could observe them performing all the menial tasks, such as laying the tables in the huge dining hall or sweeping the floors, for no one has any special privileges.

The rearing of the children under these to us very unusual conditions has attracted a great deal of attention from psychologists. Opinions as to the effects differ widely. When the kibbutzim movement started, it was confidently expected that the loosening of the possessive grip of mothers on their children, and the early experience of living together with other children, would make for a much happier childhood, and above all, they thought, there would be fewer problem children. One thing is certain: there are no, or hardly any, delinquents. When they go into the army—and every young person, male and female, has to do this at present—they are said to make very good soldiers and leaders. But the range of personality problems with which the child guidance clinic that serves

the kibbutzim has to deal is said to be as wide as that at any other clinic, with a slight shift in the incidence of the characteristic problems that arise. In the young children there seem to be more learning difficulties at school—not behaviour problems, but actual difficulties in coping with the tasks. This has been linked by some psychologists with the early language experience of the children, at the age of two to three years, when they spend so much time in each other's company, but not in the company of adults. The overwhelming complaint of the adolescents, I was told by a psychiatrist, was about the lack of privacy in their lives. The child—like the adolescent—in the kibbutzim, it appears, is no longer overwhelmed by his parents, but by the inescapable presence at all times of his peers, and this is what makes it difficult for him to find his own identity.

But far more interesting than what is happening to children in the kibbutzim is, I find, what is happening in the ordinary schools. The immigrants to Israel come from 70 to 80 different countries, and though they are all Jews, they differ so much from each other in physical features, in educational background, and in cultural traditions and ways of life that it is hardly possible to imagine greater differences. In one new settlement we saw women dressed in *saris* and to us indistinguishable from Indian women in Durban. We saw black Jews from North Africa. The proportion of Oriental to Occidental Jews, we were told, is today about six to four. And in the centuries in which the Jews have lived dispersed all over the world, they have taken on the characteristics of the people among whom they lived. Among the Oriental Jews there were some highly educated ones, but the majority were not and are not. Some came from areas where they had retained the mentality and the outlook of biblical characters from the Old Testament, others were emancipated Jews observing Jewish traditions but not the religion. And they all spoke different languages.

The language of the schools is Evrid, the modern form of Hebrew. Israeli people like to tell you that they do not have a mother-tongue, but only a child-tongue, for the children first learn Evrid at school, and then they teach their parents. Perhaps this is exaggerated but it illustrates the special problems that the immigrants have to face.

It was soon noticed that on intelligence tests, which are widely used in Israel, the children from the uneducated families performed very much more poorly than the children from the educated, and that their scholastic performance was very weak. But this was not interpreted as showing an innate inferiority of the Jews from the Orient. Today there is special provision made for children from settlements that are officially declared to be 'underdeveloped settlements or communities'. These children are required to attend special schools with enrichment programs from the age of three

years, and in the primary school they attend for more hours per week than the other children. The policy with regard to scholarships for children to secondary schools—these are not yet free, though they will become free as soon as the state can afford it—is that a child from an underdeveloped community will be admitted with a lower mark in the examinations than is laid down for other children. At the Henrietta Szold Institute for Educational Research I was told that this policy had proved most successful. High schools are not always happy at first about having to take these children, but these children often turn out to be the best pupils. The principle of doing more and of paying more for the education of culturally disadvantaged children, which is gradually gaining ground in the U.S.A., is fully accepted in Israel and has proved itself.

Let me conclude by pointing a moral—for us in South Africa. Yet is the moral not obvious already? At a conservative estimate in our society we spend about ten times more per year on the education of a white child than we spend on the education of a Bantu child. However we may try to justify this, the result is that we perpetuate and widen a gap in intellectual ability and in the realisation of human potential between the members of different cultural groups. It is true that in Russia there is an ideology, detestable to us in most respects, which induces the teachers to pay special attention to the intellectual development of *all* children; that in the U.S.A. the conscience first had to be stirred and the fears aroused; that in Israel there is a common Jewishness that makes the culturally disadvantaged the responsibility of all. Is a common Christianity or a common humanity, or plain self-interest not enough to make us accept *our* responsibility in South Africa?

# THE ROLE OF DESTINY IN 'THE KNIGHT'S TALE'

*by* P. C. B. FLETCHER

'Whatever flames upon the night
Man's own resinous heart has fed.'

There are almost as many conflicting interpretations of *The Knight's Tale* as there are Chaucer critics, but on at least one point the critics do agree; all stress the formal structure of the poem and the highly stylized expression of emotion. This emphasis is natural, since it is the most artificial elements of the Tale that are likely to strike the modern reader most forcibly; but the stylized emotions, the lofty philosophising about Destiny and the courtly love convention should not blind us to the purely human elements of the Tale. Chaucer inherited the convention, after all, and it is the way in which he has enriched this convention that is most significant.

Even in Arcite's dying lament, where the expression of grief is most formal, the other, more human, element is still present.

'Allas, the wo! alas, the peynes stronge,
That I for yow have suffered, and so longe!
Allas, the deeth! allas, myn Emelye!
Allas, departynge of our compaignye!
Allas, myn hertes queene! allas, my wyf!
Myn hertes lady, endere of my lyf!
What is this world? what asketh men to have?
Now with his love, now in his colde grave
Allone, withouten any compaignye.
Fare wel, my sweete foo, myn Emelye!' (11.2771-80)

The repetition of 'Allas!' gives this the rhythm of a solemn rite and many of the lines have a detached philosophic tone, as though Arcite sees his own grief as part of the tragedy of all things. But even where he speaks in the third person it is with such an intensity of vision and feeling that we feel his personal anguish breaking through his philosophy:

Now with his love, now in his colde grave
Allone, withouten any compaignye.

The structure of the poetry demonstrates how acutely Arcite has

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imagined the deprivations of death. The suddenness of the transition from the warmth of love to the cold of the grave is emphasised by the juxtaposition of phrases similar in structure but so different in their emotional force: '*Now* with . . . , *now* in . . . '. Then 'Allone' receives an added strength by being placed in isolation at the beginning of the line, followed after a pause by the realisation of death's incomparable loneliness in a phrase so intimately human: 'withouten any compaignye'.

Something of the difference between Chaucer and the Anglo-Saxon poets can be seen by comparing the above passage with the Wanderer's lament:

> Whither has gone the horse? Whither has gone the man? Whither has gone the giver of treasure? Whither has gone the place of feasting? Where are the joys of hall? Alas, the bright cup! Alas, the warrior in his corslet! Alas, the glory of the prince! How that time has passed away, has grown dark under the shadow of night, as if it had never been![1]

Both passages have a noble simplicity of tone, but one important difference is evident. The Anglo-Saxon poem has universality but lacks a truly personal note; Chaucer's passage is both universal and individual. The horse, the man, 'the bright cup' and the 'warrior in his corslet' are all generalized symbols of life, whereas Arcite is an individual speaking of his own particular predicament, although his grief is formalised. A phrase like 'Allas, the deeth!' could have come equally well from the Wanderer's lament, but it is followed in Arcite's speech by 'allas, myn Emelye!'

In the funeral scene the expression of grief is civilized and orderly, with each action repeated three times:

> Ne how the Grekes, with an huge route,
> Thries riden al the fyr aboute
> Upon the left hand, with a loud shoutynge,
> And thries with hir speres claterynge;
> And thries how the ladyes gonne crye. (11.2951-5)

But the lament of the women invests the death of Arcite with an altogether human pathos:

> 'Why woldestow be deed,' thise wommen crye,
> 'And haddest gold ynough, and Emelye?' (11.2835-6)

It is obviously the poor women of Athens speaking, for whom gold is the first prerequisite for happiness and Emily only a secondary consideration.

Since the Tale, on one very simple level of interpretation, poses the riddle 'Which of the two knights deserves to win Emily?',

Palamon and Arcite are deliberately made as equal as possible in age, birth and courage, and this accounts for a large proportion of the formal symmetry of the Tale. Description of the knights' personal appearance is deliberately confined to the minimum:

> Two yonge knyghtes liggynge by and by,
> Bothe in oon armes, wroght ful richely,
> Of which two Arcite highte that oon,
> And that oother knyght highte Palamon. (11.1011-4)

Here there is as little differentiation between the two cousins as possible. Phrases such as 'liggynge by and by, Bothe in oon armes' give them the closeness and similarity of twin brothers, which is emphasised by the repetition of 'highte that oon' and 'that oother knyght highte'. When they fight in the wood their equality is again stressed by Chaucer's choice of imagery; it is the lion matched against the tiger.

This has led a number of critics to state that there is little individual characterization in Palamon and Arcite, and that whatever contrast does exist is produced by their allegiance to differing gods and 'it is a contrast which is not developed throughout the poem'.[2] Because Mrs Salter sees little individual characterization in the two knights, she emphasizes the role of Destiny in the Tale, and states that 'the human beings most painfully involved in the narrative are deliberately envisaged as pawns in a game played by the gods'.[3]

Similarly, Mr Trevor Whittock writes in *Theoria*:[4]

> Fortune is the disruptive force in this ideal world of chivalric order.

In fact, Chaucer does develop the contrast between the characters throughout, in spite of their initial similarity. Their reactions, though stylized, are yet the reactions of two sharply differing individuals. This is important because it makes the tragedy of *The Knight's Tale* at once more human and more acceptable. If Palamon and Arcite had been presented as almost identical personalities, then the humiliating death meted out to the one and the happiness accorded to the other would be nothing more than the malicious juggling of human affairs by the gods. This is not to suggest that the Tale is a moral fable with reward and punishment distributed according to merit. Arcite does not die because he deserves to die, but his death is made acceptable because it is the result of human passions the workings of which we can understand.

The individual characters of Palamon and Arcite emerge through their conversations and actions. This can be illustrated by comparing their reactions to the first sight of Emily. Palamon is walking in his prison tower:

He cast his eye upon Emelya,
And therwithal he bleynte and cried, 'A!'
As though he stongen were unto the herte. (11.1077-9)

Palamon, who starts back and cries out involuntarily as if he has been wounded, is so affected that for some time he is unable to think rationally and takes Emily for the goddess Venus. Arcite then sees Emily:

And with that word Arcite gan espye
Where as this lady romed to and fro,
And with that sighte hir beautee hurte hym so,
That, if that Palamoun was wounded sore,
Arcite is hurte as much as he, or moore.
And with a sigh he seyde pitously:
'The fresshe beautee sleeth me sodeynly
Of hire that rometh in the yonder place,
And but I have hir mercy and hir grace,
That I may seen hire atte leeste weye,
I nam but deed; ther nis namoore to seye.' (11.1112-22)

Arcite is 'hurte' by the sight of Emily, but not with the sudden sharp pain experienced by Palamon, who is 'stongen' to the heart. 'Stongen' has a sharper suggestion of actual physical pain than 'hurte', and is a harsher word. Even taking into account the fact that Arcite is prepared by Palamon for what he sees and does not receive the shock of surprise, their reactions still prepare the reader for basic differences of temperament. There is a marked contrast between:

And therwithal he bleynte and cride, 'A!' (Palamon)

and:

And with a sigh he seyde pitously. (Arcite)

The first line, with its broken, jerky rhythm, suggests a more violent emotion than the second, where the soft alliteration gives the line the tone of a gentle sigh. Arcite is the conventional courtly lover and his speech has the rhythm of a deliberately thought out attitude, so that when he says 'The fresshe beautee sleeth me sodeynly' we have the feeling that, in comparison with Palamon, the process has been far from 'sodeyn'. Moreover, he does not lose possession of his faculties as Palamon does and can even carefully describe who has stricken him:

Of hire that rometh in the yonder place,

and immediately afterwards he says what was expected of all courtly lovers: namely that he will die unless she takes pity on him.

In the quarrel that follows between the two cousins, it is Palamon again who shows the more violent emotion:

> This Palamon gan knytte his browes tweye. (11.1128)

This vivid detail shows the uncontrolled anger and jealousy building up in Palamon, but in answer to his reproaches, Arcite, in command of the situation, reasons that in fact he loved Emily first, as a woman, whereas Palamon took her for a goddess. Arcite's love does not destroy his normal chivalrous code of behaviour:

> For which I tolde thee myn aventure
> As to my cosyn and my brother sworn. (11.1160-1)

Love has supplanted reason and former friendship in Palamon, but Arcite can still say, with admirable common sense:

> And eek it is nat likely al thy lyf
> To stonden in hir grace; namoore shal I;
> For wel thou woost thyselven, verraily,
> That thou and I be dampned to prisoun
> Perpetuelly; us gayneth no ransoun.
> We strive as dide the houndes for the boon;
> They foughte al day, and yet hir part was noon.(11.1172-78)

The analogy of the dogs fighting over the bone is a humorous touch that restores the balance of common sense to the poem, and the fact that Arcite is capable of seeing their situation in terms of humour shows that he is not so emotionally involved as Palamon.

Each lover, in keeping with the convention, suffers the agonies of unrequited love, but their griefs, though exaggerated and to a large extent stylized, are still the individual reactions of two different characters. Palamon's grief is violent and emotional:

> Swich sorwe he maketh that the grete tour
> Resouneth of his youlyng and clamour. (11.1277-8)

Arcite suffers the decline of the conventional lover; he loses his appetite, grows thin,

> And solitaire he was and evere allone,
> And waillynge al the nyght, makynge his mone. (11.1365-6)

His wailing and moaning is more restrained and passive than Palamon's 'youlyng', which shakes the great tower to its foundations, and the phrase 'makynge his mone' suggests that Arcite is deliberately indulging in grief.

When Arcite is exiled he makes no attempt to return to Athens or to win Emily until told to do so in a dream. Even then he runs no real risk as he is practical enough to use his disfigurement by

sorrow as an effective disguise, and after his return he is content to serve Emily from a distance; he is playing the game according to the courtly rules rather than consumed by actual human passion for Emily. Palamon, on the other hand, escapes from prison and sets out with the resolution of raising an army in Thebes and fighting for Emily's hand. He takes refuge in a wood:

> And til a grove faste ther bisyde
> With dredful foot thanne stalketh Palamon. (11.1478-9)

He is seen as a hunted wild beast hiding in fear, yet the fact that he is crouching in the undergrowth makes him full of menace for the unsuspecting Arcite, who, in a conventional lover's lament, gives away his identity to the lurking Palamon.

> This Palamoun, that thoughte that thurgh his herte
> He felte a coold swerd sodeynliche glyde,
> For ire he quook, no longer wolde he byde.
> And whan that he had herd Arcites tale,
> As he were wood, with face deed and pale,
> He stirte hym up out of the buskes thikke. (11.1574-9)

His jealousy is so intense that he feels it as a physical pain, a cold sword gliding through his heart, and the sensation is communicated to the reader by the smooth icy sounds of 'swerd sodeynliche'. Palamon is completely at the mercy of his passions; he is unarmed, yet he impetuously rushes out of the bushes to fight Arcite, who, more reasonable and chivalrous, suggests that they fight the next day when he has procured weapons and armour for his foe.

In their choice of protective deities before the battle the two lovers decide their own fates, and each chooses in accordance with his own character. Arcite, the chivalrous, chooses Mars and asks for victory, whereas Palamon abandons knightly dignity and begs Venus for Emily's love, even at the cost of defeat in battle. Love has supplanted all other considerations in his life and if he cannot have Emily he chooses death in preference to life without her.

The point is that the gods, as Mr Whittock himself shows (but without following his observation to its logical conclusion), represent the passions of Mars, Venus and Diana, and the Tale shows how these passions work themselves out in man; the gods are rooted in man's own heart and are merely extensions of the human personalities. Far from man's being a puppet manipulated by the gods, his own passions rise above him, are deified, and eventually destroy him.

Chaucer and the characters themselves make so many references to Fortune and to the malice of the gods that it may seem that the power of Destiny over mankind is indeed the theme of the Tale. Chaucer was obviously fascinated by the supposed role of Destiny

in human affairs, and therefore put many speeches on the subject into the mouths of his characters. But these speeches, though often profound and moving, do not alter the facts of the story. Chaucer was equally fascinated by the purely human situations, and it was this that engaged his imagination. The following passage provides an interesting contrast of tone:

> Therwith the fyr of jalousie up sterte
> Withinne his brest, and hente him by the herte
> So woodly that he lyk was to biholde
> The boxtree or the asshen dede and colde.
> Thanne seyde he, 'O crueel goddes that governe
> This world with byndyng of youre word eterne,
> And writen in the table of athamaunt
> Youre parlement and youre eterne graunt,
> What is mankynde more unto you holde
> Than is the sheep that rouketh in the folde? (11.1299-308)

It is the contrast of passion and thought. Palamon's philosophy teaches him to blame his sufferings on the gods and he does so in measured, rhetorical terms that have little in common with the frenzy of the preceding passion. 'Hente', literally 'seized', implies that he is powerless against a force that takes hold of him, but there is no need of recourse to the gods for an explanation of this force, which is the 'fyr' of jealousy that burns him up so that in the end he is like the 'asshen dede and colde'. Only when this passion has run its course does Palamon attempt to rationalise the situation, using, in contrast to the vivid imagery of the fire, the learned foreign words of philosophy: 'governe', 'eterne', 'athamaunt', 'parlement'.

The 'disruptive force in this ideal world of chivalric order' is not Fortune, but love, a human passion that shatters the natural order of things, turns friend against friend, and destroys all normal loyalties and moral values. It stirs up the accompanying passions of hatred and jealousy, leading inevitably to death and tragedy.

On many occasions during the course of the poem Arcite refers to the fickleness of Fortune and blames the malice of the gods for his fate, but in his dying lament it is Emily, not a blind and malignant goddess, who is 'the endere of my life' and 'my swete foo'. In the crisis of death his philosophy drops from him and he acknowledges the human passion that has wrecked his life.

Palamon and Arcite work out their own destinies by their choice of deities, in itself an acknowledgement of which passions are ruling their lives. At the same time man's limitations are clearly shown. Arcite thinks he can control his fate by choosing Mars and asking for victory, but it happens ironically that his own words earlier in the Tale are prophetic:

> We seken faste after felicitee,
> But we goon wrong ful ofte, trewely. (11.1266-7)

What emerges from *The Knight's Tale* is that the course of man's life is determined by his own actions and passions interacting with the circumstances in which he finds himself, but that man cannot foresee his own best interests or plan his life as he wishes. Chaucer uses the medieval concept of Fortune, but his own vision rises above it and makes man responsible, within certain understandable limitations, for his own destiny; he makes use of supernatural phenomena, but as in the case of the burning brands, he gives a rational explanation, showing that this too is just part of his machinery for telling the tale:

> And as it queynte it made a whistelynge,
> As doon thise wete brondes in hir brennynge. (11.2337-8)

Where Fate does rule completely is in the realm of death, and that is why Arcite's fall from his horse is a blow from the gods, the only real intervention of Fate in the Tale.

## REFERENCES

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1 R. K. Gordon, *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, p. 82. Dent, 1942.

2 Elizabeth Salter, *Chaucer: The Knight's Tale*, p. 11. Arnold, 1962.

3 Op. cit., p. 33.

4 *Theoria* 13, 1959. *Chaucer's 'Knight's Tale'*, p. 28.

# CAN AESTHETICS BE SCIENTIFIC?

*by* B. D. FAULDS

THE SCIENTIFIC STUDY of aesthetics has in psychology a long but uneven history. G. T. Fechner, one of the founders of experimental psychology, published on aesthetics and provided some of the methods still in use: nor was he the only German scientist of the nineteenth century to share this interest (Boring, 1957). Psychology feels no theoretical restraints about studying aesthetics: every observable aspect of human behaviour is grist to some experimenter's mill. There are, however, at least three practical difficulties, which have the combined effect of relegating aesthetics to a minor rôle in (at least current) psychology.

(i) Exact, clear, repeatable methods often serve only to answer trivial questions; conversely important questions can be given only unsatisfactory, insecure, or partial answers. This difficulty is by no means unique to aesthetic experimentation.
(ii) Other aspects of human and animal behaviour appear to offer higher dividends, and accordingly attract the bulk of research effort.
(iii) Perhaps, harking back to Snow's Two Culture debate (1961) scientists feel ill at ease in what is commonly taken to be an artistic stronghold. They may feel that they lack the background to examine and comment on aesthetic matters, an opinion which their arts colleagues may be keen to endorse. Some of the experimental studies to which we shall come may well suggest to readers that Snow was on the right track.

Following a scheme of Hunter Mead (1952) we now consider whether aesthetics is any or all of (i) appreciation, (ii) production, (iii) criticism of works of art; and (iv) whether the content of the work of art contributes to its aesthetic quality. Then again we may ask (v) what is the nature of the aesthetic experience, and (vi) what is its relation to the rest of man's experience? From this broad range of topics laboratory studies usually restrict themselves to the first and fifth: in particular we exclude the fourth, content, and the sixth, what we might term the use of aesthetics. Content in a work of art means that we might judge a work of art on grounds related to its content: moral, religious, economic or historical. These seem secondary to the aesthetic experience and so we wish to avoid them, a

distinction which, far from originating in the laboratory, is as old as Plato (Pratt, 1961). Likewise, the uses of aesthetics—moral exhortation, teaching, the pursuit of the true, the beautiful and the good—seem similarly secondary.

To assist in the narrowing of attention we introduce some vocabulary: stimulus, sensation, percept, and concept. Stimuli imply the physics of the experience presented to the senses. Sensation is hard to separate profoundly from percept, but is to be thought of as atomistic, while percepts are the organised sensations, or sensations patterns with meaning; and probably learned on the basis of experience, though some may be innate. Concepts are organised or categorised percepts—the abstracted or common meaning of a class of percepts. To illustrate the use of these terms: it may be that we do not need to perceive in any detail well-known concepts. Again, thinking is commonly supposed to be done largely in terms of concepts. Again, when a concept is named—say a chair—and one is asked to imagine a chair, it is a particular percept that is recalled to the mind's eye. The aesthetic experience is now related to percepts; neither, strictly, to concepts nor sensations, though certain sensations may be pleasurable in much the way that aesthetic experiences are. Stimuli which suggest concepts undoubtedly initiate strong and often pleasurable experiences, reminding us of happy or anxious personal moments, or provoking us to action of some sort. The aesthetic experience on the other hand is rather hard to describe at all—it is enjoyable, satisfying, of course, but after saying this we may need to transfer to a more physiological frame of reference. The idea of detachment from the everyday world is common in aesthetic performance and productions: to assist the audience there are many devices such as the framing of pictures, stage lighting, the formal dress of performing artists and so on.

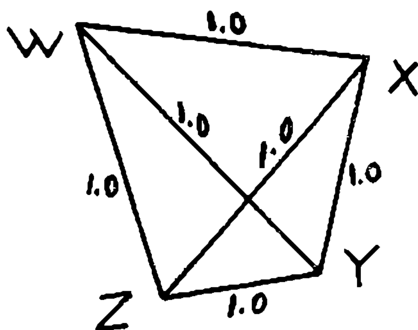
What therefore are the characteristics of percepts that will produce an aesthetic experience? We may begin our experimentation with or without a prior hypothesis. If we start without the hypothesis various stimuli, melodies, pictures, etc. are presented to observers, who then have to choose those that are to them the most beautiful. The resulting data are examined for consistency in various ways. This type of experiment is old, and is more sophisticated than to decide the truth of the matter merely by majority decision. We may, for example, assume that there is a psychological continuum of aesthetic merit, and develop procedures of assigning numerical scale values to each of the compositions (Torgerson, 1961). What can we do with the results? The philosopher Dickie (1962) believes little or nothing, saying that if the results are in conflict with expert opinion then nobody is going to accept the result; and if the results agree with expert opinion then the experiment was not worth doing

anyway. This is being unduly harsh. If the experimental observers are naive and untrained, and can still manage to agree with the experts then we get the reassuring feeling that the experts are still in the real world; and if the naive judges disagree with the experts then we are in the still more interesting position of having to try and decide why. If the naive judges disagree with the experts, it must be that they are judging in a different manner, and modern psychometrics (Torgerson, op. cit.) offers some interesting methods of examining the bases on which judgments are being made. Using analogous assumptions to those of classical psychophysics we can derive a so-called matrix of interpoint distances. For example suppose we are judging four melodies, pictures, or other artistic compositions A, B, C, and D. On a linear scale their values might be 0.0, 0.5, 1.0 and 1.5 respectively. These values imply the matrix of interpoint distances at the left, below.

| | A | B | C | D |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | 0.0 | 0.5 | 1.0 | 1.5 |
| B | 0.5 | 0.0 | 0.5 | 1.0 |
| C | 1.0 | 0.5 | 0.0 | 0.5 |
| D | 1.5 | 1.0 | 0.5 | 0.0 |

| | W | X | Y | Z |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| W | 0.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 |
| X | 1.0 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 |
| Y | 1.0 | 1.0 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| Z | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 0.0 |

Suppose, however, that for four other stimuli W, X, Y and Z we found the matrix of interpoint distances at the right. Common sense tells us that the four stimuli cannot lie on a linear scale. These distances do, however, form a possible configuration in three-dimensional space, as shown in the sketch, and in recent years procedures




have been developed for determining the best-fitting configuration in a space of whatever dimensionality seems indicated. The way is now open to fit meaningful axes into this space, and possibly as a result achieve insights about the nature of aesthetic judgement that not even the experts suggested. These modern developments have

so far not paid many dividends, partly because the calculations are formidable: the spread of electronic computers must in time rectify this.

To discuss experimentation that begins with a hypothesis let us claim, for example, that the heart of the aesthetic experience is becoming aware of relations in a percept, or between percepts. A relation here is a little vague: several kinds are implied. There may be a connection in (i) space or time, and of (ii) any of several qualities, such as colour, shape, size, loudness, pitch, timbre and so on. The connection may be (iii) similar, repetitive or contrasting. A rectangle whose sides are in the ratio of $\sqrt{2}:1$ is now potentially a most beautiful rectangle, in that repeating or halving it does not alter its shape. On the basis of this hypothesis we now prepare a number of varied rectangles, and see how frequently ours is selected as the most pleasing by a group of observers. Fechner performed various experiments of this nature. The philosopher Dickie (1962) and the psychologist Pratt (1961) agree, however, that the simple situations Fechner used have little to do with the rich texture of many works of art, even though Fechner's results are not at variance with the general line of aesthetic theory, with its insistence on form, balance, and so on.

In another example we think of two chords: the first consists of two notes with their frequencies in the ratio 3:4; the second chord consists also of two notes, but with frequencies in no simple ratio. These may be presented to a series of experimental observers for their judgment as to which is the more pleasing: it is generally agreed that the first sounds the better. Is it because we have become aware of the relationship between the two components? This is unlikely: we are certainly not aware of the numerical relation 3:4 without prior study, and may even be unaware of the vibrational nature of sound. The status of the relationship which makes for a pleasing percept is therefore somewhat vague: but it does not seem that it needs to be consciously understood. For this example Helmholtz in the theory of common overtones thought he had an explanation at a physiological level, to which we shall return in a slightly different context.

These are the two main types of experiment. A variation on the second approach is to theorise at will, and then to check whether common experience upholds the implications of the theorising, and the rest of this article will review some modern theorising. It is of course understood that the distinction between an appeal to common experience and to a formal experiment is not absolute.

For one explanation of why certain percepts may be inherently pleasing we consider a recent argument by Erich Simonauer (1964), a Berlin psychoanalyst: (i) out of the endless variety of forms which

strike us, it is the comparatively rare, regular, symmetrical, or repetitive, which strike us as pleasing: (ii) such stimuli exert an influence on other species also, and more profoundly, in that they effect certain important behaviours, such as nurturing, mating, or reacting to competitors. Simonauer is thinking of the Releaser in the IRM-releaser sequences as described by Tinbergen (1951) and others. The IRM, short for Innate Releasing Mechanism, is a doctrine of instinct, based on long and meticulous field study, and holds that many behaviours can be broken down into smaller components which take place sequentially; and that for the animal to perform each of these actions the stimulus conditions need to be just right, otherwise the behaviour cannot take place. The stimulus or stimulus conditions which are then sufficient to trigger the next step in the behaviour, are called releasers, serving to release the instinctive behaviour pattern. Many of the releasers are striking and distinctive and, for example, one of the effects of the system is to minimise interspecific matings. An example from Tinbergen is the feeding of herring gull chicks, where the releaser for the chicks' gaping is a red spot on the parents' bills: the releaser for the parents' response of depositing food is the wide gape of the chick. In the human we have less reliance on instinct—the IRMs no longer persist as gross instigators of behaviour—but perhaps they are still present in an attenuated form, evoking only the pleasurable or painful feelings which are the aesthetic experience. Simonauer's argument then develops along Freudian structural lines, not needed for our present purposes. For confirmation this argument suggests looking to animals between man and those with obvious IRMs. The outlook is not promising, because in every animal below man aesthetic appreciation seems singularly absent. One type of study only, seems to fill the gap, and it is of a kind which many people find hard to take seriously—chimpanzee painting. Simonauer quotes Morris's (1962) work at length, concluding that while ape-drawings differ from those of the trained adult a good deal in level, they do not differ in kind: that is, they may follow basically the same compositional rules.

Another suggestion, intended to strengthen the connection between aesthetic feelings and IRMs, is the Freudian (1938) idea that 'beautiful' has as its origin 'that which was sexually exciting'.

It follows that if we try and maintain the connection between the IRM and the aesthetic feeling, then content of the artistic production is still secondary; and its effect on the viewer or hearer will be determined by the previous experiences of that person in his own lifetime, while the aesthetic experience proper is of an older order. We are therefore not surprised that different ages and cultures have their own styles and typical contents; but we would expect a more basic continuity underlying the chosen content.

The American mathematician George Birkhoff (1956) presented in the 1930s a mathematical theory of aesthetics which we must consider. His three main variables are: (i) C, or complexity of the object. We may think of the amount of perceptual effort needed to take in the characteristics of the object. Thus Fechner's rectangles would count as simple, a Bach organ fugue as complex. Birkhoff writes the complexity as a sum of a long series of terms, each term being the perceptual effort for one line or feature of the object, weighted perhaps by the number of times the person attends to that particular feature. These simple elements which constitute the whole percept can then enter into the sorts of formal relation already introduced: repetition, similarity, contrast, and so on. Many of these relations have a positive feeling-tone—they are pleasant—some may be neutral or negative in feeling tone. (ii) O, or order, in its turn is also a sum of a long series of terms, each term being the amount of feeling-tone (positive, neutral or negative) characteristic of each of the formal relations that are detected between the various components of the percept. The practical details of assigning values to these two variables remained speculative; and perhaps as a result there has been less interest in Birkhoff's ideas than they merit. (iii) Then M, the aesthetic measure, is given merely by O/C. Note that if our components, C, in two works are the same, but in the one suggest more relations than in the other, then the first has the higher aesthetic value. Again the formula implies that if we have an artistic work with a given O and C, if we are able to reduce C, O will most likely fall as well, but if O does not fall too precipitously, we may well finish up with a higher ratio O/C. An example of this may be the beginner in photography, whose crowded pictures must be cropped down to a few main features representing a good composition and impact, and, if Birkhoff is right, a maximum O/C. Similarly this may explain the attraction of composers for the string quartet: they renounce the additional relations open to them in the other orchestral instruments, and restricting themselves to the four similar voices, try to maximise the number of relations still open to them.

We also feel that this process can be carried too far—that as C is reduced by the removal of elements the possibility of a large O is drastically reduced. With chamber music we are close to this point of diminishing return in the string quartet. There are string trios, of course, and even sonatas for solo violin; but perhaps by then the C-resources are becoming too attenuated to satisfy many composers. While not stated by Birkhoff it seems a reasonable inference that a work of art with a very large C may, the first time it is seen or heard, not be very enjoyable, because the human perceptual apparatus has a limited rate at which it can process information, and only a fraction

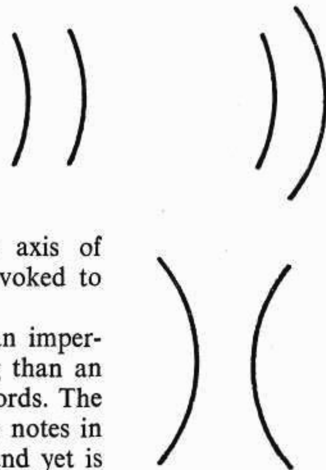
of the total relations in O may be perceived, giving an unfavourable ratio O/C. Subsequent presentations may reveal other relations, raising the ratio. Again we undoubtedly get to know and appreciate a composer's or an artist's style, and a person familiar with a composer's style is more likely to enjoy hearing an unknown piece by that composer than a person who does not know the composer.

Here, though, we encounter a difficulty with both Birkhoff and Simonauer, in having to consider the rôle played by memory and learning. If, say, Simonauer is right, and our aesthetic feeling is a vestige of an instinctive biological response such as the IRM, why is our artistic enjoyment a growing function of age and experience. For an example of this point we quote from the British investigator H. W. Wing (1948). He was developing a series of tests to detect musical talent. In one test he took some Bach chorales and rewrote their harmonies, making them thin and poor in technical ways such as moving parallel fifths. He hoped or expected that when asked to choose between the two versions, people with musical feeling would choose that of the master. In the end he had to recast the test a good deal, widening the gap between the quality of the original version and the poor version to achieve any discrimination at ages younger than adult.

Now in Birkhoff's terms, if relations are the basis of aesthetic feelings, surely one of the main situations in which to observe relations will be where the two things which stand in a relation to each other need not both be present in the percept, but one of them can be in the memory. Indeed for music this seems essential, especially if we think in terms of a symphony movement which may take 20 minutes. Note that this addition enables us to accept without surprise the fact of aesthetic growth and education. Again, if we experience the same percepts on many occasions it allows us the additional time necessary to perceive all the relations in a very full structure. In Birkhoff's symbols the C might be increasing, the O will certainly be. With very rich structures this process might continue almost indefinitely. There cannot be many, for example, who feel that they have exhausted the possibilities to be seen in the St Matthew Passion, or a work of similar stature.

While broadly adding memory in this way has expanded our scope considerably, we shall now see that a more detailed study of learning and memory will suggest additional ideas as to the nature of the aesthetic response. After decades of somewhat dry animal and theoretical studies, research on learning and memory has in recent years blossomed on a broad physiological and biochemical front, and the near future will probably see a satisfying physiological explanation of the elusive and hoary problem as to what a memory really is. Here I should like to point out some parallels between aesthetic

feeling and some of the classic experiments in learning going right back to Pavlov and the salivary response in dogs. (i) The dog having been conditioned, mere repetition of the stimulus is not sufficient to sustain the response. It is as if the dog gets bored or sated. Likewise we cannot hear the same melody, particularly if it is a short one, and continue to take pleasure in it if it is repeated indefinitely. (ii) The dog no longer responding, is rested, and at some future time the response will have spontaneously returned. Compare this with the return of aesthetic pleasure in a hard-worked favourite after a decent rest. (iii) The dog having ceased to salivate to the bell, the bell is paired with any novel intrusive stimulus: the salivary response may again be evoked. A similar phenomenon is hard to deny in aesthetic feeling: a repetition is on the whole a pleasing relation—for a time—but then it begins to pall: our pleasure can be restored if it is repeated, but not quite exactly. This procedure is most clearly seen in music; but holds in drawing as well, as we can see if we consider the two figures at the right. The second is probably the more interesting. A different variation of the design, as shown, would probably be still more interesting, but introduces another axis of symmetry, which might also be invoked to account for it.



Other examples of the idea of an imperfect repetition being more pleasing than an identical are in simple two-note chords. The octave is the most similar that two notes in a chord can be, short of unison, and yet is not regarded as a particularly interesting chord: pride of place today seems to go to the thirds and sixths. Helmholtz's theory of consonance as being due to common overtones would predict that the most consonant intervals would be octave, fifth, fourth, major third, etc., but this is surely not the order in which they would fall when judged according to aesthetic criteria. In any case Western harmony and chords are unknown in various other cultures, which argues for an appreciation of harmony as being learned rather than being determined by the physical matter of common overtones.

Lest we too readily accept that an imperfect repetition is always aesthetically pleasing, a caution is in order. At times the repetition, though it is recognized as similar, does not seem to belong and introduces a feeling of strain. One of Mozart's string quintets, for

example, is also scored for wind-band, and if a person is familiar with only one of these settings, to be surprised with the other may introduce a slightly unpleasant feeling of strain until he has so to speak sorted it out. Perhaps a literary or artistic plagiarism has much the same effect. In yet another field Hebb (1946) has described observations, and supplied a theoretical formulation that is perhaps applicable here: chimpanzees take fright at familiar things, such as their keeper or a fellow chimpanzee, when these appear in an unusual guise, for instance being differently dressed, or anaesthetised.

This can lead us to the last point that I want to mention; being the venerable one of emotion in art. What is it that makes a given piece of music, for example, sound happy, or sad, or sprightly? Is it in the music? Is it created anew by each listener? Is it that one cannot perceive at all, without some sort of emotional connotation being implied? Is it that growing up in a culture of a particular kind we learn that certain types of music go with certain emotions? These speculations have produced arguments and discussions for many years, and yet do not seem much closer to solution. Pratt (op. cit.) reviews the current position in some detail, but inconclusively. Music is probably the best art form about which to talk, because once again we want to discount the content ideas of the work: except for some very obvious examples of programme music it is up to the listener what the meaning of the music, or the effect on him, will be.

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# THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE LIBRARY

*by* J. BERTHOUD

IT WILL BE at once obvious that inherent in the words of my title lies a dual problem. The two terms in which it consists—that of the 'Italian Renaissance' and that of the 'historical library'—have both aroused considerable controversy, and I cannot enter into my subject without some introductory explanations.

Ever since the end of the nineteenth century, when Burkhardt on the Continent and Addington Symonds in Britain popularized the word 'renaissance'—a word, in their view, implying a radically new birth, a rediscovery of the lost treasures of antiquity, indeed, a kind of causeless flowering of the spirit—this notion has been under attack, particularly by medievalists at pains to demonstrate the existence of previous periods of renaissance (for example, that of the ninth and twelfth centuries) and by analytical historians hostile to the simple-minded division of the continuum of history into rigid periods. In using the term 'renaissance', therefore, I must make it clear at once that I imply that something in a measure distinct and identifiable took place in the Italy of the fifteenth century; but at the same time, I impose upon myself the duty to take into account, for purposes of anticipation as well as of contrast, the libraries of the medieval period.

As for the second term—that of the historical library—it also requires explanation, for it implies a number of problems. First, there exist practically no comprehensive histories of library institutions. The most reliable bibliographies provide only three titles.[1] The historian's task, therefore, reduces itself to making a synthesis out of a multitude of fragmentary references in studies fundamentally devoted to other matters. Second, much of the information available consists of anecdotes or descriptions of buildings, catalogues, benches, bindings, and illuminations. I am not denying that this information is necessary: a library does indeed consist of the salary of the librarian and the material of the book-cases. But one will easily see the inadequacy of such information if one considers for a moment an ancient and basic distinction, that between the library and the archive. While the archive is, obviously, nothing more than a repository, the library is far more directly concerned with matters of the mind; it is, in the fullest sense of the word, a cultural phenomenon: not only is it an expression of the culture that gave it birth, it also reacts upon that culture, either confirming it, as

in the period of the great monastic libraries, or transforming it, as in the period to which this paper is devoted. To do justice to the libraries of the Renaissance, it is not enough to describe them: one must relate them to the general movements of the age, that is, one must take into account the nature of the society which produced them, the specific function they performed in that society, and men's motives for building them. I shall be compelled, therefore, in dealing with my topic, to devote some attention to what was formerly described as 'the revival of learning' but which is now perhaps more fairly known as 'humanism'.

* * * *

The Renaissance libraries are founded on the monastic libraries of the middle ages; it is therefore necessary to pass them under review before proceeding to the main topic. The twenty-seven odd public libraries of Rome had silently vanished during the fifth century, largely on account, it is said, of Christian indifference or iconoclasm. The succeeding period, however, saw the gradual emergence, in the midst of some notable private collections, of small monastic libraries, the core of which consisted of the essential books of Christian doctrine, but which also admitted certain pagan texts, used principally for teaching Latin and rhetoric. To avoid irrelevance, I shall confine myself to two examples on which to base my conclusions: the library of the Monte Cassino monastery in central Italy and that of St Gall in northern Switzerland. To both of these I shall return when I come to deal with the Renaissance proper.

The monastery of Monte Cassino was founded by St Benedict, traditionally called the father of the monastic movement, in c. 529 A.D., when he drew up a set of rules defining the nature of the monastic life and correcting the excesses of previous asceticism. The 48th Chapter of these rules is particularly apposite:

> Idleness is the enemy of the soul. Hence brethren ought at certain seasons to occupy themselves with manual labour, and at certain hours with holy reading . . . During Lent, let them apply themselves to reading from morning until the end of the third hour, and in these days of Lent, let them receive a book apiece from the library and read it straight through. These books are to be given out at the beginning of Lent.[2]

This rule can scarcely be interpreted as an invitation to read for delight. The motive, rather, is a 'utilitarian' one: books prevent idleness; reading takes place during the annual period of fasting and penitence; the library serves religious discipline and meditation. Although it was not Benedict, but his younger contemporary, Cassiodorus, who imparted a learned impulse to monastic libraries—an impulse magnificently sustained in the ninth century by the scholars

of the Carolingian court and ultimately responsible for making the monastic libraries perform the role of *preserving* classical learning—nevertheless, the basically *religious* orientation of these libraries must be attributed to Benedict's 48th Chapter.

The nature and extent of this religious orientation can easily be assessed through an examination of the quotations set out below.[3] In c. 510 A.D. the following rubric is cut above the entrance to a reading room:

> He whose thoughts are on the laws of God may sit and ponder over holy books.

In the sixth century, Cassiodorus, inspired by the zeal to maintain and propagate classical learning, is no less orthodox:

> Satan receives as many wounds as the monk copies words of the Lord.

The catalogue of a monastic library for the year 831 A.D. closes with the words:

> Here then, are the treasures of the monastery, here are riches feeding the soul with the sweetness of the heavenly life.

A celebrated and perhaps proverbial expression formulated about 1170 states: 'A monastery without a book-chest is like a castle without an armoury', where the word 'armoury' obviously evokes St Paul's famous metaphor of the Christian as the soldier of God. As late as the fourteenth century, Richard de Bury, contemplating the foundation of a university library at Oxford, can nevertheless write in his *Philobiblion* that the book is

> the source of eternal truth, the light of the faithful soul, the weapon bestowed by God to combat all heresy . . .

These quotations, it is true, span a period of ten centuries—enough to daunt the most resolute generalizer—and, if examined in their implications, indeed reveal the changing temper of changing periods. Yet the common denominator leaps to the eye: the monastic libraries were designed essentially to serve the ends of the monastic life—a life of contemplation and retreat, dedicated to gaining admittance to heaven. They remained small, not simply because books were expensive and laborious to reproduce, but chiefly because their prime function required only the indispensable Christian texts. It would not be an exaggeration to describe such libraries as instruments for Christian salvation.

A moment's thought will show that the monastic libraries exerted a powerful conservative influence; indeed, it is no coincidence that my five quotations are, despite the length of time that separates them, so similar in spirit. Practically identical, and scattered over the surface of Europe, they preserved the essential traditions of the Christian faith and acted as a bulwark against radical change.

However, it would be a falsification not to insist on the fact that

they were also conservative in a different sense. Partly because the monasteries were also schools, which produced scholars, and partly because the protection and leisure they offered made learning possible, they became repositories conserving Latin texts in the West and Greek texts in the East. Inevitably, in their search for works useful for their pedagogic purposes, scholars encountered other works which, if they did not always read, they at least did not destroy. The library of Monte Cassino does indeed respond, in the course of its long and glorious history,[4] to high points of medieval culture.

However, the monastery which perhaps best exhibits the medieval library in its capacity as preserver of learning is that of St Gall. It was founded c. 590 A.D. by St Columban, a representative of that remarkable monastic civilization of Ireland of the early middle ages which, itself untouched by tribal migrations, illuminated great portions of Europe with its art and scholarship. Some of our finest extant codices[5] date from that period. At the time of the Carolingian renaissance, the St Gall library underwent a new expansion, the volumes of which increased to the then astonishing number of a thousand, and were catalogued by such librarians as Nokter Balbulus, a scholar of international repute. While we are reminded of the essentially religious orientation of this community by the existence of a calendar of daily saints indicating the appropriate lives to be found in the library, we must also remark that St Gall produced a long line of distinguished scholars and writers obviously inspired by the books at their disposal. From surviving architectural plans we know that the library was held in unique esteem. We are told that it was 'as large as the sacristy' and that, in conformity to the pattern established at Monte Cassino, it consisted of two storeys, 'the lower furnished as a *scriptorium*[6] . . . the upper . . . for the storage of books'.

I have said that the monastic libraries form the basis of their Renaissance counterparts. Not only did their rediscovery inspire Italian humanists to extend their search for the Greek and Latin documents that were to stock the Florentine and Roman collections, but their very influence, as I have tried to hint, and shall try to demonstrate, made possible this so-called 'revival of learning'.

* * * *

I have just spoken of their 'rediscovery': this implies that they were obscured and forgotten. In fact, the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries witnessed a process of development which transferred learning from the monasteries to the cathedral schools and, in time, the universities. From the eleventh century, Europe began to feel the secularising effect of a general, though by no means uninterrupted, growth in population and wealth. The rise of the Domi-

nican and Franciscan orders, devoted to the active as opposed to the contemplative life, and the evolution of university scholasticism in France and law and medicine in Italy, eclipsed the monasteries. The new religious orders undermined their meditative character, the new universities replaced their educational function.

The remarkable fact about the late medieval universities is that they contributed little or nothing to the new humanism, and that their libraries played an insignificant part in the dissemination of general culture. It is impossible to provide an adequate explanation for this here. The attitude of the new religious orders to books was narrowly utilitarian—St Francis, for example, considered himself, in the simplicity of his pure heart, the enemy of learning—essentially concerned, that is, with meeting the demands of the curricula of the theological, medical and legal faculties. The university culture of the thirteenth century, largely the result of the impact of Aristotle and Islam, developed its own, independent momentum: the Dominican *stationarii*[7] served this self-sufficient culture with blinkered devotion. Inevitably the universities would remain aloof from humanism, and the result was that their libraries rapidly became little more than collections of prescribed books and scholastic texts.[8]

That the universities of Italy were a source of great pride and prestige to the cities that harboured them is sufficiently indicated by the fact that Bologna, for example, in 1350, lavished *half* its annual revenue on the salaries of professors and scholars. But this must not obscure their indifference, perhaps their hostility, to the new learning. At Pavia, for instance, out of thirty eminent doctors in 1400, only two held chairs in humanism, one in Greek, the other in Rhetoric;[9] at Padua, a jurist received a huge annual stipend of a thousand ducats, while the solitary humanist teaching at the university could only, in 1453, extract forty ducats. The new humanism in Italy, and hence the libraries it produced, can no more be associated with the universities than with the monasteries: it is bound up rather with the growth of the great secular princes of the commercial city-states.

* * * *

The period I intend to cover begins with Petrarch (1304-1374) and ends with the sack of Rome by Charles V's troops (1527). A period lasting about 150 years, with the first humanist at one end and the last Renaissance pope at the other, cannot obviously be described here without rigorous selection. I shall therefore limit myself to the following scheme: for the introductory period, roughly the fourteenth century, during which the first manuscripts were discovered and the first symptoms of infatuation with antiquity evinced,

I shall concentrate on the work and influence of Petrarch only. For the main period, the fifteenth century, which saw the evolution of Greek and Hebrew studies, the formation of learned academies, the accumulation of codices and the establishment of the first Western public libraries, I shall limit myself to Florence and Rome, to the courts of Cosimo de' Medici and Pope Nicholas V, and leave out, alas, the libraries established in Milan, Venice and Naples, even though these have unique and individual interest. For the final period, the first part of the sixteenth century, I shall again limit myself to Rome and Florence, to late Medici popes and dukes. I shall conclude, in the form of a summary, with an analysis of the library of the Dukes of Urbino.

When Petrarch died in 1374, he was discovered by his servants in his private library, head buried—literally, this time—in a monumental volume, it is said, of Cicero. It would be difficult to devise a more fitting end. Although Petrarch received a formal education in law, one can scarcely imagine the sensitive and temperamental poet of the lady Laura remaining long enslaved by the fascinations of the civil code. His first enthusiasm for vernacular poetry is well known, but it is not with Petrarch the sonneteer that we are concerned here. Fairly early he turned his back on Italian, a language for which he conceived an increasing contempt as his attention was more and more absorbed by the study of classical Rome. These studies were centred on the work of Cicero, on whom he modelled his Latin style and from whom he evolved an educational ideal based on the Roman concept of *humanitas* (the cultivation of man's moral and intellectual individuality) and *civitas* (the republican patriciate's standard of public responsibility). He early recognized the limitations imposed by the scarcity of manuscripts, and at once began to assemble his own library. His search for codices led his agents to the four corners of Europe: among his irreplaceable finds one can quote the letters of Cicero and a treatise by the same author on the theme of glory.[10] Texts thus assembled he eagerly studied, and his library was guarded by his servants like a shrine. Although he valued fine bindings and beauty of script, he laid far greater emphasis on purity of text, and can be considered a pioneer among those for whom the study of the past is more than a means of confirming their prejudices. In a series of letters to a friend, Luca di Penna, he extols the duty of collecting and preserving codices, and again defines his attitude to the private library:

> Gold, silver, gems, splendid raiment, marble palaces, the cultivation of property, ornate tablets, armoured horses, etc. provide a superficial and speechless kind of pleasure; books heartily delight us, speak to us, counsel us, and are joined to us, as it were, in a living and active comradeship.[11]

Doubtless inspired by the public libraries established by Augustus Caesar, he was the first to conceive of large public institutions. In 1362 he bestowed his own books to Venice, for, as he put it himself, 'the comfort of the intelligent and noble people *who may happen to take delight in such things*'.[12]

This information, inadequate as it is, permits us to draw certain conclusions. To be sure, Petrarch's suspicion of ostentation and his emphasis on the contemplative life reveal the lingering influence of 'medievalism' (although such overt attitudes were contradicted by his private vanity and gregariousness). By and large, however, the elements of his doctrine of humanism stand clear: a return to the secular wisdom of the urban civilization of Greece and Rome viewed in its historical distance, and a challenge to imitate and spread this civilization, not to the clergy, but to 'the intelligent and the noble'. Now, inspiring as the thought of Petrarch's prophetic power may be, it is in itself less astonishing than the truly overwhelming manner in which his ideas and enthusiasms imposed themselves on the age; and it is less interesting to call Petrarch the 'father of humanism' than to try to understand why the Italy of his time found itself so appropriately ready to receive his impact. Almost without effort, Petrarch found himself possessed of a legendary fame: his society was eagerly sought, his purse repeatedly replenished. Much has been written on the social, political, and economic development of Italy during the late middle ages. It has been rightly suggested that the cultural life of a society depends on expanding wealth, and the expansion of Italian trade, banking, and manufacture has been analysed in detail. The inter-destructiveness of Empire and Papacy, the removal of a unifying political control, the growth of competitive city states, their pride in their independence and identity—all these have long since been seen as forming a causal chain not unrelated to that incomparable artistic energy manifested in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. But these factors, though indisputable, do not sufficiently explain the conjunction of humanism and political power, the alliance of scholar and prince so characteristic of the Italian Renaissance. It seems to me that such cities as Naples, Rome, Venice, Milan, and Florence, for all their variety, nevertheless possessed a common factor: the uncertainty, perhaps even the anxiety, characteristic of societies that have evolved in a direction radically different from that to which they are accustomed. The new phenomenon in Europe, that of a commercial, secular, urban oligarchy which we find in the Italy of Petrarch's time, needed confirmation, assurance, authority. This it found in what Petrarch and others were beginning to offer: a Roman civilization, like itself, secular, commercial, and urban, and above all anchored in unassailable prestige. It is not surprising that the rediscovery of historical

Rome assumed the force of a revelation. In less than a generation after Petrarch, humanists were found in innumerable civic and diplomatic positions. Their new rhetoric, their invigorated Latin style both written and spoken, became powerful weapons of negotiation and debate; their pens were employed in every department of government requiring record; they became the object of perhaps the most lavish patronage of the time.

An immediate result of this deification of Rome was a feverish search for the manuscripts that would enable Italians to drink from the fountain itself. As an example, I will simply quote Boccacio's story of his pursuit of manuscripts at Monte Cassino, as recorded by his disciple Benvenuto da Imola.[13]

> Desirous of seeing the collection of books, which he understood to be a very choice one, Boccaccio modestly asked a monk—for he was always most courteous in manners—to open the library, as a favour, for him. The monk answered stiffly, pointing to a steep staircase, 'Go up; it is open'. Boccaccio went up gladly; but he found that the place which held so great a treasure, was without door or key. He entered and saw grass sprouting on the windows, and all the books and benches thick with dust. In his astonishment he began to open and turn the leaves of first one tome and then another, and found many and diverse volumes of ancient and foreign works. Some of them has lost several sheets; others were snipped and pared all round the text, and mutilated in various ways. At length, lamenting that the toil and study of so many illustrious men should have passed into the hands of most abandoned wretches, he departed with tears and sighs. Coming to the cloister, he asked a monk whom he met, why those valuable books had been so disgracefully mangled. He answered that the monks, seeking to gain a few *soldi*, were in the habit of cutting off sheets and making psalters, which they sold to boys. The margins too they manufactured into charms, and sold to women.

Even if we allow for the distortion of prejudice, this passage is a vivid indication of the neglect into which many of the monasteries had fallen, and of the kind of difficulties that faced the earliest of the manuscript hunters. Before the libraries were established manuscripts were extremely rare and jealously guarded; the demand for accurate texts completely outstripped the supply. In order to meet this emergency, therefore, a curious procedure was adopted. Itinerant scholars established themselves temporarily in various cities and delivered courses of lectures which took the form of a prolonged act of dictation, not only of the text, but of an elaborate grammatical, critical, historical, and philosophical commentary.

It is in this laborious way that classical works began to be gradually disseminated.

* * * *

I have briefly sketched, mainly through the figure of Petrarch, the nature of the first manifestations of humanism and its effect on the Italy of the fourteenth century, and even more briefly referred to the initial impediments encountered by Petrarch's contemporaries. We have now reached what I have called the 'second period' which, as we move from Florence to Rome, we shall find characterised by the gathering together of manuscripts into libraries properly so called.

Under Cosimo de' Medici (c. 1434-1464), Florence saw the establishment of three important libraries, two semi-public, in the convent of St Mark and the abbey of Fiesole respectively, and a private one in the Medici palace itself.[14] Of these three, I shall select the St Mark, or Marcian, library as an example, and describe its formation before drawing some provisional conclusions.

Cosimo de' Medici, a second generation *nouveau riche*, owed his influence partly to his immense wealth, the result of skilful banking negotiations, and partly to a depth of cunning amounting almost to wisdom, which led him to conceal his power behind a facade of modest living and public enterprise. There can be little doubt that policy played a major part in his establishment of the two public libraries mentioned above. But that this explanation, so frequently advanced, is not sufficient the following episode will make clear. When in 1431, through the machinations of a rival family, he was banished from Florence and took refuge in Venice, he was accompanied by Michelozzo Michelozzi, a celebrated architect and a pupil of Donatello and Brunelleschi. According to the contemporary biographer, Vasari, while he was residing at Venice, Michelozzo

> made by Cosimo's order, and at his expense, the library of the monastery of San Giorgio Maggiore . . . which was finished not only with walls, seats, wood-work and other ornaments, but filled with many books. This constituted the diversion and pastime of Cosimo until he was recalled in 1434 . . .[15]

There is no reason to suspect Vasari's testimony when he attributes a disinterested love of the arts to Cosimo: to have erected a library in Venice would not have speeded the recall of a man who, even then, had infinitely weightier irons in the fire.[16] Cosimo de' Medici can be considered the archetype of the Renaissance patron: his motives for public service generally combined self-interest and self-expression.

It was at the suggestion of the pope, of whom Cosimo had asked how he could sanctify his vast fortune, that he rebuilt the San Marco

monastery after his return to Florence. The circumstances leading to his establishment of a library there are worthy of note. In 1437 occurred the death of Florence's leading antiquarian and scholar, Niccolo de' Niccoli. This man, a modest merchant, had retired early in order to devote himself entirely to collecting manuscripts, and had pursued his ruling passion with such zest that he had succeeded in ruining himself. Had it not been for Cosimo's patronage, there is little doubt that Florence would have been considerably impoverished. As another contemporary biographer, Vespasiano, says of him:

> If he heard of any book in Greek or Latin not to be had in Florence, he spared no cost in getting it; the number of Latin books which Florence owes entirely to his generosity cannot be reckoned.[17]

In addition to this service, and again with the help of Cosimo, he inaugurated the serious cultivation of Greek. Although Boccaccio had pored in uncomprehending excitement over Sophocles and Homer, it was only some time after his death that adequate bases for the study of Greek were laid, and the lectures of visiting Byzantine monks, however inferior, eagerly attended. This enthusiasm soon took the form of expeditions to such monasteries as that of Mount Athos, where scholars, among them the agents of Niccolo, went to any length to secure codices. One of these reports, for example:

> I remember having given up my clothes to the Greeks in Constantinople in order to get codices—something for which I feel neither shame nor regret.[18]

Given the fact that the remnants of Greek civilization were soon to be swallowed up by Islam, the importance of such single-mindedness can scarcely be exaggerated.

After his death, Niccolo left the only legacy at his disposal, his magnificent book collection—and the debts incurred in acquiring it. In order to gain possession of this library, Cosimo cancelled these debts, then set about finding an adequate building for them. In a moment of inspiration, he instructed Michelozzo to extend his alteration to the San Marco convent in such a way as to include a reading-room. Thus the library hall was constructed, '80 braccia long and 18 broad', according to Vasari, 'furnished with 64 cases of cypress wood full of the most beautiful books' many of them illuminated by Fra Angelico and his school.[19] This hall, opening from the upper cloisters under which Savonarola was arrested fifty years later, was divided by two rows of eleven columns into three aisles, lit by twelve windows on either side, and furnished with sixty-four desks to which Niccolo's splendid collection was chained.

In what way can this library, built after all in a convent, and

adhering to many ancient traditions,[20] differ from the typical monastic examples of the middle ages? First, in its contents. All Renaissance libraries continued to consist of a core of ecclesiastical works, but the classical sections were enormously enlarged, and above all classified independently and in their own right. Second, in its appearance and appointments. The Marcian library can already be considered an architectural masterpiece, reflecting the combined talents of a Michelozzo and a Fra Angelico, and expressing, through Cosimo's munificence, the civic pride of Florence. Third, in the spirit of its conception. This library was opened to the learned citizens of Florence, not simply in order that they might contemplate the corruption of this world and the sanctity of the next, but so that they might discover for themselves the civilization of antiquity.

* * * *

When Cosimo had planned the Marcian library, he had invited a learned cleric, one Tommaso Parentucelli by name, to draw up a list of representative books as a guide for the enlargement of Niccolo's collection. Parentucelli had from his youth been afflicted by what he called 'a certain inexplicable thirst for books'.[21] Brought up in the humanist atmosphere of Florence, he had associated himself in the search for manuscripts not only with Niccolo himself, but with a papal diplomat, Poggio Bracciolini, the most ruthless and flamboyant ransacker of monastic libraries that the age produced. Shortly after cataloguing the Marcian library, Parentucelli was appointed bishop of Bologna, and within a few years had risen to the ultimate post of Christendom. In 1447, having, in the midst of the acclamations of all Italian scholars, assumed the tiara as Pope Nicholas V, he laid his plans to re-establish, virtually to create, the Vatican library.

In moving from Florence to Rome, we are not, surprisingly enough, moving from the market-place to the cloister. Enough ink has flowed on the subject of the vice, treachery, and nepotism—with its macabre climax in the pontificate of the Borgia pope, Alexander VI—of the Renaissance popes. We might well emphasise, instead, that if the popes of the second half of the fifteenth century often assume the guise of tyrants, and even sultans, rather than that of the *servus servorum dei*, it is largely because the papal states required, not Catholic saints, but powerful administrators. Since the Council of Constance of 1414-1417 which had put an end to the great schism, Nicholas V's two predecessors had only partially succeeded in restoring authority to the disintegrated papal domains. In assuming his great responsibility, therefore, Nicholas V felt himself faced, not with the general and profound need for spiritual renewal which was shortly to lead to the Reformation, but with the immediate and

specific problem of regaining political prestige, not only in Rome, but in Italy as a whole. It was inevitable that he would play the part of the patron prince and recreate, as part of his campaign, the Vatican's ancient collection of books, scattered and destroyed at Rome and Avignon during the great schism. But as we have seen, he had received, even more profoundly than Cosimo, the impression of the new humanism; he could not have denied his devotion to book-collecting without doing violence to his soul. Availing himself, therefore, of the revenues of the papacy, and enlarging them by the unrestrained practice of auctioning great ecclesiastical positions and of selling indulgences, he undertook a series of large public projects.

He at once made use of the services of his friend Poggio, who had been appointed to the papal chancery as early as 1403, and who had, from the vantage point of this position, permitted himself every deception in the Renaissance code-book in order to lay his hands on rare manuscripts. Under the regency of Poggio and his like, Rome was transformed into a veritable manuscript factory. Poggio himself has every claim to be considered the arch-collector of the Renaissance. Without him, for instance, we would probably not possess to-day the works of Lucretius, of Vitruvius, and a good portion of Cicero's orations. An extract from his correspondence will illustrate the energy with which he undertook his researches. As a delegate to the Council of Constance, he seized the opportunity to visit the neighbouring monastery of St Gall, where he managed to unearth a complete text of the *Institutions* of Quintilian. With the excitement of his find upon him, he wrote to a friend:

> I verily believe that, if we had not come to his rescue, he (Quintilian) must speedily have perished; for it cannot be imagined that a man magnificent, polished, elegant, urbane and witty could much longer have endured the squalor of the prison-house in which I found him, the savagery of his jailers, the forlorn filth of the place. He was indeed right sad to look upon, and ragged, like a condemned criminal, with rough beard and matted hair, protesting by his countenance and garb against the injustice of his sentence. He seemed to be stretching out his hands, calling upon the Romans, demanding to be saved from so unmerited a doom . . .

And he received the following answer:

> Through you we now possess Quintilian entire; before we only boasted of the half of him, and that defective and corrupt in text. O precious acquisition! O unexpected joy! And shall I then in truth be able to read the whole of that Quintilian, which, mutilated and deformed as it has hitherto appeared, has formed my solace? I conjure you to send it me at once, that at least I may set my eyes on it before I die.[22]

Served by such men, and disbursing phenomenal sums for transcriptions and translations, Nicholas V rapidly amassed about five thousand volumes. This priceless collection was housed in the papal palace until a suitable building could be erected for it. Nicholas died, however, before he could fulfil his plan. It remained for one of his successors, Sixtus IV (1471-1484), who immortalised himself in the Sistine Chapel, to carry out this project.

* * * *

Pope Sixtus IV, though less learned than Nicholas V, was animated with the same zeal and prompted by the same pressures. He recognized at once that the Vatican collection, which was constantly growing, would have to be placed in an appropriate setting before its full splendour could be revealed. He accordingly put aside a large sum of money and appointed as librarian the celebrated Platina. This polished and ardent personage was, as his name makes only too clear, a fanatical follower of Plato; inspired by the example of Florence where Lorenzo de' Medici had encouraged such brilliant intellectuals as Pico della Mirandola and Angelo Poliziano to form the Platonic Academy, he had himself established a learned academy in Rome. This academy had been suppressed by Sixtus' predecessor, not on the defensible grounds of heresy, but on the unfounded suspicion of its political unreliability, and its leaders had been put to the rack. Fresh from his martyrdom, therefore, Platina accepted his appointment as a rightful reward and at once set about reorganizing the Vatican library. He died in 1481, only a few days after completing the catalogue and inventory that rounded off his work.

Placed in the lower rooms of the beautiful Belvedere palace this library was a lavish advance on its Florentine model. It consisted of four inter-leading halls, the first for Latin texts, the second for Greek, the third for the treasures (the *biblioteca secreta*), and the fourth for the pope's private solace. No expense was spared in dignifying these chambers. Imported German glass illuminated the windows, marble blocks and gilded studs decorated the entrance, murals by the Ghirlandaio brothers depicting such heterogeneous saints of learning as Jerome and Diogenes cast an appropriately learned atmosphere. Sumptuous desks, maps, globes, statues, movable braziers for the winter, and many other luxurious items added to the usefulness and comfort of the place. The books themselves were fumigated with juniper and dusted with fox-tails.

One or two quotations referring to the lending of books will show how far the idea of the public library had advanced. The librarian informed his master that certain books were missing. The terrible Sixtus responded with the Bull of the 30th June, 1475:[23]

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> . . . certain ecclesiastical and secular persons, having no fear of God before their eyes, have taken sundry volumes in theology and other faculties from the library, which volumes they still presume rashly and maliciously to hide and secretly to detain . . .

These persons are warned to return the books in question within forty days. If they disobey they will be *ipso facto* instantly excommunicated; clerics will be barred from holding livings, laymen from holding offices. Informers are urged to come forward.

Books, nevertheless, continued to be lent out, sometimes with their chains still attached, as the following entry at the head of Platina's library journal makes clear:

> Whoever writes his name here in acknowledgement of books received on loan out of the pope's library, will incur his anger and his curse unless he return them uninjured within a very brief period.

And I cannot resist adding the following record of a famous visitor's impressions four generations later:[24]

> On the 6th March (1581) I went to see the Vatican library which consists of five or six consecutive halls. There are a great number of books attached to several ranks of desks; there are also some in coffers which were all opened for me; besides many books written by hand and notably a Seneca and the opuscules of Plutarch . . . I saw the library without any difficulty; everyone sees it thus and draws from it what he wants; it is open almost every morning, and I was conducted everywhere and invited by a gentleman (in attendance) to use it when I wished . . .

The Vatican library was conceived for the glory of Rome rather than the glory of God, for the use of scholars rather than the edification of priests. Its external splendour and internal accessibility were the result of the same impulse: to restore authority to the Holy See in an age when the relics of Greece and Rome were treasured with the same fanaticism as the fragments of the Cross had been at the time of the Crusades. It is in this light that the libraries I have just described, the libraries of my so-called second period, must be understood.

* * * *

The third period shows the effects of some momentous new developments, not the least being the invention of printing. At about the turn of the century the presses of the goldsmith Aldo at Venice were beginning to produce the now priceless incunabula of the Greek and Latin authors. In general, however, printing spread slowly, chiefly because Italian collectors were reluctant to vulgarise

libraries designed as marks of distinction; and an examination of its effects would take me beyond the limits of the period I have chosen to discuss. Italy of the early fifteenth century, however, shows many symptoms of decadence. There hangs over these years a strange aura of enervation and elegance. The exaltation of the classics became feverish and unreal, and we can feel the breath of disease in the scholarship that extinguished the life of the vernacular literature for over a century. Man's search for secular glory acquired an edge of hysteria: it is at such moments that we are reminded that what we call the high Renaissance occurred after the heroic age of commercial expansion had passed away. I am not denying that antiquity and Christianity co-existed on terms of mutual politeness; indeed, Lorenzo de' Medici's remarkable academy had attempted to reconcile the teachings of Plato with the doctrines of the Church; and beyond such attempts, the revival of Greek and Hebrew had led to a salutary re-examination of holy writ. But it would be a mistake to ignore to what degree had taken place what I can only describe as a classicization of Christianity. I have already quoted Sixtus's bull of 1475 which made use of the terror of damnation to recover a stolen Ovid or an abducted Sappho. But a glance at the court of the last Renaissance pope, the second Medicean pontiff, Clement VII, is even more revealing. Can one imagine an Aquinas settling down to write an epic on the life of Christ in Latin hexameters entitled *The Christiado*, as Vida did? Can one imagine Duns Scotus referring to the Holy Ghost as the 'heavenly zephyr', as Bembo did? Can one imagine Dante describing the bread of holy communion as *sinceram Cererem*, as Sannazaro did? Can one imagine anyone anywhere else in Europe calling Jesus 'great Pan', as Poliziano did? Such arrogance and triviality seem to invoke the deluge; and when, in 1527, the troops of Charles V fell upon the Eternal City, one cannot repress the thought of the justice of such a fate.

It is in this context that Clement VII summoned Michaelangelo to ask him to design and build a new library at Florence. The great collections amassed by Cosimo and Lorenzo had been prudently removed from Florence by the first Medicean pope, Leo X, to protect them from the disorders that followed Savonarola's iconoclasm. They were now ready to be returned, but only when a building adequate to the Medicis' conception of themselves had been erected. The implementation of this plan took, therefore, a perfectly logical form. The Church of San Lorenzo, rebuilt by Brunelleschi under Cosimo, had from the earliest times been intimately associated with the Medicis, who had always considered it a kind of family chapel. It was to this church, moreover, that Michaelangelo had been commissioned to add a sacristy as a sort of mausoleum for the tombs of that family. The proposed library could find no more appropriate

setting. Not content with the eternity offered by God in his heavenly mansion, the later Medicis also sought the immortality provided by artists in their earthly palaces.

In planning the Laurentian library, Michaelangelo seems to have offered a challenge to time; four-hundred years later, this challenge still stands. The building which he designed, and which was completed, after his death, by the Medicean dukes of Tuscany, is still regarded as a masterpiece of that serene harmony of curve and line known by architects as the urban style. The vestibule with its matchless marble staircase, the great hall lit by thirty spacious windows, the exquisitely carved ceiling reflected below on the red and yellow design of the terra-cotta floor, the cunning variety of the reliefs cut in the reading-stalls, the heraldic motifs on the window glass, the finely proportioned walnut bookcases—all that luxurious restfulness created by Michaelangelo remains a monument, not merely to the dignity of learning, but to the secular achievement of a lordly Renaissance name.[25]

Petrarch's private library—Michaelangelo's homage to the Medicis: these can be taken as markers defining the limits of the period I set out to investigate. And although faith in the enlightening power of antiquity is common to both, how distant the father of humanism now seems! Where is his Christian contempt for 'marble palaces' and 'ornate tablets'? Where is that 'living and active comradeship' with Virgil and Cicero? In his humility and asceticism, Petrarch revealed the other-worldly concerns of the Middle Ages; Clement proclaims, in his pride and splendour, an uncritical faith in the glory of the earth.

* * * *

What then, was the significance of the library of the Italian Renaissance? Modern man, disillusioned by two world wars, can no longer share the unquestioning zest for the world, the belief in the infinite possibilities of man typical of the high Renaissance. We find Petrarch pedantic, Clement ostentatious. Indeed, our own libraries are shamelessly utilitarian: we can only provide entertainment for the masses, specialist libraries for the expert. To us, Renaissance heroism is a pose, Renaissance honour an immaturity. Modern historians tend to view the whole period as an experiment that failed.

And yet such a conclusion would be neither just nor true. We cannot judge an age solely in terms of its excesses and abnormalities; we must also make an honest attempt to understand the nature of its submerged ideal. We cannot judge men simply on the evidence of their unconscious motives: we have to take into account the nature of their goals. I shall conclude therefore, by a brief analysis of the

library created by the Dukes of Urbino, for it can be considered an embodiment of what is best in the civilization of the Renaissance.

Federigo da Montefeltro and his son Guidobaldo transformed, in the second half of the fifteenth century, the mountain duchy of Urbino into one of the greatest cultural centres of Europe. Anyone wishing to gain an insight into the Renaissance ideal of the complete man—as soldier, scholar, statesman, and lover—should read Castiglione's celebrated treatise on aristocratic manners, *The Book of the Courtier*, inspired by the court of Urbino, and study the work of such native sons as Raphael and Bramante. Duke Federigo, brought up by the humanist Vittorino da Feltre to excel in every department of life, enriched his duchy by his exploits as a *condottiere* or professional general. A man of unrivalled reputation for integrity and skill, he devoted his wealth to the cultivation of his duchy, and earned such affection from his people that he was the only Italian prince of the period who could show himself in the street unprotected. We are fortunate in having an eye-witness account[26] of the formation of the palace library for it reveals something of the quality of his ideal of perfection.

> We come now to consider (writes his biographer Vespasiano) in what high esteem the Duke held all Greek and Latin writers, sacred as well as secular. He alone had a mind to do what no man had done for a thousand years or more; that is, to create the finest library since ancient times. He spared neither cost nor labour, and when he knew of a fine book, whether in Italy or not, he would send for it. It is now fourteen or more years since he began the library, and he always employed in Urbino, in Florence, and in other places, thirty or forty scribes in his service . . . There are numerous Greek books by various authors, which, when he was not able to get them otherwise, he sent for them, desiring that nothing should be wanting in any tongue which it was possible to acquire. There were to be seen Hebrew books, all that could be found in that language, beginning with the Bible and all those who have commented upon it, Rabbi Moses and other commentators. Not only are those Hebrew books the Holy Scriptures, but also on medicine, on philosophy, and in all branches, all that could be acquired in that tongue.
>
> His lordship having completed this worthy task at the great expense of more than 30,000 ducats, among other excellent and praiseworthy arrangements which he made was this, that he undertook to give each writer a title, and this he desired should be covered with crimson embellished with silver. He began, as has been noted above, with the Bible, as the foremost of all, and had it covered, as was said, with gold brocade.

> Then beginning with all the doctors of the Church, he had each one covered with crimson and embellished with silver; and so with the Greek doctors as with the Latins. As well philosophy, history and books on medicine and all the modern doctors; in such a manner that there are innumerable volumes of this kind, a thing gorgeous to behold.
>
> In this library all the books are beautiful in the highest degree, all written with the pen, not one printed, that it might not be disgraced thereby; all elegantly illuminated, and there is not one that is not written on kidskin. There is a singular thing about this library, which is not true of any other; and this is, that of all the writers, sacred as well as profane, original as well as translations, not a single page is wanting from their works in so far as they are in themselves complete; which cannot be said of any other library, all of which have portions of the work of a writer, but not all; and it is a great distinction to possess such perfection.

Although the themes we have been examining are here, and especially the concept of the library as a source of prestige ('. . . all written with the pen . . . that it might not be disgraced . . . it is a great distinction to possess such perfection . . . '), an attentive reading of this passage will reveal a far finer and more disinterested concern for excellence than mere ostentation could give. Vespasiano insists, with the warmth of an obviously sincere enthusiasm, on two special features: the universality of this collection, and the beauty of its individual volumes. We cannot but be dazzled by a conception so bold in its inclusiveness and so meticulous in its detail; Urbino seems to have drawn to itself from every part of Europe the entire resources of recorded knowledge and transmuted it, in the alchemy of its workshops, into golden harmony and order. Indeed, balance and proportion are the marks of this collection: Montefeltro reveals no prejudice, either against tradition or contemporaneity, literature or science, Italian or Hebrew. Such an achievement is indeed based on wealth and pride, two of the more ambivalent qualities of an aristocracy; but it is also inspired by a more lasting virtue of the aristocratic life, that leisured aloofness from the demands of the practical so favourable to the finest achievements of the human spirit. If the Renaissance library can teach us anything, it is that a neglect of its ideal can only render our own studies more sterile, timid, and dependent:

> . . . And Guidobaldo, when he made
> That grammar-school of courtesies
> Where wit and beauty learned their trade
> Upon Urbino's windy hill,
> Had sent no runners to and fro

That he might learn the shepherd's will.
And when they drove out Cosimo,
Indifferent how the rancour ran,
He gave the hours they had set free
To Michelozzo's latest plan
For the San Marco Library,
Whence turbulent Italy should draw
Delight in art whose end is peace,
In logic and in natural law
By sucking at the dugs of Greece.[27]

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

[1] See H. J. de Vleeschauwer, *Mousaion*, No. 63, p. 5 (University of South Africa, Pretoria, 1963).
[2] *The Rule of St Benedict*, trans. Cardinal Gasquet (London, 1925).
[3] These quotations are collected from Alfred Hessel, *A History of Libraries*, trans. Reuben Peiss (New Brunswick, 1955), Chapts. II and III; and F. Harrison, *A Book about Books* (London, 1943), Chapts. I to III.
[4] For the sake of the general reader: a codex is a manuscript volume; an incunabulum a book produced in the infancy of printing.
[5] The building was finally destroyed by American bombardment in 1943.
[6] Room in which manuscripts were copied and illuminated.
[7] Commercial booksellers in the great city centres.
[8] I am not, of course, denigrating the achievements of scholasticism, but emphasising that in this aloofness we can see the seeds of its ultimate ossification. It is scarcely necessary to remind the reader of the contempt of Montaigne and even Milton for a system that had long ceased to have any validity.
[9] Not to be confused with the rhetoric of the middle ages: these two chairs, occupied by humanists, were given loose titles.
[10] It is perhaps not irrelevant to note that Petrarch lost this treatise: he lent it to his tutor, Convennevole, and the old man pawned it.
[11] Quoted by John Addington Symonds, *The Revival of Learning* (London, 1912), p. 53. (My translation.)
[12] Quoted by Hessel, *op. cit.*, p. 39.
[13] Quoted by Symonds, *op. cit.*, p. 97.
[14] These three libraries form the basis of the Biblioteca Mediceo-Laurenziana, one of the glories of modern Florence. (See Wilfred Bouser, 'The Libraries of Florence' in the *Library Association Record* for October, 1952.)
[15] Vasari, Lives of the *Painters, Sculptors and Architects* Everyman, 1963, trans. A. B. Hinds), Vol. 1, p. 316.
[16] See F. Schevill, *A History of Florence*, (New York, 1936), Chapt. XXI.
[17] Quoted by Symonds, *op. cit.*, p. 129.
[18] Quoted by Hessel, *op. cit.*, p. 41.
[19] Vasari, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 318.
[20] This library was fitted with what has been called the lectern system, originally used when very few books had to be stored. For a discussion of this term as opposed to the 'stall system', see J. W. Clark, *Care of Books* (Cambridge, 1901), Chapts. IV and V.
[21] Quoted by Hessel, *op. cit.*, p. 43.
[22] Quoted by Symonds, *op. cit.*, pp. 98 to 100.
[23] Both quotations taken from Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 201 and 230.

[24] Michel de Montaigne, *Journal de Voyage de Montaigne en Italie* (Lantrey, Paris, 1906). (My translation.)

[25] See L. Goldscheider, *Michaelangelo* (Phaidon, 1954), p. 17, and plates 141 to 143 and vii, viii, and ix).

[26] Quoted by D. Mack Smith, 'Federigo da Montefeltro' in *The Penguin Book of the Renaissance* (Penguin, 1964), pp. 289 to 290.

[27] W. B. Yeats, 'To a wealthy man who promised a second subscription to the Dublin municipal gallery if it were proved the people wanted pictures', in *Collected Poems* (Macmillan, 1952), p. 119.

# BLAKE'S *TYGER*

*by* G. K. PECHEY

WE DEMAND of each of the *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, as we must of any other poem, that it shall stand or fall by itself; but *The Tyger* points—points more insistently and fascinatingly than any of its fellows—to its counterpart in Innocence; and the contrast itself is therefore not unworthy of a few introductory remarks.

The lamb is a creature of sacrifice, and a traditional symbol of human self-sacrifice. The tiger affects us as a ruthless self-seeker; but what makes it impossible for us to identify him with the Selfhood (as Blake used the term)[1] is the splendid reality of the self he asserts and preserves. His is not the hypocritical selfishness that weeps crocodile tears, in the manner of the oppressor-figures of Experience —Cruelty, Jealousy, Nobodaddy, and the like: such a figure doesn't really exist except as an abstraction from, and justification for, the manifold wickedness of reaction;[2] he can only 'exist' as long as some men continue to assert their worst—that is, their anti-social—selves. The tiger, on the other hand, is fiercely autonomous, magnificently *there*: a *single* nature, the thing that hypocrites most hate and fear. Here, we must be made to feel, is no mean existence. He burns with a ferocious energy, proclaiming his ferocity in his outward appearance, and in absolute truth to his tigerish nature makes no apology for it. Above all, he is alive; a part of that great variety of life which includes both tiger and lamb as contraries, and of which the Selfhood is always and everywhere the negation.

A brief glance at *The Lamb* will do. The lamb's nature is diffused in a naturalistic surrounding—is reflected in and echoed by it, and finally identified, without conflict or incongruity, with both child and Christ; the movement is characteristically outwards, one of gentle giving and gentle receiving, of happy reciprocity, of self-effacement even. The language of Blake's description of the lamb's life—we recognize here the familiar elements of any lamb's actual life—is a language of relatively low poetic intensity: 'clothing of delight' strikes us as the one momentary heightening in the whole poem. In the plain statement of faith that occupies the second stanza (its plainness is, again, a relative matter) the lamb almost disappears as a presence and an identity; or at most is felt only tenuously in the texture of the verse; and all that that can give us is a pervading sense of the quality of its life, no sharp particularity. An actual lamb, then, more or less naturalistically described, assumes symbolic status; and

the words which thus elevate it are the inevitable ones: all work to evoke a familiar surrounding, a familiar creature, familiar associations; everything about the lamb is close to us, and the lamb itself is only minimally self-assertive.

When we contrast the tiger we see how right is Blake's choice of the tiger in the first place: its very newness as a symbol—and more, the new associations Blake's particular language brings to our ordinary conception of tigers—have their own immediate effect upon us. In his exoticism[a] he absolutely resists identification or diffusion with anything outside himself; the characteristic movement is inwards, towards the heart of the tiger; and Blake is at pains to realize, to give shape to and intensify, this earliest of our responses. The feeling that overwhelms us is one of a sharply defined *identity* undiluted by any association, symbolic or sympathetic, with anything outside its glorious and terrible self. It is upon this unsymbolical character of the tiger, and its utterly unsympathetic otherness, that Blake builds: the contrast with the lamb is complete. That by the end we *can* call the tiger a symbol, and that we recognize an aspect of ourselves in its single-minded wrath—that, in fine, it symbolizes a latent and necessary human quality—is certain; if it couldn't be shown to embody some definable quality, the poem would lack meaning altogether. Although Blake plainly intends this ultimate response, he knows he has to make us feel an absolute difference from the creature of his choice, for only in that way can its fierce autonomy be made real: a creature we could somehow easily and immediately gather to ourselves just would not do. Far from weakening, then, the focus in this poem only sharpens and intensifies; the subject, vividly there in the first line, is there more vividly still in the last.

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All that is extraneous to his purpose Blake scrupulously omits. Concentrated relevance, which, all will admit, is inseparable from the greatness of great poetry, here obtrudes as a positive technique, a method in its own right. What is important is that the tiger—so much at home in the forests and the night—should yet be sharply defined against them, that his powerful independent assertion should be brought before us in the simplest possible elements. And what better elements could Blake have chosen than the sharp clash of that brilliant burning light and the permanent gloom of the forest? The suggestion of permanence and oppressiveness is important. In Innocence night falls over 'green fields & happy groves', and is viewed as the time of rest after the day of joy: night is never allowed to become an absolute, but signifies instead the 'temporal' aspect of human life, day being 'eternal': it is happily transient, and morning

can always be relied on to appear in the skies.[4] For innocent eyes night is caught up in a scheme that tames it. Experience reverses all this: the world of Experience *is* such a night, and there's no escape or respite from it. Its boundless, formless darkness—*a* forest might be circumscribable, *forests* certainly aren't—must be encountered in its nakedness: it is the condition of life in this world, which cannot be wished away.

Now here the tiger and the featureless worm (villain of the piece in *The Sick Rose*) must be distinguished; and that 'featureless', with the contrast it implies, is the key word in our argument. Its featurelessness, its lack (as Blake himself might say) of 'lineaments', means that the worm is—strictly—a nonentity; a creature peculiarly at home—indeed a part of—the night's dark chaos, insidiously working against the wholesomeness of life. In the tiger we're shown life's answer to Experience; here, we feel, is the champion life's unconquerable resilience throws up for the encounter with it. He is there in Blake's irreplaceable words:

> Tyger! Tyger! burning bright
> In the forests of the night.

The rhyme insists with simple force, in a context where simple force is inseparably and obviously a part of the meaning, on this violent contrast between the beast and his element. And the contrast isn't simply one-dimensional: after the opening incantation of the name—perhaps the most forceful instance of incantatory repetition that there is, with its twin suggestion of the speaker's fascinated lingering before the tiger, and his terrified hesitation to realize it in its particulars—he leaps into life in two words only, the only two words Blake needs. The simple essence of the creature, what our inadequate words can only call his untameable energy, is there for us in the rich, strong, rounded sensuousness. Something of his natural ferocity is given in the suddenness with which that essence assumes a solid presence: the speaker's precipitancy suggests the tiger's, and in his tense awe one senses the tension of the poised beast. What the tiger looks like is what he is—a burning vitality utterly beyond anyone's control, constantly creating itself anew in the form its furious content demands. Fire stands naturally for the absolute consonance of form and content, and for a substance or nature which, absolutely self-determining, takes the shape of its own choosing without inhibition from within or impediment from without. The tiger burning bright in the dark amorphousness of Experience is such a fire. In these two words—they gather retrospective force with the unfolding horror of the next line—Blake has our responses perfectly in control: there is no need for him to qualify further.

After such concreteness, there can be no moralizing or philosophizing. The questions we ask about it are the questions it insists on: an *idea* of the tiger would politely and soothingly invite us into the luxury of speculative inquiry, into the safe irrelevancy of yet other ideas, until the tiger is forgotten altogether. But here is the tiger's essence concretely presented, and the moral eye that wonders and starts at it poses correspondingly concrete questions. Take the first:

> What immortal hand or eye
> Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

This is no abstract moral question, but one of simple terror and wonder mingled. Granted that the maker's hand must have been an immortal hand—the hand of a god—*what* hand, even among immortal hands, could make *that* thing? The tiger is at once 'bigger' than any god the speaker can conceive, seemingly beyond any god's power to make. What sort of god must he be who is equal to that task? asks the speaker. And the invention is no less wonderful than the execution; the *eye* no less than the hand. Even to conceive such a creature is a feat of more than godlike genius. That 'or' works to suggest the speaker's mounting wonder; also suggested—suggested in and through the wonder and constituting part of it—is the truth that hand and eye are interchangeable; that, in a creator as inspired as this one, invention and execution, thought and act, must be simultaneous and one. What the eye visualizes is what the hand can realize. This truth is implicit in the speaker's words, and that word 'frame' enforces it: framing is an activity of both hand and mind; it includes both and suggests their intimate co-operation. The speaker's perspective resembles that of a practising artist; or we might put it this way: honestly and directly to confront the tiger, as the speaker does, is intuitively to become the artist Blake says all men should be —it is to apprehend what it must be like to be the tiger's maker. It is to know the act of creation as the act of whole-souled deliberateness that it is. The hand implies an eye equally fearless; an eye guiding and being guided by that hand in a tension of integration that never relaxes. Any manifestly achieved and perfect work is the product of such deliberate purpose and such taut integration: the tiger's fearful symmetry is such an achievement. The god, therefore, who achieved it really *meant* it to be what we see before us—*framed* the tiger in the fullest sense, and with the stern application one feels in the very sound of the word. The real force of my argument will emerge when we consider the tameness, the almost implicationless neutrality, of such a question as this: What hand made thy fearful symmetry?—and then set against it the immensely deepened wonder and terror of the question as it stands in the poem.

The speaker's response to the imagined tiger is the kind of rounded,

wholly human response that makes of him an Everyman. In that single irreplaceable phrase—'fearful symmetry'—Blake speaks for all of us: his finger is firmly on his own pulse (and it is a pulse both like and unlike that of his fellow-men: like theirs in that he is human; unlike theirs in having that fully conscious and comprehensive humanity we call genius). As vulnerable human creatures—because we are men—we fear the tiger's superior strength and ruthless nature; but we also admire it, and we admire it because we are men: its symmetry is something we recognize and have a word for. Neither of these responses is 'truer'—more significantly *human*—than the other, and neither is allowed to swallow the other up; they subsist in a polarity that is permanent and perfect. Observe how Blake exploits the peculiar resources of English: the simple emotion is expressed in the long sound and simple eloquence of an Anglo-Saxon derivative, the more cultivated response in the less familiar Latinate word. Clipped and nicely controlled, 'symmetry' offers a contrast with its companion, and faintly suggests a musical dissonance: suddenly alive for us in those two words is the strange and contradictory essence of *awe*. Inevitably, and quite properly, one's voice drops as one reads this last line. The syllables drummed and rang in our ears before; now we are responding to the tiger those syllables evoked, and our tones are hushed and chastened. With the next stanza, though, a new and harsher stridency enters:

> In what distant deeps or skies
> Burnt the fire of thine eyes?

It is in his eyes that the tiger's essential nature is concentrated and expressed; there that the energy of his wrath burns most fiercely. That the fire of those eyes had its source in some remote vastness is to be expected: the question is, *What* deeps or skies could have yielded such fire? Of all places where the ordinary human pieties have no meaning whatever—places of complete and final indifference—that place is for man the most unfathomable. Whether they are deeps or skies is uncertain: the uncertainty, felt in the sudden convulsive sweep from extreme to extreme, adds to the horror of a question already huge enough. Blake doesn't need—indeed is wise to avoid—the loud expostulation of adjectives describing the subjects of his questioning. He knows that to produce the sense of something the mind cannot compass, it is worse than useless to fall back on such crude means; for any adjective would tend to bring these things at least part of the way into the comfortable sphere of the familiar. Wings this god must have needed; but what wings? And even among immortal hands the hand that could seize this fire must indeed be singular.

To examine the transition from this last stanza to the next is to

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notice in the progression of the speaker's questions a powerful elementary concreteness: each leads ineluctably to the next—not back along a nexus of causes to some ghostly unconditioned first cause, but along the succession of practical acts that must have gone into the tiger's making. Here is a mind to which metaphysical abstraction is utterly foreign: it is the mind, essentially, of a child, with its great virtue of immediate picturing.

> Neither youth nor Childhood is Folly or Incapacity. Some Children are Fools & so are some Old Men. But There is a vast Majority on the side of Imagination or Spiritual Sensation.

The man who wrote those words is recognizably the poet of *The Tyger*. He really means what he says when he talks of spiritual *sensation*: there is nothing in this poem that cannot be seen or felt as well as thought. From the eyes burning with wrath the natural logic of the speaker's terrified curiosity takes him to the heart no sympathy can move—'pity' ever 'divide'; a heart so remote from the mutualities that govern our ordinary relations that the strength and peculiar skill needed to fashion it are beyond our comprehension. In the heaving, breathless slowness of those two lines—

> And what shoulder, & what art,
> Could twist the sinews of thy heart?

—in the very effort of reading them, the speaker reproduces the huge effort of creation, creates the tiger in imagination. This is a creature whose very heart has sinews: not even there will anything be found to mitigate the singleness of his nature: indeed the beating of that sinewy heart is the condition of the working of those sinewy limbs, of the tiger's coming terribly to life. With his first burst into life the speaker reels into quite understandable incoherence. Suddenly the act of creation appears in all its enormity, and he recoils terrified from the god who could perform it: the god must himself be a dreadful god. All the dread is fleetingly concentrated in his hand and feet—or are the feet perhaps the tiger's? The ambiguity seems to me deliberate, expressing as it does not only the speaker's incoherence but also the grasped truth that creator and creature must share the same terrible nature. Scholars 'explain' the absence in this sentence of a verb or object;[5] but the fact—the manifestly intended poetic effect—of the omission remains. Blake's point is simply this: that hand and those feet seem now completely and essentially dreadful; they don't need to be *doing* anything. Ordinary vulnerable humanity sees in them the agents of the ultimate menace and there is no more to be said: such an inchoate cry of horror is the only fitting response. A similar daring ellipsis opens the next stanza:

What the hammer? what the chain?

And now the questions are more urgent than before; and it is only as the stanza unfolds, and other questions follow, that their reference becomes clear: the speaker sees the tiger's god as a sort of Los-figure[6] working at his smithy. But the momentary obscurity doesn't —ought not to—disturb us; and for a simple reason. Violent hammer-blows have already been heard and felt in the tiger's heart-beat: so the image of the brain being beaten out on an anvil carries familiar associations—is precisely the kind of thing the speaker's terrified mind would leap to.

With the end of this fourth stanza, the poem reaches the first of its three rapidly consecutive climaxes:

What the anvil? what dread grasp
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

It is in the very abstractness of those 'deadly terrors' that the force of the expression lies—the hugely comprehensive force it must have, coming at such a climactic point. One can't immediately see, or circumscribe, terrors: infinite possibilities of cruelty are suggested, unnamed and unnameable horrors; and a hand which dares to grasp these must be as dreadful as what it grasps, certainly not less so. But Blake's word—'clasp'—is what we ought to be fixing on: the word suggests a familiar, intimate encircling of the thing: one clasps someone or something one expects no harm from. To infer from this an affinity between god and tiger is only a short step—a step, indeed, that there is no time to be conscious of; and therefore scarcely an inference at all, but rather an apprehension that clutches at the speaker and forces itself out in a guttural rasp, the more forceful in being implied and not stated.

Tension and a relentless hammering beat have marked the verse so far; now the speaker turns from the tiger itself to the result of his creation, and the effect is at first one of relief after that terrible climax so relentlessly pursued and achieved. Of course there is, finally, no relief at all. All that happens is a temporary shift of focus; and in the quieter, more expansive movement we enter a new, more philosophical sphere of discourse—philosophical only in the limited sense of having less of immediate response about it, and more of the ranging human mind. We could say that the whole 'moral universe' is here more explicitly present than before; that it is no longer a matter of *simple* terror, though without that antecedent reaction the questions of this stanza would have no real force whatever. For terror there certainly still is: to understand it we must look closely at the speaker's terms; and in doing this we will find ourselves considering the position, the kind of humanity, he represents.

His honesty is plainly beyond question. What characterizes him

(and all other men, I suppose, in varying degrees: he is not unique or abnormal) is his timidity. He has the timidity of an innocent in Experience—he represents our humanity in its timid, vulnerable aspect—and is profoundly disturbed by his vision of the stars in disarray, of things so comfortingly orderly thrown into disorder. The stars shining in the night of Experience (observe the consistency of Blake's symbolism in this poem) are the only kind of order its chaos knows: that is, a transcendental, imposed, extraneous order, antithesis of the immanent *harmony* of Innocence. By the cold glint of their spears we recognize them as the 'angelic' armies of order, actual as well as allegorical, whose presence implies chaos; in other words, if the chaos of division and separation—of alienation—which is Experience weren't there, they too wouldn't be there: the 'day' of harmony and brotherhood, of 'higher' Innocence, would already have dawned. The Bard in his *Introduction*, it will be recalled, consoled Earth:

> The starry floor,
> The wat'ry shore,
> Is giv'n thee till the break of day.

What the Bard adjures Earth to take comfort from, promising her eventual emancipation, is what our speaker intuitively takes comfort from—the regular presence of the stars; though, of course, he lacks the Bard's prophetic perspective. His vulnerable humanity is horrified by the violent, self-sufficient energy—we may now, I think, call it the energy of revolution—that, wherever and whenever it asserts itself, challenges the huge formidability of imposed order and finally defeats it. The side of ourselves that clings in the dark to the consolatory order of the stars is the same side that fears the fierce autonomy of the tiger. Blake's reference to them as 'the stars', without further qualification, gives just that sense of accustomed presence that is required here, and is no sign of refusal to define: we know in that expression what their defeat means to the timid soul. And the upheaval is complete: the armies of order not only surrender: they '[water] heaven with their tears', they assume pity. Aggression becomes compassion, 'spears' 'tears'—the simple dramatic effect of the rhyme points up the change. Or we may put it this way: man's heaven, which is always the mirror-image of his nature (at once its reflection and sanction), becomes a heaven of compassion; and it takes the proud, fierce self-assertion of the tiger to make it so—in a word, to restore the lamb. The tiger's creation is a direct assault on the law-governed heaven; the battle is decisive and final. What we have here is not simply the defeat of one imposed order by a new one—which can only reproduce, consolidated and clarified, the errors of the old—but the destruction of universal

uniform law itself. The past tense of this stanza oughtn't to be taken quite literally: Blake's tiger is created in 'eternity'—that is, in the present moment, dialectically viewed[7]—and the conflict with order that is implied by his very being, by his coming alive in the hearts of men, is an 'eternal' one. Of course, the speaker is denied this perspective; and anything in the present tense (not to mention the future) simply would not express the finality of the event, which he intuitively grasps. One has only to put the stanza into the present tense to see how miserably its significance is diminished. As it stands, it is perfect: the sense given by the past tense accords perfectly with the speaker's intuitive grasp of things, and with the prophet's vision of them.

Now Blake knows that man's victory over Experience will be an irreversible victory only if man takes on the tiger's fierce singleness of nature; Blake *knows* this; but it is what fills the speaker's mind that interests us. It is through letting the speaker speak the terror of that mind honestly and uninhibitedly, from a position that we recognize as at least a side of ourselves, that Blake shows us what we must become. We must be made afraid of it in order to know what it is. What we are afraid of, and feel most remote from, is what we must become: a soul undivided by pity or humane solicitude of any sort.[8] The full force of that question—

Did he smile his work to see?

—should by now be plain. Did this god smile at such a huge upheaval of the order of things, apparently so dangerously destructive? The speaker does not see the event in its creative aspect—doesn't recognize the stars' disappearance as simultaneous with the coming of day: his mood is not the kind of mood in which that implication would suggest itself to him: filled with fear of the tiger, he *cannot* see it as a force for ultimate good. That any being—even a god, whose nature by definition includes and comprehends all—could smile at such an event in the serenest satisfaction with it: it is this thought that shakes our innocent speaker—*and us*.

Implied in his question is another question, one which follows from the last: Can such a god smile? If this god is completely tigerish, how is it that he is 'human' enough to smile? If he is on the tiger's side against the world—and this is the conclusion our only too timidly human speaker must come to—is *this* the way he would react to its triumph? His unspeakable bafflement is Blake's way of teaching us; and the shock and violence of the 'method' is not mere superadded sensationalism: it is itself the lesson, if lesson it can be called. He approaches us through that in ourselves which is the speaker of this poem, and for his purpose this is the only approach.

The poem reaches its second great climax:

> Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

The simplicity and stark phrasing of the question broadens at one blow the already huge implications of the earlier questions, sending out reverberations which it yet manages miraculously to keep in control. Here, suddenly and intimately juxtaposed, are the tiger and his contrary. The monosyllables insist on being almost spelt out as one reads: we reproduce not only the speaker's perplexity but also his first fascinated discovery of a world wonderfully and richly broadened. This fascination is a new impulse; but it is an impulse as strong as—if not momentarily stronger than—the natural human impulse to cling to the familiar lamb. 'He who made the lamb': the texture of the verse suggests the gentleness of such a god—could it be that this god 'made *thee*'? That strident, high-pitched 'thee' (it is almost a shrill of terror) recalls and concentrates the whole experience of the poem.

That the answer is 'Yes', no one (except perhaps those scholars who argue knowledgeably from supposed sources)[9] needs to be told. But the last thing Blake's purpose demands is an easy affirmation: nothing would more surely blunt the sharp contrariety of natures that the question holds in proper suspension—a contrariety which, with the speaker, we feel on our pulses, and which no verbalizing tendency must be allowed to interfere with. Here is no tame confrontation of abstract principles reconciled by appeal to a third principle as abstract (and therefore as arbitrary) as the first two, but a concrete opposition, squarely faced. 'Wrath' and 'pity' are, I suppose, adequate words—or rather adequate shorthand terms—to describe this opposition; but it is easy when bandying such words about to forget the realities they exist merely to denote; and it is just this that the speaker is innocent enough and honest enough with himself not to do, just this tendency that he is supremely free of. Poet and honest man meet at this point: both use words only in so far as they create or reflect or embody—and in a sense finally *are*—realities; both are on the same side against the metaphysician. The honest man's truth to his immediate responses takes us just far enough. He leaves the opposition of tiger and lamb alive in the reader, and doesn't kill it with an affirmative. He *cannot* go any further; the poet, valuing his point of view, doesn't want him to. An affirmation of a kind there certainly is: but it remains implicit and difficult, and this is its strength. To have inserted a simple affirmative, or to have turned the question into an affirmative statement, would have been to make a different (and quite trivial) affirmation—one that is expressible in almost any other similar words we might pick on. Its question form is the source of its

tremendous force. The lamb-god *is* the tiger-god: neither is obliterated in the equation.

The danger of slipping over into an easy affirmation is not only averted, but is positively and finally ensured against: what absolutely precludes it (at least for a mind fully engaged in the experience of the poem) is that master stroke of a last stanza, in which the vivid initiating image is recalled. All the terror and wonder of that first vision remains, diminished not a jot by being made articulate, but rather heightened. The change from 'could' to 'dare' is only one change, and an immediately noticeable one (we'll discuss it later); less noticeable, perhaps, is the change wrought by the intervening experience of the poem, which somehow makes one read this last stanza in a voice more subdued than that one naturally adopts in reading the first. Precisely what this is a spontaneous reaction to—what it is the poem has done to us inwardly—is what we must now consider. With the speaker, it seems to me, we are now more incredulous than we were before; but the height of the speaker's incredulity, reached in that last climax, was also—implicitly—a statement of faith, the more powerful in its human intensity (and here is an apparent paradox) for seeming the antithesis of such a statement. Now the reasoner's 'doubt' is for Blake a dead and unproductive habit of mind, the result of a deadening sophistication: it must not be confused with our speaker's awed questioning, which is passionate, fierily human, the characteristic utterance of a man who knows what it means to be man alive, and therefore a statement of the only kind of 'faith' worth having. This last stanza partakes of the character of the question immediately preceding it. Its faith consists in the speaker's courageous truth to himself—is nothing more nor less than his ability wholeheartedly to see, to acknowledge his fear, and to question. His spontaneous humanity loses nothing of its dignity in the process; which is precisely what it would do if forced into unnatural and dishonest postures of acceptance, of what is conventionally called faith. And not only does his humanity not lose dignity, it rises to its proper stature, strong in its seeming weakness. The terror and wonder don't, then, disappear. Indeed the continued presence of these emotions is the condition of the speaker's real faith; and by the end we recognize them as the form his faith takes, and the hushed voice we assume is an unconscious response to this recognition. The reassertion, in this stanza that so neatly sums them up, of these twin emotions—their reiteration in the very words, all but one, that introduced them to us—is inevitable. Need I say why only a repetition will do? The speaker ends by saying what demands to be said. Blake's point is made.

It would be wrong to play down the surprise effect of the single obvious change that marks the repetition; what does, however, need

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pointing out is the fact that it only works to confirm, and put the final emphasis upon, a direction the poem has been taking all along. The element of daring enters in the second stanza; 'dare' is the operative word in the poem's first climax; and now, with one deft stroke, Blake sums up the cumulative effect of the whole poem. Far from being reconciled to the tiger in some merely verbal or theoretical way, the speaker is in the end more incredulous than ever: what sort of god must he be who can dare even to 'frame' such a creature? The total experience of the poem is brought vividly before us, but in a context created by that experience as it has been offered to us *in extenso*.

## NOTES

[1] Northrop Frye defines the Selfhood as a 'state of animal self-absorption' (*Fearful Symmetry*, p. 58). Blake often uses the term in the longer prophecies; and he has a great variety of equivalents or near-equivalents, his choice in any context depending on the emphasis that context demands.

[2] I use this word in the broadest sense of 'counter-revolution': no other word, it seems to me, includes the suggestion of every kind of oppression or restraint in quite the way this one does. And it has Blake's sanction. Satan, he says, is a 'Reactor' (*Jerusalem*, 29); he never *acts*, but can only react.

[3] 'Exoticism' is not really the word I want—it generally refers to an artistic cult or fashion—but it will have to do: 'exoticness' is an ugly word, and one that I don't wish to coin.

[4] The reader will recognize in these sentences some indirect quotation from, and implicit allusion to, certain of the *Songs of Innocence*; the direct quotation is, of course, from *Night*.

[5] In the first MS this (third) stanza ran on into the next, which Blake later discarded altogether. The transition read as follows: 'What dread hand & what dread feet/ Could fetch it from the furnace deep', and so on.

[6] One hesitates to label Los, or any of Blake's symbolic personages, so subtly variable are their significances. Generally, though, Los stands for the 'Poetic or Prophetic character', in whom time and 'eternity' intersect. Frye (p. 252) makes my particular reference clearer: 'Los is the builder of the eternal form of human civilization, and is therefore a smith, a worker in metal and fire, the two great instruments of civilized life'.

[7] By 'dialectically viewed' I mean 'seen in all its relations simultaneously', seen (for Blake) as it really *is*. 'Eternity' is the reality that 'vision' reveals, the only truly real present.

[8] I am indebted for the language of this sentence to two Blakean sources. One is from *The First Book of Urizen*, Chapter V: 'pity divides the soul'. The other is from the *Descriptive Catalogue*: 'The strong Man acts from conscious superiority, and marches on in fearless dependance (*sic*) on the divine decrees, raging with the inspirations of a prophetic mind. The Beautiful Man acts from duty and anxious solicitude for the fates of those for whom he combats'.

[9] See Kathleen Raine: 'Who made the Tyger?' *Encounter*, II, 6, June 1954. Miss Raine's enthusiasm for sources leads her not only to forget that they are necessarily problematic—and that any statement about them must therefore necessarily be tentative—but also to make quite categorical deductions from them. As children, she says, we answer 'Yes'; the adult answer, it seems, is a definite 'No'. Blake's own reaction to such erudite ignorance may be easily imagined.

# DIVIDED ALLEGIANCE IN THE LAST TWO BOOKS OF SIR THOMAS MALORY

*by* R. S. LUNDIE

SIR THOMAS MALORY'S *Morte D'Arthur* is famous without being well-known, and, until recently, what *was* known of his writings owed its form to an editorial subterfuge of William Caxton. Until the publication of the definitive edition of the *Works* (*ed.* Eugene Vinaver) by the Oxford University Press in 1947, only Caxton, as the first editor, had access to Malory's work in manuscript, and all the editions which followed were based on his small folio volume published at Westminster in 1485. Here the writings appeared as a single continuous work. There were certain odd features. The title which Caxton chose of 'Le Morte D'Arthur' he immediately followed by a diverting apologia: 'Notwithstondyng it treateth of the byrth, lyf, and actes of the sayd kyng Arthur, of his noble knyghtes of the Round Table, theyr mervayllous enquestes and adventures, th'achyevyng of the Sangreal, and in th'ende the dolourous deth and departyng out of thys world of them al'. In the narrative some of the characters appeared before the relation of their birth. Others re-appeared after the relation of their death. The charm of Malory's writing was undeniable—the 'indescribable plaintive melody, the sigh of the wind over the enchanted ground, the spell of pure Romance' (Ker), but the value of his work as an epic account of Arthur's kingdom was, in some respects, puzzling.

It was not until 1934 when, entirely unexpectedly, a second fifteenth-century manuscript of Malory's writings was discovered by the librarian of Winchester College that the whole scene was re-lit. This was not the manuscript used by Caxton in compiling the Morte D'Arthur, and it was in many instances more complete. To Professor Vinaver, the contemporary authority on Malory, was given the task of editing the new text. He readily discarded the critical edition of the Morte D'Arthur based on the two extant copies of Caxton's volume on which he was working, and, being now brought nearer to what Malory really wrote, found *not* a gigantic single work but 'a series of separate romances, each representing a distinct stage in the author's development, from his first timid attempts at imaginative narrative to the consummate mastery of his last great books'. As Professor Vinaver's work proceeded it became clear that it was for reasons of editorial expediency that Caxton

had planned to publish the writings as a single book and this he had proceeded to do, adroitly removing any evidence in his manuscript to the contrary. Whatever the advantage to Caxton's sales, the concomitant disadvantage to Malory's published text was not made good until nearly 500 years later.

What emerges particularly from the newly edited text is the dimension of reality which belongs to Malory's characters, now seen as constituting a society about whom he wrote many books, recounting his tales not necessarily in the chronological sequence established by Caxton. His people are now real people, no longer merely attractive, legendary figures. His achievement is greatest in what Professor Vinaver has been able to establish as to the two books written last: 'The Book of Sir Lancelot and Queen Guinevere' and 'The most piteous tale of the Morte Arthur Saunz Gwerdon'.

Even John Speirs, who expresses the fairly representative view that in spite of the 'magic' of Malory's style, 'the charm of the prose is a remote charm; the imagery is without immediacy; there is a lifelessness, listlessness and fadedness about this prose for all its (in a limited sense) loveliness' feels obliged to qualify his strictures on behalf of the last books to which he concedes 'an impressive kind of unity of their own', 'a gloomy power'.

It is the claim of this essay that Malory's work far exceeds this assessment, that in his telling and profound recognition of the impermanence of human relationships lies one of the main elements of tragedy, and that in the theme of divided allegiance which rings through his last books he creates a power that far surpasses gloom —a power that is essentially tragic.

In order to investigate this claim, we shall deal with it in two parts: firstly, by an examination of those towering characters of the work, Lancelot, Arthur and Guinevere, and, secondly, and at the risk of some repetition, an examination of the events that bring about their end, for true to the tragic tradition Malory shows us the inevitable dependence of destiny on character.

The two idealised forces prevailing in Arthur's realm—the brotherhood of knights and the devotion of the knight-lover to his lady —assume reality in this work by their conflict, for it is the common lot that love and loyalty do not exist in isolation. It is when events necessarily divide allegiances but do not extinguish them, when men do not evade human commitments but choose to act, that the way for tragedy opens.

At the pinnacle of the virtuous and ordered society created in England stand Lancelot, Arthur and Guinevere. They form an accepted and established unit—curiously, for Lancelot is the Queen's lover of long standing. Yet between all three exist love and trust, and for many years this situation has held. The first book opens with

Lancelot's return from the quest of the Holy Grail to Arthur's court. The action springs from the attempt he now makes to withdraw from his relationship with the Queen, both because of his recent experiences in the quest of the Grail and because of the scandal beginning to spring up on his return to court, for 'they loved togyders more hotter than they ded toforehonde.' The second reason of obvious practicality Lancelot produces as likely to be more acceptable to Guinevere when she calls his actions to account, but the first reason goes deeper for him. Lancelot had failed in the quest of the Grail because of his inward longing for Guinevere: 'For in the queste of the Sangreall I had that tyme forsakyn the vanytees of the worlde had nat youre love bene', as he tells her when they finally part. And just as he was unable to relinquish his secret thoughts of her at that time, so now he is unable to reject his remembrance of the Grail quest and the awareness of holiness awakened in him. Both forces retain their hold, but the wholehearted satisfactoriness of the earthly love has now been breached. His attempted withdrawal is not an overt rejection caused by his accusingly regarding their love as sinful, but rather a regretful and partial relinquishment by one who has been granted an apprehension of the road to perfection.

When speaking to Guinevere, and to her alone, Lancelot displays a certain guilt which only emerges completely at the end of the book, when, on Arthur's death, they both take holy orders. Now, his words 'The boldeness of you and me woll brynge us to shame and sclaundir' bear a faintly uneasy tang, an incontrovertible hint of distaste at their departure from society's rules and the necessity for discretion. Nevertheless, the relationship receives a tacit acceptance from Lancelot's kinsmen, to whom he comments as occasion arises quite without guile, but with whom he never discusses it directly *per se*. When Guinevere, infuriated by Lancelot's well-thought-out scheme of withdrawal, orders him from the court, Lancelot carries his dolour perfectly naturally to Bors, and Bors as naturally consoles him, reminding him of the many times in the past when the Queen has vented her fury on him and as often repented. In the same way Guinevere quite openly looses her jealousy on Bors when Lancelot wears Elaine's red sleeves at the Great Tournament. Bors's understanding of the situation is shown when he does not justify Lancelot's behaviour on the obvious grounds that being a bachelor he is perfectly entitled to wear any lady's favour, but on the grounds that Lancelot's motive in wearing the sleeve was the (to Guinevere) legitimate one of disguising himself. It also happens to be the true reason, but it is illuminating that Guinevere's condemnation of the gesture as a treasonable act should be regarded as requiring justification.

The attitude of Lancelot's kinsmen and friends is promoted by their near-adoration of him, not by any liking of Guinevere (although as Arthur's wife she is given respect), and certainly not by approval of the adulterous situation. They would frankly prefer Lancelot to marry, but Bors can go no further than to say of Elaine: 'God wolde . . . that ye cowde love her, but as to that I may nat nother dare nat counceyle you'. Even Bors's intense devotion to Lancelot does not qualify him to say more, and the subject is dropped. Lancelot's own views on matrimony can be described as practical and military. In an earlier book he says unequivocally and with finality: 'For to be a weddyd man, I think it nat, for then I must couche with hir and leve armys and turnamentis, batellys and adventures'. His similarly categorical objection to paramours is that in the working out of God's justice any knight who has dealings with them will decline in military prowess. Lancelot does not, of course, regard Guinevere as a paramour, but he has an inner conviction at the time of the Grail quest that his love for her mars his prowess as a knight. Any encroachments on his absolute devotion to her come from a supernatural, not a human level. His devotion exists in reality, and is not a mere courtly expression, for although he constantly fights for her and is available to her every command, at times in the face of all reasonable behaviour, he nevertheless remains to her the same real person who can, for example, turn irately on an Amazonian huntress who has inadvertently loosed an arrow into his buttocks and say, 'Lady or damesell, whatsomever ye be, in an evyll time bare ye thys bowe. The devyll made you a shoter'. He does not, to Guinevere, assume the attitude of a devotee in the religion of courtly love, but pays her the compliment of plain speaking, saying forthrightly, after she has chosen to display both jealousy and unreasonableness: 'That ys nat the first tyme that ye have been displese with me causeles. But, madame, ever I must suffir you, but what sorow that I endure, ye take no forse!'

And ever he does suffer her. When she refuses to understand his advised withdrawal from the court and passionately banished him, he accepts his banishment sadly and obediently. When her subsequent defiant flourish at his absence begins a sequence of events that leaves her in dire need of a champion, Lancelot's response is single-minded in his delight at the possibility of being restored to favour: 'Thys ys com happely as I wolde have hit!' he says. Of infinitely more serious consequence is his response when, in the potentially dangerous situation created by Aggravaine, Guinevere sends for him in Arthur's absence. Lancelot with accustomed lack of guile reports to Bors that 'he wolde go that nyght and speke with the quene'. Bors is aghast. 'And never gaff my harte ayenste no goynge that ever ye wente to the quene so much as now' is evidence of previous

misgivings on this score. Now he has no doubt at all of the implications of the discovery of such a visit which, he says, 'shall wratth us all'. Lancelot's reply is bland, unanswerable: 'Fayre neveawe, I mervayle me much why ye say thus, sytthyn the quene hath sente for me'. And Bors, for love of him, regretting bitterly the foolish risk, can only send him off with a good grace. Malory's naive admiration of his hero is evident: 'And so he walked in hys mantell, that noble knyght, and put himselff in great jourparté.'

Although Lancelot has an inkling of the tragic consequences that may follow his disastrous visit, he does not in any way depart from his loyalty to Guinevere, which requires him to place her honour above all. On this is based one aspect of his reiterated and obviously untrue assertion that she is faithful to Arthur, a valiant assertion from which he never departs. He asserts it for the first time on his return to Bors and his kinsmen when he says 'For and I may be harde and suffirde and so takyn [meaning 'If I may be heard, and allowed, and if my offer is accepted] I woll feyghte for the quene, *that she ys a trew lady untyll her lorde*'. Lancelot means that he will prove her honour by combat—in other words, that he will kill any knight who dares to claim that Guinevere is untrue. This was an accepted method of proof of the time, where the truth was established by physical prowess, and we will call this the 'honourable' truth. But that this is not the whole story is hinted at by even such a morally insecure knight as Mellyagaunce when Lancelot threatens him with just such honourable proof. Mellyagaunce, with unexpected insight into Lancelot's trust in his own prowess, warns him of deeper levels of conduct: 'My lorde sir Lancelot, I rede you beware what ye do; for thoughe ye are never so good a knyght, as I wote well ye ar renowned the best knyght of the wor[l]de, yet shulde ye be avysed to do batayle in a wrong quarell, for God will have a stroke in every batayle'.

Lancelot evidently now realises that there may be more to it than the establishment of the honourable truth, for he continues to Bors: 'But the kynge in hys hete, I drede, woll nat take me as I ought to be takyn'. And he is right. The king knows perfectly well that Lancelot will support the Queen's honour by his unsurpassed physical strength and therefore,taking his stand on what we will call the 'naked' truth 'and with both astuteness and regal integrity' he says 'I woll nat that way worke with Sir Launcelot, for he trustyth so much upon hys hondis and hys myght that he doutyth no man. And therefore for my quene he shall nevermore fyght, for she shall have the law'.

But the naked truth is impossible to Lancelot: for Guivenere's sake, for Arthur's sake, and even for his own sake he cannot face it fully until the end of the book until, that is, he rejects the secular life.

When, having rescued Guinevere from the fire (and the law) to which she has been committed by Arthur once evidence of her faithlessness has been established, he takes her to Joyous Garde and is besieged by Arthur and Gawayne, his defence is revealing. He says, 'And as for my lady quene Gwenyver, *excepte youre person of your hyghnes and my lorde sir Gawayne*, there nys no knyght undir hevyn that dare make hit good uppon me that ever I was traytour unto youre person'. The exceptions are vital, for they hint at the naked truth. Lancelot repeats himself, as if desperately sticking to a formula that does not make nonsense of his integrity: 'And where hit please you to say that I have holdyn my lady, youre quene, yerys and wynters, unto that I shall ever make a large answere, and prove hit uppon ony knyght that beryth the lyff, *excepte youre person and sir Gawayne*, that my lady, quene Gwenyver, ys as trew a lady unto youre person as ys ony lady lyvynge unto her lorde, and that woll I make good with my hondis'.

It would be idle to imagine that Lancelot is incapable of distinguishing between the two forms of truth. At the same time it is apparent that he is perfectly willing to assert, and to continue to assert, the honourable truth in order to protect Guinevere's good name to everyone except to Arthur and Gawayne. The exceptions are the stumbling block, for it is here that Lancelot's motivation is obscure. It is possible, of course, that he deliberately conceals the naked truth from Arthur in a desire to save him hurt. But Arthur has himself respected the naked truth by insisting that Guivenere should have 'the law'. Does Lancelot respect Arthur (with the curious addition of Gawayne, in these circumstances) altogether too much to prove on them an obvious untruth by force? In this particular context the linking of Gawayne's name with Arthur's seems to have a deeper significance than a straightforward reluctance to fight his oldest and most trusted friends.

There are other likely facets to Lancelot's resistance. He may have a profound unwillingness to take up arms against the anointed king —to him a supremely irreligious act—or an equally profound unwillingness to fight Arthur as the injured party in a manifest case of adultery, for in terms of God's justice Lancelot might *not* prove his case on his 'hondis'. Here we have a very real connexion with Gawayne, for Gawayne has also been truly injured by Lancelot when he unwittingly killed Gaheris and Gareth. Does Lancelot feel here also the possibility of divine retribution for his guilt?

It may well be that the explanation lies with Malory. Lancelot is his epic hero and as such may have eluded his grasp and arrived at the situation where there is no alternative but heroically to persist in his protestations of the Queen's innocence, entirely without justification. At any rate, Malory cheerfully disregards it as a problem

and, in spite of this, Lancelot really lives. Of all the characters, his is infinitely the most attractive and the most vital. In his relationship with Guinevere we constantly take his side and not hers. We prefer the knight who, having conquered Mador de la Porte, grants him his life on condition that 'no mencion be made uppon sir Patryseys tombe that ever quene Gwenyver consented to that treson', to the Queen who, when Mellyagaunce was in a similar position, 'wagged hir hede uppon sir Lancelot, as ho seyth "sle him".' Lancelot's motives are less self-regarding than Guinevere's and more generous; similarly, his masculine sense of values is more profound, and this finds its echo throughout the book where ultimately the fellowship of knights is the more important allegiance. Arthur expresses it trenchantly even before the siege of Joyous Garde: 'And much more I am soryar for my good knyghtes losse than for the losse of my fayre quene, for quenys I might have inow, but such a felyship of good knyghtes shall never be togyders in no company'. Lancelot is likewise only too happy to offer to return Guinevere to him. Although the causal chain of events which leads to the destruction of the Round Table springs from the relationship of Lancelot and Guinevere, this relationship diminishes in stature compared with the knightly loyalties and passions as the action proceeds.

Guinevere's character contributes to the potentially dangerous situation at the beginning of the book. She is demanding, possessive, fiery, and in her actions and indiscretions, culpable. Immediately we are aware of her tempestuous femininity as she confronts Lancelot in his gentle and reasonable attempt to put a stop to the scandal, largely for her sake. He meets with passionate tears and passionate words. 'Sir Launcelot, now I well understonde that thou arte a false recrayed knyght and a comon lechourere, and lovyste and holdiste other ladyes, and of me thou haste dysdayne and scorne'. She makes no attempt to follow his argument. Her jealousy in the past has been of such violence as to send Lancelot out of his mind and later, in the episode of Elaine of Astalot, Lancelot is warily and wearily apprehensive of any gossip coming to the Queen's ears. It does, of course, and Guinevere does not mince her words. 'Fye on him, recreayde knyght! For wyte you well I am ryght sory and he shall have hys lyff' shows complete relentlessness to Lancelot's reckless attempt to make good the breach by appearing at the tournament for her sake. The fact that, on occasion, she repents of her stormy conduct with both humility and grace serves to heighten the dimension of reality seldom absent from her.

Her reactions are never tentative. During the Elaine incident she has poured nothing but spite and fury on Lancelot, who has behaved with courteous reserve towards the girl, but when the story draws

to its appealing close and Elaine's dead body is brought to the court, Guinevere can say with superb and wholly exasperating reproach to Lancelot, 'Sir, ye myght have showed hir som bownté and jantilnes which myght have preserved his lyff'. She subsequently apologises for her behaviour, but nevertheless with subtle arrogance requires Lancelot to wear *her* sleeve at the next tournament—evidence of a resentment not quite forgotten. It is in this giving of herself so completely to feeling that Guinevere's personality is vigorously drawn. She indulges in robust anger, but never in chill hauteur; in extravagance, but never in prudence. In dealing with the extraordinary incident of Mellyagaunce she declares to him roundly 'I had levir kut myne own throte in twayne rather than thou sholde dishonoure me', and she means it, yet when the poor knight pitiably capitulates she can ask with impatient good humour, 'What ayles you now?' It is her wholly unafraid, enduring love of Lancelot that wins from Malory the admission that 'whyle she lyved she was a trew lover, and therefore she had a good ende', and her whole-hearted renunciation of Lancelot at the end of the book is dramatically in the character of a person who never does things by halves.

Inevitably, she is unpopular. Her termagant treatment of 'the best knyght in all the world' can do no other than arouse covert dislike among his passionately loyal supporters, though the judgment that she 'ys a destroyer of good knyghtes' is born of emotional reaction rather than fact.

But just as Guinevere's hasty temper and ill-judged conduct contribute to disaffection among the knights, so Arthur's even and open disposition and steady influence maintain the fellowship that he has built up. He has a rock-like, steady nobility, unimaginative, yet leavened with generosity and humility of spirit. A certain law-abiding stolidity and a forbearance of Guinevere's truant disposition enable him equally to consign her to the fire and to welcome her deliverance from it 'hartely' on the occasion when she is accused (unjustly) of having poisoned an apple which is destined for sir Gawayne, but which is eaten by sir Patryse and causes his death. Arthur lacks Lancelot's spectacular charm, but his consistent good worth is winning enough. Malory epitomises Arthur's influence when he says 'He that was curteyse, trew and faythefull to hys frynde was that tyme cherysshed'.

It is Arthur's consistently honourable qualities which make him vulnerable. That the extraordinary position, where the Queen's known lover is at the same time the most honoured knight at court, has persisted for so long without scandal and without disruption is due to Arthur's deliberate unconsciousness, born of a simple and intuitive wisdom. Arthur loves and values both Guinevere and Lancelot, and has assessed his values inwardly if not explicitly. He

accepts openly and with tranquillity that Lancelot is the Queen's acknowledged champion and can say to Guinevere quite simply, when she is in need of a defender: 'What aylith you that ye can nat kepe Sir Lancelot uppon youre syde?' Of the common knowledge that Lancelot is rather more than the Queen's defender Arthur has, as Malory says, a 'demying' which he honourably fails to explore. 'He wolde nat here thereoff, for sir Lancelot had done so much for hym and for the quene so many tymes that yte you well the kynge loved hym passyngly well'. Guinevere's lack of discretion allows scope for the working of malice, but does not breach the deep love and admiration Arthur and Lancelot have for each other, which has its root in the successful 'man's world' they have established together. Lancelot is 'the moste honorabelyste knyght' of the Round Table, and 'by the noble felyship of the Round Table was kynge Arthur upborne': years of mutual respect and liking are behind their bond. Indeed, Arthur is unable to sustain for any great length of time his prosecution of Lancelot at Joyous Garde,—the castle to which Lancelot takes Guinevere when he rescues her from the fire. Lancelot's own unwillingness to fight and his gallant forbearance is enough. 'For when kynge Arthur was on horseback he loked on sir Launcelot; than the terrys braste out of his yen, thynkyng of the grete curtesy that was in sir Launcelot more than in ony other man. And therewith the kynge rod hys way and myght no lenger beholde hym . . . ' Almost every meeting after the débâcle is accompanied by Arthur's tears and Lancelot's, with, at the end, the whole court 'sobbyng and wepyng for pure dole'. We have a strong feeling that Malory commends the 'dole' heartily and joins in vicariously, as indeed we do.

It is in his relationships with Lancelot and with Gawayne that Arthur is most deeply moved, for they are representative of what he values most—the loyalty, strength and contentment of his kingdom. Unwittingly and spontaneously Arthur gives evidence that his domestic situation does not compare in importance with the welfare of the state, at the moment when Mordred tells him that Lancelot was taken in the Queen's chamber (thus supplying the required proof of his guilt). Arthur's first comment is 'Jesu mercy! he ys a mervalous knyght of proues', his second, regret that his fellowship of the Round Table is now broken for ever, and his last, that if he is to retain his honour, his queen must 'suffir dethe'. And although by this last he is 'sore amoved', loss of the Queen never wrings from him the final depths of pity and love of which he is capable. Her subsequent abduction is an offence against his status both as husband and king which requires to be requited, but it is of secondary consequence; to Lancelot, when they encounter each other at Joyous Garde he is, of conventional necessity, his 'mortal foo', but again

his reasons fall into unconscious order of importance. 'Thou hast slayne my good knyghts' is followed by 'also thou haste layne by my quene . . . '

Arthur's simplicity and strength in affection exceed his intellectual capability. He swoons for 'verry pure sorow' when he hears of the deaths of Gaheris and Gareth, lamenting them in his own right, and at the same time lamenting the bitter grief that it will bring to Gawayne. In a clumsy but well-meant attempt to save Gawayne hurt he charges the other knights not to tell Gawayne of the deaths (how could Gawayne *fail* to learn of it?) and has enough sensitivity and understanding to cause them both to be buried before Gawayne can see them. But generally he lacks the perspicacity to see where events will lead him. He is guided by loyalty rather than foresight and is therefore determined, but obtuse and inflexible, in action. When Aggravaine forces the issue of Arthur's deliberate unconsciousness, Arthur has no alternative but to take action against adultery, for he acts within the limit his honour has prescribed for him.

No man can be a successful autocrat who loves so well. Arthur's kingdom, built on loyalty and affection, falls on loyalty and affection. In establishing his fellowship, he relinquishes the absolute power of a feudal lord, and because he steps down to be among his knights the nobility behind the act creates a climate where he is loved and honoured. Paradoxically, more than any of the knights he is required to conform to the code, and that his laws are no mere empty formulae he owes to his rigid personal integrity. In the poisoned apple episode Mador can legitimately say to him 'Thoughe ye be oure kynge, in that degré ye ar but a knyght as we ar, and ye ar sworne unto knyghthode als welle as we be', requiring, and obtaining, certain behaviour. Malory comments with patriotic and admiring fervour: 'For such custom was used in tho dayes: for favoure, love, nother affinité there sholde be none other but ryghtuous jugement, as well uppon a kynge as uppon a knyght, and as well uppon a quene as uppon another poure lady'. It is both ironic and tragic that it is Arthur's imperturbable reliability and unswerving obedience to the order he has himself instituted, that permits the start of the chain of events which leads to his noble fellowship being 'disparbeled'.

The potential for tragedy is truly grounded in the *virtues* of the chief characters. Guinevere's indiscretions arise from a nature both courageous and passionate. Lancelot's devotion to Guinevere and to Arthur is real and true. Arthur's forbearance with and affection for Guinevere, coupled with his love and admiration of Lancelot have brought about a situation where their very vulnerability is ensured by their loyalty and honour. Arthur adds to his honourable

liabilities so far as Gawayne is concerned by going beyond all normal bounds in deference to his wishes, but it is a deference born of love and trust.

Gawayne's influence over Arthur is never satisfactorily explained by Malory, although it is overwhelmingly apparent. The explanation may lie in the characters of the two men: Arthur's essential humility excludes arrogance; Gawayne, a born leader, lacks humility until the end of the book. He is emphatically the stronger character of the two, and the fact that he is *not* the king enables him, in such a society, to be considerably more outspoken. His original defence of Lancelot is generous, far-sighted, and tenacious in its loyalty. But such a tenacity is a two-edged sword, sharpest in his subsequent pursuit of revenge against Lancelot, where his direct speech progresses to a superlative ability to insult. In the three-cornered bond of love between Guinevere, Arthur and Lancelot, Guinevere is, as it were, gradually replaced by Gawayne, whose unconquerable will maintains the strife. Yet we must concede his strength as a strength, and his purpose honourably and justifiably born.

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*The Book of Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere* opens with the 'tale of the poisoned apple'. We regard for a moment the warm heart of the rich, smiling land of Logres, Arthur's court, welcoming home its most honoured knights, then at once we are projected into action.

Lancelot's fall from grace provides ready matter for the gossipmongers, especially the 'opynne-mowthed' Aggravaine. Guinevere's rash and defiant reaction to Lancelot's effort to amend brings the consequences of any such ill-considered behaviour. To banish him from the court so soon after his honoured homecoming must cause conjecture. To arrange a private dinner-party for twenty-four knights in an attempt to rid herself of an inner dejection by an outward flourish displays a certain gallantry as well as a certain childishness, and as in all such acts where the motive must remain hidden it does not stand up to the vagaries of fortune. That Pyonell should choose this occasion to pursue his private vendetta by poisoning an apple is disastrous. Whether or not the apple was eaten by the right man is irrelevant: the glaring and frightening consequence is the immediacy with which every single knight present assumes Guinevere's guilt. And her position is such that she cannot justify her innocence: any admission of her reason for arranging the dinner is impossible. Her relationship with Lancelot has so far received tacit acceptance at the court because of Lancelot and in spite of herself. Now the suspicion directed at her brings into the open her unpopularity. Malory describes Arthur's reaction to be that of a 'passyng

hevy man'. There is an element of weariness, even of pathos, in his defence of her, hinting that he has long borne with her. The atmosphere becomes clouded. Shadowy factions are formed among the knights and there are but few who favour the queen.

In 'The Fair Maid of Astalot' the situation begins to emerge more clearly. Arthur's plans for a great tournament are marred by Guinevere's refusal to accompany him: 'She wolde nat, she seyde, for she was syke and myght nat ryde'. Malory's use of 'she seyde' implies deception, confirmed by the false social ring of Guinevere's further protestation: 'Truly, ye muste holde me excused. Y may nat be there'. Public opinion is now sufficiently knowing to conclude without hesitation that her aim is to remain with Lancelot in the king's absence. Lancelot's similar refusal to go, also because he 'seyde he was nat hole', has the justification of circumstances. The deviation from court behaviour has the effect of making Arthur once more 'hevy and passynge wroth'. The more common the gossip, the more difficult it is for him to turn a blind eye. Even Lancelot evinces a certain realistic sourness at Guinevere's behaviour for he permits himself, 'I alow your witte. Hit ys of late com syn ye were woxen so wyse' when she points out that people *will* talk.

That Arthur's irritation is not directed against Lancelot is shown by the rather heavy but endearing humour with which he several times hints at his penetration of Lancelot's consequent disguise at the tournament. Malory's comment, 'he knew hym well inow' bears the warmth of old affection, not the flavour of bitterness. Nor does the protective affection that he displays at the same time to Gawayne alter his love for Lancelot. Rather it is the love of a father who directs a different but not a lesser care to each son, and will not allow the superior ability of the one to detract from the other. Throughout this story all the bonds of knightly affection are blended and strong: only Aggravaine and Mordred persistently withhold themselves from the general rejoicing.

Nevertheless, we are still made aware in 'The Great Tournament' of an undercurrent of insecurity by Guinevere, who nervously seeks general popularity by asking Lancelot, for her sake, to force himself there that 'men may speke you worship'. And then, as if presenting us with a final glimpse of carefree happiness in Logres, Malory begins the story of 'The Knight of the Cart' with the idyllic description of Guinevere maying with her knights. Even the marital scene is presented as normal and undisturbed. They 'rode on maying in wodis and meadowis as hit pleased them, in grete joy and delytes. For the quene had caste to have been agayne with kynge Arthur at the furthest by ten of the clok . . . ' Into this fairytale picture of the queen and her knights, 'bedaysshed with erbis, mossis and floures in the freysshyste maner' comes Mellyagaunce with his

ridiculously unsophisticated scheme of abduction. Inevitably Lancelot comes to the Queen's rescue, and in this tale we are left in no doubt of the fact of adultery.

Now, as it were in preparation for the altogether deeper level of events about to befall, Malory recounts 'The Healing of Sir Urry', the knight whose seven wounds seem to bear a strangely symbolic significance and which, because of an enchantment, require to be searched (that is, handled and gently ransacked) by the best knight in all the world before they will heal. Arthur's humble example in searching the wounds first, fails. As in an occasion of great formality and reverence the court follows suit, the hierarchy of names proceeding without haste—'King Angwysh of Irelonde, Duke Chalance of Clauraunce, Sir Petipace of Wynchylsé, Sir Ozanna le Cure Hardy . . . ' and in themselves evoking mediaeval pageantry. Dramatically and at the last Lancelot arrives. Arthur bids him also to search Sir Urry's wounds in token of his fellowship with the Round Table. Lancelot's reaction illumines his unalterable allegiance to Arthur as king, but supremely his awareness of holiness. Malory's most lovely leisured account of the healing reveals the humility with which Lancelot gravely searches the wounds, and when the wounds 'fayre healed', 'ever sir Launcelot wepte, as he had been a childe that had been beatyn'.

And at the height of Lancelot's stature—because he offers nothing but his humility—Malory says 'But every night and day Sir Aggravaine, sir Gawayne's brother, awayted quene Gwenyver and sir Launcelot to put hem both to a rebuke and a shame'. He cuts himself short, clumsily and obviously, because this is the theme of his last book. But the ground has been prepared and the seeds of dissention and suspicion have been sown.

*The Most Piteous Tale of the Morte Arthur Saunz Gwerdon* re-evokes for a brief moment the idyllic 'floures' of May, before proceeding with the inexorable chain of events 'that stynted nat tylle the floure of chyvalry of the worlde was destroyed and slayne'. The action proceeds quickly, instigated by the two obvious villains of the piece, Aggravaine and Mordred, surreptitious, malicious characters who nurse a 'prevy hate' of the Queen and Lancelot, and who do not hesitate to use and to manipulate whatever human failings and virtues come to hand to bring about their downfall. Malory's own conservative and rigid disapproval echoes through the lines and Gawayne, as it were his spokesman, attempts to stamp out the malice before it can spark into action. The reader reacts in sympathetic concert, for although in the face of the bare facts Arthur *is* shamed by Guinevere's infidelity, he himself has acted on a deeper level of morality by choosing to disregard the situation after an inward assessment of the values at stake But at the same

time he has laid himself open to this charge and it is his noble and deliberate unconsciousness that gives Aggravaine the weapon he needs. There is something peculiarly horrible in the unscrupulous way in which Aggravaine *uses* Arthur's virtues to prosecute his private hate, while at the same time professing himself inarguably, on the face of it, as the champion of Arthur's honour.

Gawayne, however, *does* argue: he immediately grasps the possible implications and with both practical insight and genuine loyalty puts the situation as best it can openly be put in an effort to prevent the malicious exposure, receiving immediate support from Gaheris and Gareth, who say prophetically 'now ys thys realme holy destroyed and myscheved and the noble felyship of the Round Table shall be disparbeled'.

When confronted with the accusation, Arthur is noncommittal but helpless, for his blind eye has been forced open and he has no alternative but to ask for proof. His respect for the order of the society which he has himself instituted cannot allow him to evade the issue. In the same way, Lancelot's commitment to Guinevere is such that he unhesitatingly goes to her chamber in the king's absence, realizing that a trap has been laid, but counting in gallant foolhardiness his devotion to her wishes as his immediately highest loyalty.

Aggravaine's malevolence is effective simply by virtue of the honourable qualities of both Arthur and Lancelot. The consequences widen as the action proceeds and other loyalties are drawn in. Lancelot, in his mighty prowess, kills Aggravaine and twelve knights in his escape. From here it is more or less inevitable that factions should form and war threaten. Lancelot's kinsmen have awaited his return in anxious perturbation, and receive him with a warmth and reassurance, and a readiness to share misfortune, that display their close fellowship. 'Loke ye take no discomforte . . . And we shall gadir togyder all that we love and that lovyth us, and what that he woll have done shall be done. And therefore lat us take the wo and the joy togyder' is gloriously free from any recrimination. Their affirmation that Lancelot has no alternative but to rescue the Queen lightens his burden of responsibility and his grave acceptance of their advice bears a foreboding of what is at stake: 'Peradventure I shall there destroy some of my beste fryndis, and that shold moche repente me . . .'

Internal strife can only be averted if Gawayne—for as Aggravaine's brother he is the injured party—does not seek revenge. *And he does not.* With munificent clarity of insight he puts Lancelot's case to the king in the best possible light. His loyalty to Lancelot is evident, and Arthur's response, expressing his intention to invoke the law, appals him. Even when the king points out Gawayne's

legitimate grounds for revenge, he resists the argument with great detachment, maintaining his earlier disapproval of Aggravaine's plot. His stature and resolution are such that he can refuse—at the risk of disloyalty to the throne—to be present when Guinevere is taken to the fire. Arthur, out of respect and love of him, does not insist, but in a momentary assertion of kingship commands Gaheris and Gareth to be present. Gawayne's words, 'Alas, that ever I shulde endure to se this wofull day' are more prophetic than he knows. Gaheris and Gareth 'ar yonge and full unable to say [Arthur] nay', but their reluctance is sufficiently strong for them to assert stoutly that they will be there in 'pesyble wyse'. It is this loyal reluctance to see Guinevere burnt (and, by implication, their loyalty to Lancelot) that leads to their death, for it 'misfortuned' Lancelot to slay them, 'unarmed and unwares', and unrecognized, in the press of people when he rescued the Queen.

Here lies the pivotal tragedy of the work. Lancelot's love for Gareth has a particular tenderness; Gareth loved Lancelot 'bettir than [Gawayne] and all hys brethirn and the kynge both'; and Gawayne's awareness of this together with his own love of these two brothers overwhelms him and directs his actions from now on.

Although Arthur is well aware of the repercussions that will follow the deaths of Gaheris and Gareth, he is singularly obtuse about his own contributions to the tragedy, both in insisting that Guinevere should 'have the law' and on Gaheris' and Gareth's presence at the fire. The consequences carry him far beyond his own orbit of intention, though he remains unconscious of his contribution to the end. Each contribution to the tragic sequence: Lancelot's loyalty to Guinevere, Arthur's to his order of society, Gaheris's and Gareth's refusal to bear arms, and Gawayne's loyalties, now directed to a grief-stricken pursuance of revenge of his brothers' deaths, is nobly born and displays a consistency of behaviour. Each contribution, interlocking with the others, has formed an infinitely stronger force towards disaster. Not one of the characters has committed a single epic act of choice which can be pointed to as the whole cause. It is here that Malory's work speaks to our human condition, for men are hardly ever solely and wholly each one responsible for tragedy. There is only a degree of truth in Arthur's mournful cry. 'A, Aggravayne . . . thyne evyll wyll . . . hath caused all this sorow'. And his response to Gawayne's despairing words 'Alas, they beare none armys ayente hym (i.e. Lancelot) neyther of them bothe' is provoking in its lack of perception. Nevertheless, he is emotionally aware of the effect these deaths will have on Gawayne and accepts in advance the action to which it will lead him. He knows the only comfort he has to offer Gawayne: 'Let us shape a remedy for to revenge their dethys'. This

foreshadows his willing submission to Gawayne's influence, and Gawayne vows his revenge as strongly and as unhesitatingly as his original defence of Lancelot and remonstrance with the king. It is final, wrung from the depths of his biting grief and from a sense of betrayal, and his previous sternness with Arthur now assumes a note of authority—'And therefore I require you, my lorde and kynge, dresse you unto the warre'—which strengthens throughout the siege of Lancelot and Guinevere at Joyous Garde, where Lancelot's speech of defence is answered by Gawayne, not by the king.

Gawayne accepts without demur the Queen's innocence—ostensibly the issue at stake—but from his heart is wrung the real cause of the siege: 'What cause haddist thou to sle my good brother sir Gareth that love the more than me and all my kynne? And alas, thou madist hym knyght with thyne owne hondis . . . ' Of the sacredness of such a relationship Lancelot is sharply aware. He is bound in the same way to Arthur, and this is partly the reason for his intense reluctance to take up arms against him.

When the news of the siege reaches the Pope, he, taking 'consideracion of the grete goodnes of kynge Arthur and of the hyghe proues off sir Launcelot', issues bulls charging Arthur to take his queen again and to accord with Lancelot, and Guinevere is unquestioningly restored and received. Again it is Gawayne who decides the issue: 'In no wyse he wolde suffir the kynge to accord with sir Launcelot; but as for the quene, he consented'. He relegates the king to a subordinate role—'The kynge may do as he will, but . . . ' It is Gawayne's sheer force of will that withholds accord for Lancelot offers earnestly to make the most penitential amendment that he can. Gawayne dismisses him with contempt. 'Pyke the lyghtly oute of thys courte' follows a threat to continue the revengeful war, and utter dejection rings through Lancelot's farewell: 'But fortune ys so varyaunte, and the wheele so mutable, that there ys no constaunte abydynge'.

Gawayne's continued pressure on Arthur and his relentless determination cause a mighty host to be shipped to France to besiege Lancelot at Benwick. Here Lancelot's reluctance to fight is matched by Arthur's, but Gawayne's inveterate obstinacy holds something of the tragedy of Macbeth. 'Woll ye now turne agayne, now ye ar paste this farre uppon youre journey?' he beseeches Arthur, as if tenacity itself were justified when purpose began to fail. The doleful pursuance of revenge is narrowed down to a single combat between Lancelot and Gawayne. Arthur is left in the role of a bystander 'syke for sorow' both at Lancelot's forbearance and at the wound Gawayne receives. It is the news from England that interrupts the siege and draws us back to one of the original causes of the tragedy, Mordred's villainy.

Mordred, by craft and self-seeking, has succeeded in having himself crowned king of England. He has also attempted to make Guinevere his wife, but she, being not without guile herself, has adroitly escaped and established herself unassailably in the Tower. She is as to the point with Mordred as she has been with Mellyagaunce, letting him know 'opynly and pryvayly, that she had levir sle herselff than to be maryed with him'.

Malory gloomily attributes the success of Mordred's cause to the fickleness of the common people who, he asserts conservatively, are so 'new-fangill'; but the success has, in fact, only been possible because of Arthur's absence in France at Gawayne's behest.

Arthur's return in force begins the civil war, and in the battle on arrival at Dover Gawayne is mortally wounded. Approaching death brings him to see with clarity the consequences of his obstinacy: 'Thorow me and (my) pryde', he says to Arthur, 'ye have all thys shame and disease, for had that noble knyght, sir Launcelot, ben with you, as he was and sholde have ben, thys unhappy warre had never ben begunne.' Gawayne's tragic guilt rings with inconsolable remorse, and it is strangely significant that he attributes his death solely to the wound given him by Lancelot—'for thorow my wylfulness I was causer of myne own dethe; for I was thys day hurte and smitten uppon myne olde wounde that sir Launcelot gaff me'. Again we feel the symbolic significance attached to a 'wound', which seems to represent something infinitely deeper than a physical injury —a betrayal, or a mortal sin. After his death Arthur dejectedly resumes battle with Mordred and defeats him, but not finally, for, ironically, 'they that loved sir Launcelot drew unto sir Mordred' using the opportunity to revenge Arthur's siege in France.

Gawayne's appearance to Arthur in a vision induces him to attempt a treaty with Mordred. Both uneasily agree to meet, accompanied by some few knights, between their armies, and both warn their armies to attack should any sword be drawn during the parley. 'And so they mette as their poyntemente was, and were agreed and accorded thorowly. And wyne was fette, and they dranke togydir. Ryght so cam oute an addir of a lytyll hethe-buysshe, and hit stange a knyght in the foote. And so whan the knyght felte hym so stonge, he loked downe and saw the addir; and anone he drew hys swerde to sle the addir, and thought none other harme. And whan the oste on bothe partyes saw that swerde drawyn, than they blewe beamys, trumpettis, and hornys, and shoutted grymly, and so bothe ostis dressed hem togydirs.' In this final battle a hundred thousand men are slain, and Arthur and Mordred finally meet in single combat. Malory's realistic account of Lucan, one of the two knights left alive with Arthur, who 'as he yode he saw and harkened by the moonelyght how that pyllours and robbers were com into the fylde to

pylle and to robbe many a full noble knyght of brochys and bees and of many a good rynge and many a rich juell. And who that were nat dede all oute, there they slew for their harneys and their ryches' evokes vividly the desolation.

The account of the barge which receives Arthur, grievously wounded, and Malory's inconclusive words 'Rather I wolde say: here in thys world he chaunged hys lyff', revert to an age of myth and legend.

Lancelot, stricken with the news of Mordred's treason and Gawayne's death, blames himself uncritically. Both he and Gawayne have realised with bitterness and mourning that it is by their own acts that they have been impelled onwards in the sorry causal chain and atonement is not possible. Arthur, although immeasurably moved by the pitiable consequences, failed to evaluate his own acts. Lancelot, with much more sensitivity, accepts without question the responsibility for Gawayne's death, although this acceptance is emotionally rather than rationally justifiable. When he has learnt of Arthur's death he goes in search of Guinevere, and their final meeting clarifies their relationship in honest perception and admission of sinfulness. Guinevere is frank enough to direct her remarks to her ladies: 'Thorow thys same man and me hath all thys warre be wrought . . . for thorow our love that we have loved togyder ys my most noble lorde slayne'. She displays a pure simple faith—'for synfull as ever I was, now ar seyntes in hevyn', and fulfils the requirements of true repentance by firmly purposing amendment, for she requires Lancelot 'never to se me no more in the visayge', and goes even further in recommending him to marry. Lancelot is unable to relinquish their love absolutely. He sees the need for the religious life as she does: ('I muste nedys take me to perfection, of ryght') but not for the same reason: he will embrace holy orders because she does. It was her love that withheld him from the religious life at the time of the Grail. Now he has a right to embrace it. But, he says, 'because in you I have had myn erthely joye, and yf I had founden you now so dysposed, I had caste me to have had you into myn own royame'. But Guinevere is resolute, and Lancelot is priested in great humility. When Guinevere dies, he performs his last devotion to her in the office of priest, and he defends his consuming sorrow to his superior: 'My sorow was not, nor is not, for ony rejoysyng of synne, but my sorow may never have ende. For whan I remember hir beaulté and of his noblesse, that was both wyth hyr kyng and wyth hyr, so whan I saw his corps and hir corps so lye togyders, truly myne herte wold nat serve to susteyne my careful body. Also whan I remembre me now by my defaute and myn orgule and my pryde that they were both layed ful lowe . . . '. He has loved Guinevere greatly, and Arthur greatly

also, and particularly he mourns them as they lie 'togyders'. And because there is nothing left for him in life, he dies of grief.

In death he 'laye as he had smyled' and Sir Ector's lament over his body conveys the quality of the nonpareil of knights. 'A, Launcelot! thou were hede of al Crysten knyghtes! And now I dare say', sayd syr Ector 'thou sir Launcelot, there thou lyest, that thou were never matched of erthely knyghtes hande. And thou were the curtest knyght that ever bare shelde! And thou were the truest frende to thy lovar that ever bestrade hors, and thou were the trewest lover of a synful man that ever loved woman, and thou were the kyndest man that ever strake wyth swerde. And thou were the godelyest persone that ever cam emonge prees of knyghtes, and thou was the mekest man and the jentyllest that ever ete in halle emonge ladyes, and thou were the sternest knyght to thy mortal foo that ever put spere in the reeste.'

It is Lancelot's superb qualities that, finally, establish him as the tragic hero of the work. In neither case—to Guinevere, nor to Arthur—does he evade his commitment. Guinevere recedes temporarily as the action proceeds into war, but Lancelot's allegiance to her, though dormant, is never extinguished. Arthur's most powerful commitments lie within the knightly fellowship, but nevertheless do not escape the division of allegiance, for his love of both Lancelot and Gawayne wrenches him emotionally apart. Nor does Gawayne escape the conflicting intensities.

The facts that basically these forces are a potential for great harmony, and that it is the powerful virtues of fallible men that bring calamity, constitute the tragedy.

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# SARTRE AND LANGUAGE

*by* PETER ROYLE

*The Philosophy of Sartre*, by Mary Warnock, is the only book yet to have appeared in English which is both devoted exclusively to the philosophy of Sartre in all its aspects and written by a philosopher. It is therefore important that certain fallacies concerning what for Sartre is the very nature of philosophical activity and its relation to literature should at this stage be exposed.

In a remarkable passage of her book Mrs Warnock writes:[1]

> Sartre tries to tell us what the world is like in general, without providing a system, but merely by extending his description of the particular vaguely and indefinitely outwards. We are inevitably left with the question why things should be as he says, and with the feeling that as a matter of fact they are not, or only accidentally. This is almost to say that, so far as this aspect of his philosophy goes, Sartre is not really, or only accidentally, a philosopher. For philosophy must be general, whereas what Sartre gives us is a description of the particular which has as its aim to make us *feel* the particularity of things; and this we may reasonably believe to be the province of, say, poetry or the cinema rather than of philosophy. When he tries to construct the general account out of the material of the particular he fails. All we have is exaggeration, rather than true generality. Kant's categories might make some serious claim to be a list of the elements of the structure of our world; at least he tries to *deduce* them. Sartre's general account of the world, on the other hand, has no *rationale*. It is as if someone who, in a novel, successfully made us feel what it was like to be, for instance, jealous, or depressed, then said, 'and we are all of us in this state all the time'. But, of course, though we can understand the state, we *know* that we are not in it all the time. And the success even of the particular description is rendered suspect, if, after all, we are told that it is not really particular but entirely general.

This passage is remarkable because its central thesis is the exact opposite of the truth. Far from Sartre the philosopher's extending his description of the particular vaguely and indefinitely outwards, far from his trying to construct the general account out of the material of the particular and therefore failing, it is because Sartre the

artist, who, qua artist, aims to make us *feel* the particularity of things, is obliged nevertheless to try to construct the particular out of the material of the general, that he necessarily fails. But of this failure, which is for him the unavoidable failure of all literature, he is perfectly aware. This is clearly demonstrated by the following passage from *La Force de l'âge*, in which Simone de Beauvoir tells us that, like her, Sartre was of the opinion that[2]

> Tout récit introduit dans la réalité un ordre fallacieux; même si le conteur s'applique à l'incohérence, s'il s'efforce de ressaisir l'expérience toute crue, dans son éparpillement et sa contingence, il n'en produit qu'une imitation où s'inscrit la nécessité. Mais Sartre trouvait oiseux de déplorer cet écart entre le mot et la chose, entre l'oeuvre créée et le monde donné: il y voyait au contraire la condition même de la littérature et sa raison d'être; l'écrivain doit en jouer, non rêver de l'abolir: ses réussites sont dans cet échec assumé.

Why is this failure necessary? Because, as is suggested in the passage quoted, existence is incoherent.

> C'est pourquoi aussi l'artiste a toujours eu une compréhension particulière du Mal, qui n'est pas l'isolement provisoire et remédiable d'une idée, mais l'irréductibilité du monde et de l'homme à la Pensée.[3]

In a footnote to the passage from *La Force de l'âge*, Simone de Beauvoir writes: 'Il s'en est expliqué dans *La Nausée*'. And it is remarkable that immediately after the aforequoted passage from her book, Mrs Warnock cites, without understanding its import, the very passage from *La Nausée* to which Mme de Beauvoir undoubtedly refers. As it is a very long passage, I shall quote, in the English translation of Mrs Warnock, only a fragment of it:[4]

> The world of explanations and reasons is not the world of existence. A circle isn't absurd—it can be perfectly satisfactorily explained as the rotations of a segment of a straight line round one of its extremities. But then a circle doesn't exist. On the other hand the root existed just in so far as I couldn't explain it. Knotted, inert, nameless, it fascinated me, filled my eyes, drew me continually back to its own existence. In vain I repeated 'that is a root'—it didn't catch on any more. I saw clearly that you couldn't go from its function as a root, as a suction-pump, to *that*, that hard, dense seal-like skin, that oily, callous, stubborn appearance. Its function didn't explain anything: it allowed you to come to a general understanding of what a root is, but not in the least what that particular one was.

The point is that words, the instruments with which the writer must seek to render the particular in its untranslatable singularity, contain, with the exception of proper names, eidetic intuitions which fit them adequately only for descriptions of the general. How, as Sartre says in his *Esquisse d'une théorie des émotions*, could one classify certain phenomena under the heading of emotion if one did not already have an *idea* of emotion[5]

But by the same token, philosophy, which, as Mrs Warnock says, 'must be general', escapes the fate of literature. And when Sartre describes, for example, in *L'Être et le néant*, the masochist, it is indeed *the* masochist that he is describing and not *this* particular masochist; or, to be more precise, he is describing *me* indulging in masochism. His descriptions are not empirical and therefore only probable and of limited application: they are phenomenological. We must therefore distinguish rigorously between the philosophy of Sartre and his literary descriptions; and this is precisely what Mrs Warnock fails to do. She writes:[6]

> This insistence on the particularity and concreteness of descriptions, from which ontological and metaphysical and general statements may be drawn, is what most clearly characterises existentialist writing—and what, incidentally, makes it perfectly plausible for Sartre to use novels and plays as well as straight philosophical expositions to convey philosophical doctrines.

In his philosophy it is, quite properly, the general which refers to the particular: in showing us what *the* masochist is, it seeks to help us understand *this* masochist. In literature this movement is reversed: it is the particular which refers to the general which it *signifies* (to use the word in its Sartrian sense): in describing *a* masochist, it perhaps wishes to give us an insight into *the* masochist that we may understand *this other real* masochist. It is therefore Sartre the artist who is constrained to use the tools of the philosopher and not, as Mrs Warnock claims, Sartre the philosopher who betrays his task by using the techniques of the artist. (That he does do this occasionally is undeniable; that he makes a habit of it is false.)

It might be objected that Sartre's philosophical style and his literary style are almost identical in one important respect, and that this proves that even as a philosopher he does not seek precision. As Mrs Warnock says in her Preface:[7]

> His method of composition is cumulative. He often attempts three or four ways of conveying a certain impression, which do not necessarily say exactly the same as, and may even contradict, each other. Almost everything he says about, for instance, perception could be discussed and probably quarrelled with.

This is correct. However, the author continues:

> But if one did that one would mistake his purpose; for, regrettably perhaps, he does not want to be precise, nor to get things exactly right. He is interested in presenting a picture of what things are like, in bludgeoning his readers into accepting a certain view of the world, and he does not care very much what weapons he uses to do this. Above everything else his philosophical method is descriptive. He aims to present an absolutely complete description of the world in its most general aspects; so that he is a metaphysician, but essentially a literary metaphysician.

The fact that Sartre hurls words at us in literary description, in attempts to convey the existent, is to be explained by the inadequacy of his tools and the necessity to approach the object described from every possible angle: he gives a good account of this in *Qu'est-ce que la littérature?* But to claim that in his philosophy, where precision is possible, Sartre does not aim at it is quite wrong. Why, then, does he, in his philosophy also attempt 'three or four ways of conveying' what he has to say, 'which do not necessarily say exactly the same as, and may even contradict, each other'? The answer is quite simple. As Mrs Warnock herself says:[8]

> He thought that philosophy is metaphysical (let us rather say, ontological)—that is, that it should provide a total and universal account of the nature of the world, such that whatever phenomenon one picks on, this is accounted for by assigning it its right place in the whole.

As Sartre would say, his philosophy is totalitarian, which means that it is present in its entirety in the smallest of its parts. This means that the linear method of exposition employed in deduction is inadequate: for what has not yet been expounded is, like what comes next in a play, just as necessary to an understanding of what *is* being expounded as is what has gone before. But as the linear method is the only one which allows of intelligible exposition, as, that is, what is being expounded will have, as far as possible, to depend for its intelligibility only on what has already been expounded, there will be a constant necessity for reformulation, modification, and correction until the picture is finally complete. In other words, what has to be conveyed will be said in 'three or four ways'.

This failure to appreciate the nature, for Sartre, of the distinction between philosophy and literature springs from an even more radical failure to understand what phenomenology is; and more specifically, what is meant by the term 'phenomenological ontology,' which is what *L'Être et le néant* purports to be. How else can we explain

the statement that 'Sartre's general account of the world . . . has no *rationale*'? Or Mrs Warnock's failure to distinguish between an artist's necessarily 'subjective' vision of the world, in which phenomena will depend upon his particular 'nihilation' for their organization, and the ontology of the philosopher? Or her identification, despite what Sartre has to say on the subject in *La Transcendance de l'ego* and again, later, albeit with slight modifications, in *L'Être et le néant*, of the 'pre-reflective cogito' with Husserl's transcendental self?[9]

These questions, however, do not concern us here. What does concern us is that *The Philosophy of Sartre*, which is on the whole a sympathetic account, if not of this author's later philosophy, at least of his earlier work, should not be regarded as the most sympathetic account that can be given.

## NOTES

[1] Warnock, *The Philosophy of Sartre*, pp. 89-90.

[2] S. de Beauvoir, *La Force de l'âge*, pp. 44-5. In the following translation of the passage, I have followed Green P., *The Prime of Life*, p. 40, except for the words and phrases in italics, where his translation seemed to me erroneous or inadequate: 'Any account of an event imposes a deceptive pattern upon the truth . . . ; even though the narrator resorts to verbal incoherence, and strives to grasp experience raw, in all its *contingency*, its scattered shapelessness, he can produce *only an imitation invested with necessity*. But Sartre thought it idle to deplore this discrepancy between things and words, between the world as it is and *the work created*; on the contrary, he regarded it as the basic condition of literature, its main 'raison d'être'. The writer's achievements are all gained within the limits of this *failure which he must assume*, and instead of longing to abolish it, he ought rather to turn it to good advantage.'

[3] Sartre, *Qu'est-ce que la littérature?* in *Situations*, II, p. 159. My translation: 'That is also why the artist has always had a peculiar understanding of evil, which is not the provisional and remediable isolation of an idea, but the irreducibility to thought of man and the world.'

[4] Warnock, op. cit., p. 94.

[5] Sartre, *Esquisse d'une théorie des émotions*, p. 11.

[6] Warnock, op. cit., pp. 72-3.

[7] Ibid., pp. 9-10.

[8] Ibid., p. 89.

[9] Ibid., p. 22.

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