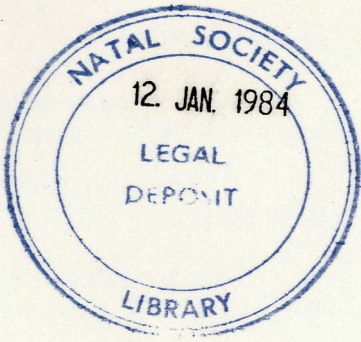


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THEORIA

A JOURNAL OF STUDIES
in the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

Vol. LXI



October 1983



R2,50 (+ 15c GST)

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Published twice yearly by the
UNIVERSITY OF NATAL PRESS
PIETERMARITZBURG

The usual diversity of material in *Theoria* is tempered in this issue by certain unifying factors. From among the contributions received, we were pleased that we could select and juxtapose two dealing with *The Tempest*. Two others are also concerned with a 'brave new world', though in rather different ways, as exercises in utopian thinking. We are sure that our readers will find these provocative, and we invite their responses.

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Theoria,
P.O. Box 375,
Pietermaritzburg 3200,
South Africa.

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SUBSCRIPTIONS

These should be sent to:

The Secretary,
University of Natal Press,
P.O. Box 375,
Pietermaritzburg 3200,
South Africa.

The annual subscription for *Theoria* is R5,00 (+30c G.S.T.)

New subscription rates from January 1984

Individuals R7,00 per annum

Institutions R10,00 per annum

These prices do not include GST

Editors: ELIZABETH H. PATERSON, DOUGLAS McK. IRVINE

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THE GREAT DIVIDE
PERSONALITY, PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORY, AND
POLITICS

by JEAN M. STEWART

Many people today share a pessimism about the future. Economists have answers to some problems but not to others. Political policies meet certain situations at the cost of others. We have spoiled the world's ecological balance. Social behaviour seems increasingly to be anti-social. What *can* be said, perhaps, is that a degree of world consciousness is developing. But with it there is an uneasy awareness that we seem to lack direction and that we cannot control our extremes of behaviour. Many people, especially young people, experience despair. And yet . . . and yet . . . There are those who keep trying to find solutions. And more important, there are those who manage to live the good life even in this imperfect setting.

The most challenging conflicts that beset the world appear to be conflicts about difference and inequality. One solution currently considered is 'equity', a closing of the gap between rich and poor nations, a redistribution of wealth. We have become confused in the face of accusations and protests about difference and inequality and now want to eliminate them. But can one? Are they not part of life itself? The opposite view suggests that we should allow free competition to weed out the weak and inefficient. But what should then happen to them? An alternative approach offered here, is that we re-examine the concept of development which lies somewhere between the illusion of equity (the elimination of inequality) and the illusion of freedom (the exploitation of difference). It is not a 'middle path' but rather, a stereoscopic view of two opposites into something which might lessen the negative aspects and enhance the positive aspects of difference and inequality.

As things are now, differences seem to lead to inter-group hostility within each country as well as hostility between countries and regions. Inequalities lead to hostility between those who have more and those who have less of whatever is valued. We are familiar with the polarisation of attitudes on these issues. It would seem that the most common reaction is to put the 'blame' on to the other side while retaining an image of 'rightness' for one's own. This is as true for individuals as for groups and seems to be part of the human condition. But divisions do not *have* to be regarded as evils in themselves in spite of the complexities they cause. They are sometimes recognised to be enriching to a society. Yet they *can* be evil. And the fear that they *might* be

seems to be rooted in the earliest experience of every individual.

If this is true, instead of searching for ways to control the behaviour of others it may be more productive to study fear itself. Certain concepts drawn from psychoanalysis and confirmed by observational studies of the normally developing child, provide ideas which might be relevant and useful. Contrary to popular belief, psychoanalysis is not alone in its view of personality. All the religions make similar claims as to the nature of man though they do so from other positions. The view presented here derives from various analytical sources but should be tested against the reader's own experience and observation.

* * *

There appears to be a universal, instinctive resistance in man to feeling helpless, a determination to escape and then avoid such a state. How he does so, is crucial.

A human being is equipped at birth with the capacity for loving and the capacity for destructive aggression. At first both are purely psychological but within the first two years they become capable of physical expression too. They constitute what could be called his survival kit and from infancy are used in defence of the helpless self. The most primitive psychological defence against the feeling of helplessness is the opposite feeling of power to have or to take what is needed or wanted. Clinical findings would seem to indicate that until more adaptive reactions are developed, the greater the helplessness the more extreme the mental defence against it. In other words, the fantasies of the helpless infant seem to be of the 'change places' variety. In his fantasy it is the infant who attacks, devours and incorporates the mother, though real power obviously resides in the mother who represents love and care but also pain and frustration for the infant (Klein 1957). As he becomes secure in the world, we think it must seem to him that the mother's response to his need is the result simply of his wish for something, since he has no understanding of mothering. The infant's experience of this power is called his fantasy of omnipotence. It is an important link between helplessness and power. The greater the helplessness, the greater the power which the wish seems to have; the stronger the wish to reverse the situation and the greater the illusion that the helpless one *can* control the powerful one.

At first every infant seems to experience life in a polarised way, either as totally gratifying when he is being fed or held or as totally unbearable when he is hungry or uncomfortable. This primitive splitting of the world into good or bad appears to be the basis of a human tendency to polarise situations which constitute a frustration or threat (Segal 1964). If the infant survives at all it

means that his survival kit has been activated. He wants what he wants, and he wants it *now*, and he wants it *all*. His reactions to the inevitable frustrations of early life emerge as the primitive emotions of greed, envy, jealousy and possessiveness. These basic reactions are natural to each and every human being. They come under the child's control gradually (*if they do*) as he experiences his mother's control of them along with her love, and as he experiences his father's control of them along with his love. *While they are uncontrolled they spoil relationships.*

Mastery implies that the destructive aspects of aggression are repressed (in the psychoanalytical sense of the term) by the individual himself; relegated finally to the unconscious. According to this view, repression is an *achievement*, implying that morality or healthy guilt has been reached. It seems to become possible between three and four years (Mahler 1975). Before this, destructiveness is either attributed to the other or directed at the other. When repression has been achieved, the *non-destructive* aspects of aggression remain available to energise the individual's love and work relations in positive ways and can be mobilised when necessary in defence of the self. It seems that although the crucial part of this process occurs early, it is finally integrated towards the end of adolescence and, if successful, allows the young adult to make a selective identification with his parents and to separate from them. Whether love or hate is the original impulse is irrelevant. Both are inevitably activated and interact in the developing psyche. But for emotional (and social) health, love must triumph over hate. If it does not, guilt is disowned. It is either projected on to the other or acted out in aggressive behaviour. These irrational defences bring only temporary relief, however, since the 'other' then becomes a frightening object and is treated as dangerous when perhaps he is not. (Whether he really *is* dangerous does not depend upon the subject's projection, but on whether or not the other has mastered his own destructive impulses.)

In social life it seems that groups of like-minded individuals operate in similar ways. Immature elements in each group claim righteousness for their own group and blame opponent groups for all meanness, dishonesty, cruelty, weakness, power or whatever is seen as evil. It is suggested, therefore, that the really important division of humanity which cuts right across differences of race, religion, language etc. and inequalities of wealth, status, education, ability etc. is *the invisible division between those individuals who are still naturally destructive, and those who have overcome destructiveness in the course of their emotional development* and so have become capable of healthy guilt and what could be called stereoscopic social vision, the ability to see

two points of view at the same time. If this is true, social policy has to take into account not only the visible divisions but also an invisible and fundamental division underlying all the others. Each country at present contends with the outer, visible differences and inequalities. They are the divisions everyone knows about and talks about. They *apparently* cause all the trouble. But each country, and the world as a whole, also contends willy-nilly with the invisible division between non-destructive and destructive individuals. This deserves the emphasis of a label: *The Great Divide*. While it is, perhaps, too clearly drawn (since remnants of destructiveness remain even in emotionally mature personalities) the exaggeration is necessary to expose the essential problem. The great divide has not, it is suggested, been clearly enough extricated from the more easily recognisable divisions. The purpose of this article is to expose and explore it.

* * *

A useful analogy may be drawn between the role of the family in individual development and the function of government in society by virtue of the relation between the state and the citizens of a country. It will be argued that political policies have their roots in individual human emotions of needing and wanting, and that constructive political leadership must undertake the task comparable to parenting, of meeting needs and restraining wants. Political solutions, it will be suggested, can be judged according to how far they reduce helplessness yet at the same time restrain natural destructiveness and civilise it into constructive behaviour.

Masked destructiveness in the adult personality is practised by the one who is still basically selfish; who frightens or dominates in order to get what he wants. Acted out destructiveness is practised by terrorists, bomb-planters and hostage-holders. Outright barbarism is practised by the killers, torturers and mutilators. There are destructive personalities among the 'haves' as well as the 'have nots' of the world and it is usually overlooked that there are emotionally mature personalities among the 'have nots' as well as the 'haves'. Power, in other words, is *not* synonymous with destructiveness. Power is necessary and useful, like aggression. It is the *abuse* of power which is destructive. The process of achieving self mastery, if this argument is valid, is one which needs to be properly understood, because unless the vast majority achieve it destructive behaviour may finally prevail.

Individuals overcome their destructiveness, *if* they do, in the setting of the good family, that is, a family which is *both loving and firm*. No government can perform or even monitor this delicate and complex task directly, nor can a central authority

hope to control the behaviour of millions of individuals. Any stable society depends upon the *self* control of its citizens. Government, on the other hand, can either support and reward successful parenting and continue the process in the social context, or it can thwart the lessons learned in a good family.

The family comprises the irreducible variables of relationships: male/female, parent/child (i.e. difference and inequality). For the purpose of the social analogy to follow, they can be elaborated as follows:

- (a) Equality in spite of difference. *This is a horizontal relationship.* Neither male nor female can create a child without the other. To work well, both the difference and the equality should be mutually acknowledged by the partners.
- (b) Inequality with justice. *This is a vertical relationship.* No helpless infant will survive without the protective power of the parents. To work well, the power must be exercised to meet the child's needs in the interests of his basic security.
- (c) Exclusion with purpose. This crucial, dynamic principle, adds the *dimensions of time and direction* in linking (a) and (b). Parental authority rightly excludes children and sets limits to their wants, but at the same time grooms them for adulthood. Children resent the limits and resist them until they begin to grasp the idea of future time. Then, co-operation and self mastery develop.

The family may fail in its task of maturing children emotionally. The parents may treat each other unfairly and so distort a complementary horizontal relationship of equality into a vertical one where one partner dominates the other. (The contribution to society, of the woman at home, for example, has been grossly undervalued. The unique contribution of the father to the child's emancipation from his attachment to the mother has also, until recently, been overlooked.) The unequal power of parents over children may be abused and so betray the purpose of parental authority. The demands of children may not be curbed, so distorting this vertical relationship into a horizontal one where the power of children is made equal to that of parents. (Parents are sometimes afraid of their children's anger and fail to exercise their appropriate authority.) Exclusion may be rigid instead of developmental, so blocking a process of emotional growth by which children find a positive identity, first in the family and then in society. (Parents may hold on to their authority too long.)

It is unlikely that any family succeeds in achieving its full potential for the constructive development of all its members. But it is *only* in the family that the individual experiences that unique blend of love and discipline which leads to a level of emotional maturity at which irrational destructiveness gives way to realistic

adaptation and consideration for others. The child of good parenting may still have problems. But he is never a menace to society. He is a constructive member. No government can achieve this by legislation. No authority outside the home can quite match it. Different societies have tried different methods, but they succeed only to the extent that they provide comparable substitute, close relationships for growing children (Bettelheim 1969, Bronfenbrenner 1970, Sidel 1972).

* * *

It is not mere justification to claim that South Africa is one of the most complex societies in the world. It exemplifies all the differences and inequalities we know: four races (20 million blacks, $4\frac{1}{2}$ million whites, $2\frac{1}{2}$ million of mixed race and $\frac{3}{4}$ million Asians); two official languages and at least eight vernacular languages; many religions and cultures; first-world technology, third-world subsistence; educational levels which range from advanced research to functional illiteracy; great wealth and dire poverty. No government would find such a country easy to govern. Add the great divide to this variety and the task becomes daunting indeed. There is a great deal of tension behind the façade of ordinary daily life. (Divorce rate, accident rate and heart disease are among the highest in the world.)

In emotional terms, it would seem that the black majority resent and fear the power of laws which block or limit their participation. Urban blacks enjoy the spin-off of a western technological society (an efficient infrastructure, goods and services of high standard). They want to be part of it and resent their exclusion from many of its opportunities and choices. They (partly correctly) interpret white attitudes as motivated by greed and selfishness.

The white minority in turn, are apprehensive about black numbers. Some fear a possible murderous hatred towards them, as it has indeed broken out at times in ex-colonial Africa. Others fear an overwhelming takeover and spoiling of systems, institutions or possessions. They (partly correctly) interpret black attitudes as motivated by spite and envy. On the other hand, they have experienced the loyalty of black employees and their impressive adaptability to new ways, new languages, new social and industrial demands. Increasingly, as they face the evidence, they experience a healthy concern at the hardships endured by most blacks.

On both sides, therefore, there are signs of the great divide: mature adults, black and white, motivated by reason and kindness; immature adults, black and white, motivated by greedy

or envious hostility. It is appropriate to appreciate kindness. It is appropriate to fear hostility. Vertical and horizontal social positions in a developmental relation to one another, and corresponding to those in the family, must be faced and perhaps *are* faced by mature personalities both black and white. But their reality is not faced by destructive individuals (black or white) because, it is suggested, this requires self mastery and adaptation.

Equality in spite of difference. The social equivalent of this relation implies mutual acknowledgement of equality *where it exists*. Present official policy cannot encompass this concept. It strains to achieve justice without such an acknowledgement. It perpetuates the illusion that the homelands provide 'separate but equal' opportunity when they do not. It makes positive gestures of consultation which lead to constructive plans, yet cannot bring itself to dismantle those laws which run directly counter to its positive gestures. Things are changing, but much remains the same. Constructive individuals try to set progress in motion again, but destructive individuals (black and white) are locked in an invisible battle of envy and greed.

Inequality with justice. The social equivalent of this relation implies acceptance of responsibility by the strong for need and dependence in the weak, where they exist. Paternalism, originally an *appropriate* response to the black/white situation, has been unfairly discredited. But it has also betrayed its name. The hopes it fostered have been disappointed. To some extent needs are met by welfare legislation. But it can fairly be stated that the vast burden of black poverty and ignorance has been ignored for too long by the majority of whites and all white governments, not only the present one. The customary policies of migrant labour and live-in domestic service have protected white employers from an awareness of rural destitution. And while both practices have provided the necessary entry for blacks into the money economy, they have at the same time led inevitably to family break-up.

Exclusion with purpose. This dynamic principle is crucial in social as well as individual terms. It implies recognition, by government and all citizens, of different levels of accomplishment. It introduces the developmental element linking the vertical to the horizontal at all levels. It implies a hierarchical structure essential for advancement, with an elite at the top, on the model of the parent in the family. It is a most unpopular concept prior to the mastery of destructive feelings, but mature personalities find their level without resenting those above them. There is no escaping the truth that every individual stands in vertical relations throughout life. Knowledge and numbers have an inverse relation to one another. Greater and greater knowledge is achieved by fewer and fewer people, and the

advancement of society depends upon the outstanding few.

Elites have been discredited, partly with justification because of their greed, but partly unjustly out of envy. The elite which emerges from the present line of argument would qualify primarily on the grounds that its members had developed beyond egocentricity and achieved mastery over their selfish impulses. If the functions of government could be carried out by men and women who combined this level of emotional maturity with superior knowledge and ability, everyone could indeed live in security and contentment. The hierarchy itself has to be defended, but movement upwards on the vertical index must obviously be defended too. If it is blocked from above on the grounds of colour or caste, talent is strangled. If it is held back on the grounds of equality, development is actually reversed as envy takes over.

Because of their historical position, some whites have been protected from the realities of the vertical index and occupy an exalted position on it. Some blacks, on the other hand, deny the vertical index and accuse whites of imposing *all* inequality artificially. The writer suggests that whereas inequality is being *perpetuated* artificially it is not a white contrivance. If there were no blacks in South Africa, whites would still have achieved a high standard of living, as they have done elsewhere, because of their technological know-how. It is out of his heritage of recorded history that the white man has been able to carry technological advancement further and further. The black man is now beginning to record his history. His aspirations have been enlivened, it is suggested, because of the impact of contact (however painful it has also been) with someone different from himself. Some of his disadvantages arise from injustice. Some do not and are made good only with time. Full participation does involve being *allowed* to enter the system. But once the barriers are removed, equality does not come about as the result of a powerful, magical 'wish'. Realistic development comes about when the vertical index is set in motion again, with its horizontal stations at all levels.

* * *

Governments of all kinds can and do operate on the basis of the principles outlined here. Yet the individual seems always to be at risk. *Is* there any real protection against destructiveness? The writer would like to suggest that if it is true that the horizontal/vertical grid *is* accepted by an overwhelming, but silent majority (black and white), *this* is society's protection: the taking for granted by ordinary people of growth by stages, keeps

communities stable and productive.

The *apparent* majority in South Africa is black. But if one thinks in terms of the great divide instead of colour, it may be that the majority comprises those men and women (black and white) who have outgrown their original destructiveness and do therefore accept the vertical/horizontal grid. It is at present a silent majority, hidden and afraid of being revealed, afraid of being intimidated, afraid of being scorned. But it may be much larger (in all societies) than has been recognised. These are the people who just want to live peacefully. They accept the authority of the expert. They want high standards maintained. They are the realistic adapters. The whites among them are not greedy. They would not block the rise of blacks with ability. The blacks among them are not envious. They would not want to take and spoil what others already enjoy. Both would have enough tolerance and patience to accept the limits and pace of change. They would want to protect the external social structure from destructive greed or envy.

If this is true, some means has to be devised to exclude from governmental power those individuals who are still motivated by destructive feelings, and entrust it to men and women who have mastered their selfishness. Party politics encourages polarisation. Even if the problem of numbers did not exist, black and white political parties would tend to attack each other as opposing white parties do now. A one-party state, on the other hand, rests upon the fallacy of equality, and so does nothing to curb destructive envy. A military government protects the authority of those greedy for power. Limited or partial representation denies acknowledgement to those who are excluded. It would seem, therefore, that a way must be found for individuals to elect individuals: but to select only from those individuals best qualified to hold authority. To qualify for high office, emotional maturity would have to be combined with knowledge and superior ability. The latter attributes, on the other hand, without emotional maturity, would be insufficient qualification for a member of government.

Accordingly it is suggested that:

1. Parliament should comprise *individuals* (not representatives of constituencies or groups) selected from nominees who:
 - (i) can be shown to belong to the mature population and not to the destructively motivated population. (This might not be as difficult to determine as might at first appear. Evidence of destructive attitudes is not hard to identify.)
 - (ii) can be shown to occupy the highest positions on the vertical index in terms of knowledge and ability.

2. Voters (under universal, adult suffrage) should take individual and private responsibility for choosing individual members of parliament. (Logistically this poses a mammoth problem, but we do live in a computer age. And there are models available. The election of office-bearers for the council or convocation of a university, for example, provides such a model. A list of candidates is supplied to each voter. Each candidate is described in terms of qualifications, personal achievements and service record. The voter lists in order those he feels to be most worthy.)
3. Voting in parliament should be individual and private in order to facilitate task-centred decisions and to avoid the polarising tendencies inherent in all groups.

At the present time parliament would consist mainly of white members, because whites have been better groomed to adapt to the requirements of the technological society than have other groups. But it would have its black members too, those outstanding individuals who combine maturity with intellect and ability. Members of parliament would, of course, constitute an elite and so inspire envy, greed, jealousy and spite in those who are immature and destructively motivated. But they would also be models to emulate, admire and identify with. Successful candidates would be likely to combine the technological skills of the scientist with the imaginative qualities of the humanitarian. They would have internalised certain qualities of good parents. They would be able to encompass similarity and difference in their thinking. They would not relish their power. They would take their responsibility very seriously.

Given power by the support of the invisible, but no longer silent, majority, they would be able to contain and restrain the destructive impulses of citizens who had not outgrown their egocentricity and who would now be revealed as a minority. Those who had outgrown selfishness would live in peace knowing that wisdom was in control instead of hatred. There would be no danger of such candidates passing any legislation which would endanger the ordinary family since they would be products of such families themselves, in the sense that they had been taught the lessons of life by parents who were loving yet strong enough to be firm. They would know that while no government can legislate to make people law-abiding, loyal, constructive and creative, the good family turns out citizens with these qualities all the time.

Durban.

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PROBLEMS IN APPLYING CHRISTIAN MORALITY TO POLITICS*

by PETER HINCHLIFF

I am going to leave aside altogether the kind of Christian theology which says that Christianity is completely inapplicable to politics. Reviewing my recent book, *Holiness and Politics*, Mr Enoch Powell wrote that a Christian ‘. . . lives as an individual, dies as an individual, and, if he is redeemed, is redeemed as an individual’. That conjures up an appalling picture of Mr Powell existing in total isolation for all eternity — a prospect surely as grim as hell itself! It also raises the question, ‘What is it that determines whether a man or woman is redeemed at all?’ One hardly needs to read much of the New Testament to realise that it is the way in which he or she treats other people, which is at least one of the determining factors. Since society is, in one sense, other people in the aggregate, any argument that Christianity is inapplicable to one’s political behaviour or that one is only required to behave morally in an individual rather than a social context, must be nonsense.

But there is a very difficult problem inherent in the application of Christian morality to politics. Early in the Falklands campaign the Archbishop of Canterbury was quoted in the press as saying, ‘In the real world, turning the other cheek is a luxury we simply cannot afford’. One of the Archbishop’s staff subsequently denied that he had said those words, but I am sure that there were a great many good and decent people, Christians even, who felt that they would have been entirely justifiable. And this is odd because it is an attitude which we would not accept in any other area of morality. If I were to say, ‘Being faithful to my wife is a luxury which I simply cannot afford’, you would find this absurd. Yet marriage is just as much a part of real life as politics is. Business is ‘real life’, too, yet if a businessman said ‘In the real world of business, honesty is a luxury I simply cannot afford’ — even though that might be quite *literally* true and honesty might cost him almost everything he owned — we should not wish to do business with him. Yet in the statement which was wrongly attributed to the Archbishop I expect we all felt a sneaking sense that there was something in what he had, or had not, said. There is something about the political world which makes the application of moral principles peculiarly difficult.

* This is the text of a University Lecture delivered in Pietermaritzburg in August, 1983, while Dr Hinchliff was visiting the Department of Divinity, University of Natal.

What is different, is very difficult to say with any precision. It may be the sheer size of the thing; it may be that in a world inhabited by wicked men, as Macchiavelli said, the good man will not survive — and it is the duty of politicians to see that their society does survive; it may be that the choice between evils arises more often in politics than elsewhere, because the problems in politics are more complex than in private life; it may be that in the corporate life of society we are always having to take decisions which affect other people (who may not share our own moral values) and while it is one thing to accept martyrdom for oneself it is quite another to be moral at the expense of other people. Perhaps it is a combination of all these factors and of others besides. Whatever the reason, it is clear that it is not easy simply to apply the criteria of personal and private Christian morality to the issues that arise in politics.

On the other hand, it is not sufficient to say that it is difficult and leave it at that, for Christians can neither say — with Mr Powell — that morality is purely individual; nor can they sit back and say that anything goes. There must be limits to the immorality which we will tolerate in the political sphere or we will find ourselves condoning quite appalling policies with incalculably damaging consequences for other people. There have been all sorts of attempts to establish such limits in moral theories about natural law, middle axioms, contextualism and so on. They all tend to fall into the trap of making do with a second best and calling it the right thing to do.

It is never fair to quote what academics say when they write in the popular press, so I am going to use a quotation anonymously. It is written by someone who is a very respectable academic, who is well known as a Christian moral theologian, respected for his opinions in matters relating to public affairs, and someone about whose integrity and whose concern for Christian values there can be no doubt. Criticising the report, *The Church and the Bomb*, which was debated in the General Synod of the Church of England earlier this year, he wrote:

There are two ways of approaching the moral element in political problems. The first is to have a set of moral principles and then to apply them, whatever the consequences. The second is to have a moral goal and then to work out what is the most effective way of reaching that goal.

At first sight this seems eminently reasonable, and a very sensible solution to the problem. But, unfortunately, only at first sight. For there is no difference between 'goals' and 'ends' and we all know that there are a great many problems about the argument

that ends justify the means towards them. You cannot justify everything simply on the grounds that you have moral goals; the means by which you achieve those ends have to be compatible with the moral values which the goals are supposed to embody. Moreover, nearly everybody claims to have moral goals. They can become what C.S. Lewis called 'the great moral platitudes'. In the case of the debate about the use of nuclear weapons, both the unilateralists *and* those who support the possession of the deterrent, claim to have moral goals; and the goals are the same — the preservation of peace. And, as St. Augustine pointed out one-and-a-half thousand years ago, there really isn't anyone who *doesn't* desire peace.

Indeed in the nuclear debate the peculiarly difficult thing about the whole issue is that the prudential arguments about which course of action is least likely to bring about the holocaust, about which is the lesser of the two evils, are so finely balanced. Neither the unilateralists' case, nor the case of those who wish to retain the deterrent, is completely convincing. One is weighing very finely balanced probabilities against each other. One feels instinctively that this ought to be a situation in which some mediating solution was possible, just because it is so difficult to decide that one argument is more certain than the other. To make it more difficult, both parties over-simplify their case, and indulge in propaganda. And yet, for all one's longing for a middle ground, there does not appear to be one. The stark choice seems to remain: one has to opt for one course or another. And at this point I am tempted, myself, to say that, when the prudential argument is so finely balanced, perhaps one has to take refuge in moral principles and apply them whatever the consequences. It is better, after all, to die for a worthwhile moral principle than because a prudential gamble has failed to come off.

The argument from moral goals will not, in itself, get us off the hook because there must be a limit to the immorality of the means which we can countenance. Yet if we insist on totally moral means, then we are no nearer a solution than if we insist on applying totally moral principles at all times. But once we admit less than moral means, where do we draw the line?

It is possible, of course, to think of specific situations in which we should have no hesitation in saying that this or that means towards an end would be wholly unacceptable. We might regard the use of torture, even to serve a moral goal, as obviously unacceptable — but note that there is nothing in the passage I quoted which would exclude it. It might well be 'the most effective way of reaching that goal', though I am sure the academic I was citing had no intention of defending the use of torture.

But, even if we can be sure that there are clear-cut cases where we could not tolerate certain immoral means towards an end or goal, even if it was an intensely moral one, there will always be an endless number of situations where it is not clear, like the case of the nuclear deterrent.

In other words, what I am trying to suggest is this: it *does* seem to be the case that Christian moral principles are not very easily transferred from private to public life; but, once one accepts that one cannot simply apply them rigidly, there is no easy way of limiting the degree of imperfection which it is proper to allow. It is not enough to say that each case has to be considered on its merits, for first one must have principles which will enable one to perceive what its merits are.

I am quite certain that the answer lies in a proper appreciation of the actual relationship between Christianity and society. It has come to be a kind of platitude that when Constantine started to show favour to Christianity, the Church sold its soul for a mess of pottage and accepted an involvement with the state — what is called ‘Christendom’ — in which it compromised its integrity. That is one view of things. The opposing view is equally oversimplified — and I quote again from the writer whose views on moral goals I have been citing. He describes the Constantinian settlement as ‘. . . the point at which the Church grew up, when it was prepared to take its fair share of responsibility for political order’.

Neither of these views seems to me to correspond with actual historical likelihood. When Constantine first began to favour Christianity there had just been a period of savage persecution. While there is evidence that some Christians hankered for the relative simplicity of the days when Church and State were sharply marked off from each other and Christians were a sect largely separated from the rest of society, it is clear that most simply accepted with relief that their trials were over. No doubt that feeling was often expressed in exaggerated form, as in Eusebius’s eulogy of Constantine. But it must, essentially, have been a very simple and unselfconscious reaction, which just is not adequately described by either of the stereotypes we have been considering. Moreover, no one in the fourth century was really capable of envisaging a religiously neutral and secular state, such as we have to deal with. Religious pluriformity, indeed, was a phenomenon with which they were familiar. Part of the success of Constantine’s settlement was that it drew Christianity into the religiously pluriform context of contemporary society. But an a-religious state was literally unthinkable.

Most Christians would not have been asking themselves self-conscious questions about the theological implications of the

policy being adopted. If one has been savagely persecuted and then is offered terms which will place one on all-fours with other officially favoured religions, could one turn that offer down unless it clearly involved a betrayal of some doctrine or some moral value which was essential to Christianity? Most Christians did not regard the acceptance of the new relationship as that kind of betrayal. Most Christians, in fact, probably hardly noticed any real difference between their political role after Constantine and what it had been before. It was only a very few — some laymen who belonged to the imperial service and a few bishops — who were drawn into the structures of government. For everyone else government was — as before — something that went on without their intervention; a 'given' in the sense that St. Paul described it when he said that the powers that be are ordained by God. It is only some time afterwards that one finds attempts to work out a theological justification of the new situation, as the problems (usually moral problems) inherent in politics had to be resolved by Christians in government.

All this ought to remind us, in any case, that things have changed somewhat since the second decade of the fourth century. We no longer live under the Constantinian settlement. It is a little hard to blame (or even praise) Constantine for the situation in which we find ourselves. We live in what is to all intents and purposes a broadly secular society, and our situation is entirely different from that of a Christian in the Constantinian empire or in the *societas Christiana* of the Middle Ages. We live in a society where the other members may be of a quite different religion or none at all. And, in a democracy, the Christian also has a *political* role. If he or she is a citizen and a voter, government is no longer simply a 'given'. One simply cannot say that the powers that be are ordained of God. One is partly responsible for ordaining the powers that be, oneself. One has a responsibility for the way society is. As a Christian one has a responsibility for ensuring that what one does, and the influence one exerts, is in accordance with Christian values. But since the whole of society is not Christian, one cannot expect it to share all one's concerns.

That seems to me to be a peculiarly difficult situation and I do not blame anyone who hankers for the much simpler, if much less comfortable situation that existed when Christianity was a sect living in a ghetto and had neither contact with nor responsibility for what government did. But the plain truth of the matter is that most of us do *not* live in such a situation. There is no way that we can put ourselves back into that situation. For to refuse to exercise one's rights as a citizen is itself a political act. If a wicked government comes to power because good people have not exercised their political rights, then they are as much responsible

for what happens as anyone else. And society would be no better for the opting out of Christians. Any good man or woman must desire a good society. When early Christians like Eusebius eulogised Constantine — and when Christians of the Reformation era waxed enthusiastic about ‘godly princes’ — I do not think they were hypocrites who merely mouthed these exaggerated sentiments in order to feather their own nests. Some may have had such motives but many, I think, were quite honestly expressing their sense that society ought to embody certain human and moral values, for which Christianity stood, and that they hoped that they were being given an opportunity to help it to do so.

Perhaps there are those who feel that, after all the disappointments that have attended these recurring hopes, it is foolish to continue to hope for this. That would be a reasonable sentiment. But if one *is* to be thus pessimistic then there are only two other options open to Christians. One is to opt out and embrace the ghetto and that, as we have seen, achieves nothing and absolves one *from* nothing. The other would depend on one’s having a *faith*, as perhaps the Liberation Theologians of Latin America do, that one can perceive the clear direction of God’s action in history and that the Kingdom will come — or at least come closer — within the framework of time and space. Then one could throw oneself into the fight for the new society, on the side of the divine will for justice, with a conviction that one was serving the fundamental morality. One would be creating a society in which there would be a possibility for Christian values to exist unspoiled.

For myself I find it difficult to share such a faith. It seems to me that the doctrine of original sin and the element of the eschatological in the Christian gospel, make it clear that the Kingdom of God will never be fully realised within history. No new and future society will ever emerge in which the Kingdom is realised on earth in all its perfection.

But I am also clear that there are not more than these three options. Human society may be so finally evil that one must opt out. Or it may be perfectible in history and in that case one must do anything that will bring such a perfect society a degree nearer. Or it is a matter of yes and no, the tension between the now and the not yet. What will never be compatible with Christianity is a complacent acceptance of the *status quo* which takes it for granted that no element of costly witness is called for.

In fact, the third option, the one of tension between what ought to be and what is, seems closest to the New Testament expectation. The gospel seems to represent the Kingdom as breaking into this world and yet transcending the framework of

history. Therefore, the present situation in which we live corresponds to what we ought to expect: a state of affairs in which we have to struggle continually to make human society correspond more closely to the ideals embodied in Jesus of Nazareth while recognising that, within the framework of time and space, this is not going to happen fully or finally.

This is not a comfortable doctrine. There is something heart-breaking about a struggle for an ideal which one cannot expect to realise here and now. There is nothing more difficult to achieve than a continuing, high-hearted courage when one has to accept that one is going to go on failing. But, as I understand it in my own personal life, this is precisely what being a Christian is all about. I need the resources, each day, to pick myself up and carry on, in my home and family, in my job, in my relation with other people, to live the Christian life, in spite of my failure yesterday and my knowledge that I shall not succeed today, either. And the resource to do this is what we call grace, God's gift which makes possible the faith that the humanity of Jesus of Nazareth is somehow my humanity and that I can dare to lay claim to it.

Yet the humanity of Jesus of Nazareth is not my private humanity, but the humanity of the society in which I live. I desire passionately that every man and woman in that society should have the opportunity to live the fully human life for which Jesus of Nazareth is the type and for which he died. Therefore I want a society in which such human living is possible. Therefore I want the Church to be engaged *with* society (not withdrawn *from* it), to be the leaven in the lump, so that every *possible* Christian value that fallen, disappointing, human society *can* absorb, *is* absorbed. But there will also be times when that society does things which are so directly a denial of the values of Christ, that I am bound to protest against them. And I fear that that will happen fairly frequently, more frequently than we are really comfortable about. So the Church can never be wholly *of* society and that, again, seems to me to be what the New Testament ought to lead us to expect.

This oscillating relationship with society is radical and costly. If it is not, then something has gone wrong with it and we have become complacent. So we can't comfort ourselves with the doctrine of 'moral goals', or something of that sort, and tell ourselves that if we have had to choose the lesser of two evils, that lesser evil has somehow become a 'good'. We have to recognise that the lesser evil is still an evil, even if we can find no other possible course of action.

This seems to me to impose its own logic upon the Christian. If politics requires, as it often seems to do, a necessity to follow the least of available evils, then this is because of our fallen-ness. We

are being confronted by human sinfulness — original sin as well as personal sin — and the Christian way to do that is by forgiveness. So we need a 'politics of forgiveness'.

Now I admit that the phrase sounds feeble and utopian — we need other terminology to express it. But if we cannot use the word, the *thing* — forgiveness itself — is not necessarily impractical. Most intractable political problems (in Great Britain at any rate) — Northern Ireland, industrial relations and class resentments, the decay and violence of the inner cities, racial tensions — exist because there are generations of inherited and unforgiven wrongs.

But one cannot *require*, as a matter of policy embodied in law, that *others* shall forgive their enemies and those who have wronged them. Even to say to a party of the persecuted on their way to the gas chamber, that they ought to forgive those who have put them there, is a psychological impossibility. It is only one's *own* enemies whom one can forgive. Yet that very impossibility can provide one with the necessary yardstick — the yardstick for which we have been looking — to enable one to decide just how much compromise is tolerable when one seems to be faced with a choice between evils in political decisions.

One cannot *require* forgiveness from the persecuted just because it is so difficult and costly. To forgive is a burden which is not easy to bear, once again because human nature is fallen, limited and imperfect. The very thing that makes it necessary, also makes it almost impossible. If we desire a stable, peaceful, good society, without friction, tension, injustice and exploitation, we ought to be able to see that we cannot achieve it if we are trying to impose the heaviest burden of forgiving on those least able to bear it.

For instance, in Britain the government maintains that the only way to get the economy going again is to accept certain necessities — among them a very high level of unemployment, as much as 17 per cent of the work force in some areas. The government does not say that it wants or works towards this. Mrs Thatcher is always saying that she is sorry for the unemployed and looks for the day when the figures come down again. Nevertheless, this is the first government since the war which is not committed to treating unemployment levels as an important indicator in assessing the health of the economy. They are, rather, part of the price that has to be paid for it.

If that is so, then the unemployed are really bearing the necessary burden on behalf of us all. They are the heroes and martyrs whose suffering is saving the rest of us. But, because the government is also urging the necessity of hard work and success — and is rewarding it — those who are *out* of work are being

made to feel, not heroes or martyrs, but scroungers and layabouts with no contribution to make to society. It is easy to do this, for they have no room to manoeuvre. Their choice is between resenting or forgiving the way they have been treated.

Society tends to behave like this because it is easy to place burdens on the powerless, the poor, the minorities and the disadvantaged. The hidden logic behind it is really that society thinks it can *force* them to forgive, or at least to remain passive. This must be the logic of the situation since there is no other way in which we could adopt such policies and still expect peace and stability. We are not expecting those who carry the burden to do anything other than suffer in silence. If they do not, we shall *compel* them to be quiet. We are, in other words, going as far as we can in demanding that they shall forgive society.

The Christian, who ought to understand how costly forgiveness really is, should not — it seems to me — take political decisions on the basis of such a logic. If whatever course is followed will do *some* evil, then it ought not to be the powerless (who have no options, no cushion against fate, no room to manoeuvre) who ought to be asked to bear the burden. It ought to fall, instead, on those best able to bear it.

When one says that, one is always accused of being utopian since one is appealing to what is good in human nature. But it seems to me, in fact, to be hard-headed political realism. The assumption that one can *compel* the powerless and the disadvantaged to accept bitterness and resentment with forgiveness (or at least with passivity), seems to me to be the real utopianism. A politics of forgiveness, by whatever name one may choose to call it, may be the ultimate in realistic, practical politics if one is concerned to create a good, peaceful and stable society.

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‘THE MAN IN THE ISLAND’
SHAKESPEARE’S CONCERN WITH PROJECTION
IN ‘THE TEMPEST’*

by PETER KNOX-SHAW

The Tempest is among the best loved of Shakespeare’s plays but it is also among the most elusive which is why there often hovers over its shimmering brilliance and manifold themes the question — what is it really about? The question was answered, I believe, by Coleridge when he suggested that the play had to do, in a special way, with the imagination. The idea is one he throws out twice, but leaves — as was sometimes his way — more or less undeveloped: his analysis is broken off at the third scene so that he can turn to Milton, and he later loses himself in a theory about individuals and types.¹ My approach fills only one niche within Coleridge’s broad view of *The Tempest*. Since my topic is projection I shall be looking chiefly at the way the characters reveal their imaginative qualities through what they make of each other and of their setting. It is as an influence on seeing that imagination enters my inquiry but I shall be led to trace some of its other dimensions in the play and to consider its centrality.

To project, in the sense we shall be using it, is to transfer a mental image to an object outside the self. An obvious feature of this process is that an inward tendency presents itself as — and sometimes gets mistaken for — an objective reality. When the word first came into use in the nineteenth century, it was a metaphor from optics. Light projected onto a screen, whether from a lens or prism, provided a vivid model for the way a mental disposition can colour the external world. Although Coleridge, as it happens, was responsible for introducing the word² he was far from inventing the idea which — if not as old as history — certainly goes back to Shakespeare’s day. We find it among the ‘tricks’ of the imagination noted by Theseus in the great speech from *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* on the ‘shaping fantasies’ of lovers and madmen (V.i.2–22). There it figures as the force that prompts the lover to see ‘Helen’s beauty in a brow of Egypt’ (not to mention Oberon’s in an ass), the lunatic to seek out devils, and anyone to embody terror of the night in a ‘bush supposed a bear’. These everyday instances, although seen as distinct, are allied to the creative imagination of the poet who ‘gives to airy nothing / A local habitation and a name’.

* This is the text of a lecture given at the University of Cape Town Summer School in January 1983.

Projection invades every sphere of experience but, for a variety of reasons, it declares itself most forcibly where the unfamiliar is concerned. The action and setting of *The Tempest* are accordingly of a kind to throw the workings of projection into sharp relief. For it is basic to the conception of this play that the characters should be brought together as strangers, or that they should meet 'as over a vast . . . as it were from the ends of opposed winds'. The quotation is from *The Winter's Tale* where it sets the scene for the fraught reunion of the brothers, soon to sunder under the strain of Leontes' projected evil (I.i.30). And in *Cymbeline* it is once again distance with its implicit switch of cultural perspective that provides the prelude to the distortion of Imogen's character. But in *The Tempest* these preliminary conditions are taken further. While the shipwrecked passengers look over the strange place on which they have landed, Miranda and Caliban look out at the representatives of an equally unfamiliar world. The island, moreover, presents a sample of *terra incognita* not only to the majority of characters but to the reader as well, for Shakespeare withholds all geographical location and, uniquely, even a name. This vagueness serves Shakespeare in two ways. It allows him, in the first place, to make his setting all the more mysterious. His wholly unpredictable island challenges expectation at every turn and so comes closer to the experience of the unknown than could any report of (once) undiscovered land. In the second place it allows him to abstract from the specific. Rather than reconstruct a particular encounter between, say, Jacobean England and Virginia he is free to offer a general model of cultural interaction. It is because the New World is so often inseparable from the Old in *The Tempest* that this interaction sometimes takes place within the mind of a single character. Consider, for example, the following exchange between Stephano and Caliban:

- Cal.* Hast thou not dropp'd from heaven?
Ste. Out o' the moon, I do assure thee: I was the man i' th' moon when time was.
Cal. I have seen thee in her, and I do adore thee:
 My mistress show'd me thee, and thy dog, and thy bush.
Ste. Come, swear to that; kiss the book: I will furnish it anon with new contents: swear. (II.ii.137–143)³

Caliban projects two sets of images here which derive from different quarters of the globe. It is through Miranda's eyes that he looks at the moon and finds the man, dog, and bush that every Elizabethan child was trained to see. (The unfortunate actor who takes the part of Moonshine in 'Pyramus and Thisbe' has a hard time managing his lantern as well as the other two).⁴ It is as a

moon-worshipper, on the other hand, that Caliban hails Stephano as a god come down from the sky. Contemporary accounts of voyages to the New World were filled with details of this phenomenon⁵ often gloatingly reported by explorers who seldom failed to take advantage of the situation in much the way that Stephano does. The double focus has its point. It enables Shakespeare to juxtapose a notorious instance of New World credulity against a familiar, domestic instance of projection and so trace an affinity between the two. Just as the old wives' tale of the man-in-the-moon gives a distant world a familiar face so Caliban comes to grips with an inexplicable presence by fitting it into his system of belief. There are other parallels that present themselves from elsewhere in the text. Miranda, too, at her first sight of Ferdinand has supposed that she is in the presence of something divine; and for a moment Ferdinand, in his turn, takes Miranda for a goddess. When Stephano asks Caliban to 'kiss the book' yet a further range of comparison opens out. For just as Prospero's magic is founded on his handbook, or Christianity on the scriptures, so Caliban's new religion will be fuelled by sack. Shakespeare upholds a hierarchy of value but he is also concerned to show up the patterns that underlie the variety of human behaviour he presents. His analysis of the ways in which people come to terms with the unknown applies, in consequence, very generally. He would not have been surprised to read the well-attested case of an Eskimo tribe who, after their encounter with some Russian explorers, decided that they had been visited by a party of squid.⁶ Shakespeare shows that the unknown reflects the preoccupations and beliefs of the observer.

Richard Hakluyt, the chief anthologist of Elizabethan voyages, with whose work Shakespeare would almost certainly have been familiar, once gave a graphic account of the way 'desires of divers men' moulded impressions of the New World. 'If an ox be put in a medowe', he writes, 'he will seeke to fill his bellie with grasse, if a Storke be cast in shee will seek for Snakes, if you turne in a Hound he will seek to start an Hare; So sundry men entring into these discoveries propose unto themselves severall ends.'⁷ This principle holds true of *The Tempest* where each character creates, in effect, an island in his own image — a circumstance made conspicuous by Shakespeare's rather special treatment of the setting. It is, of course, common practice in Renaissance drama for characters to report repeatedly on what they see but they do not, as a rule, disagree about what there is to be seen. In *The Tempest*, however, the island takes on as broad a range of aspects as there are characters, and it goes through all the fluctuations of a chameleon when the characters clash their differing points of view. In the following extract, for example,

while the level-headed Adrian asserts a nature unpolished but not intemperate and the well-meaning Gonzalo transmits a golden age, Antonio and Sebastian, about to plot the death of Alonso, chip in jointly with their jaundiced asides, producing between them an image that strongly suggests the predatory. Antonio wins his bet as Adrian breaks the silence:

- Adr.* Though this island seems to be desert, —
Ant. Ha, ha, ha!
Seb. So: you're paid.
Adr. Uninhabitable, and almost inaccessible, —
Seb. Yet, —
Adr. Yet, —
Ant. He could not miss't.
Adr. It must needs be of subtle, tender and delicate temperance.
Ant. Temperance was a delicate wench.
Seb. Ay, and a subtle; as he most learnedly deliver'd.
Adr. The air breathes upon us here most sweetly.
Seb. As if it had lungs, and rotten ones.
Ant. Or as 'twere perfum'd by a fen.
Gon. Here is everything advantageous to life.
Ant. True; save means to live.
Seb. Of that there's none, or little.
Gon. How lush and lusty the grass looks! how green!
Ant. The ground, indeed, is tawny.
Seb. With an eye of green in't. (II.i.34–53)

The tawny beast with the green eye is planted in the landscape by the conspirators who, when they are later caught with their swords drawn, summon further wild creatures of their making. For while Gonzalo and Alonso wake (respectively) to music and to silence, Antonio and Sebastian explain their aggressive stance by peopling the island with a 'herd' of roaring lions (II.i.311). It is their own evil that breeds the fiction that they are subject to violence.

The Tempest is a play of sharp contrasts and its setting is presented as both foul and fair. Caliban, who assesses the island with the eyes of a native, distinguishes fresh springs from briny-pits, barren places from the fertile (I.ii.340). Calm alternates with storm and there are foetid bogs as well as yellow sands. It is against a brindled nature that the one-sidedness of the Neapolitans stands out. Adrian's remark that 'the air breathes upon us here most sweetly' sounds the signature-tune of Ariel; Antonio's reply 'Or as 'twere perfum'd by a fen' reverberates the darker aspects of Caliban who in his opening lines draws a curse from the 'unwholesome fen' (I.i.324). While the benevolent project an image of sweetness and light, the conspirators express themselves, as Coleridge observed, through the 'habitual scorn'

that often characterizes Shakespeare's bad men.⁸ But while the wicked are dismissive of the good, the more serious consequence is that the good are blind to evil. This proves to be a major concern of the play. When Gonzalo rebukes Sebastian for telling Alonso that he only has himself to blame for his sorrow, we see that his benevolence softens his regard for truth:

Gon. My lord Sebastian,
The truth you speak doth lack some gentleness,
And time to speak it in: you rub the sore,
When you should bring the plaster. (II.i.131-134)

Prospero, on the other hand, who has suffered for his lack of vigilance in respect to Antonio,

Pros. . . . my trust,
Like a good parent, did beget of him
A falsehood in its contrary . . . (I.ii.93-95)

learns his lesson — to the extent, at least, that he lets no opportunity slip of rubbing the truth into others. He makes a point, for example, of compensating for Ariel's benign forgetfulness by reminding him regularly of his past:

Pros. . . . Hast thou forgot
The foul witch Sycorax, who with age and envy
Was grown into a hoop? hast thou forgot her?
Ari. No, sir.
Pros. Thou hast. Where was she born? speak; tell me.
Ari. Sir, in Argier.
Pros. O, was she so? I must
Once in a month recount what thou hast been,
Which thou forget'st. (I.ii.257-263)

Of course this exchange provides the excuse for the story of Sycorax which follows, but it serves also to underline its function. For as the story unfolds it becomes clear that the history of the island presents an ever-recurring cycle of servitude and usurpation.⁹ Shakespeare is determined to bring home the idea that history repeats itself and this he does by introducing a series of fortuitous parallels which impart an insistent pattern to the narrative. Banished from Argier, Sycorax is 'brought with child' across the sea and once landed supplants and imprisons Ariel. Exiled from Milan, Prospero with the infant Miranda drifts to the island where he releases Ariel and assumes sway. Each dynasty occupies twelve years and the fortunes of Ariel and Caliban alternate. It soon transpires, however, that the events of the past

are, as Antonio puts it, a mere 'prologue' to the actions of the present (II.i.248). The developing conspiracy against Alonso almost exactly reduplicates Prospero's dethronement. Abetted by the head of a rival power, brother contrives to overthrow brother. The characters change parts — Alonso finds himself (unwittingly) in Prospero's role while Antonio moves from usurper to instigator, but the plot remains the same. The main difference is one of degree. Whereas Alonso and Antonio were restrained from killing Prospero by the good will he enjoyed among his people, Sebastian and Antonio prepare to kill Alonso outright for, as Antonio points out, nobody but the man-in-the-moon could ever know. Once again the island takes the deeper imprint of desire.

But apart from the Neapolitan plot, history surfaces in another guise. Caliban asserts his right to the island in the early stages of the play:

This island's mine, by Sycorax my mother,
Which thou tak'st from me . . .
For I am all the subjects that you have,
Which first was mine own King. (I.ii.332-3 and 341-2)

But it is ironically only after he has paid homage to Stephano, his newly appointed King, that his scheme of putting a nail through Prospero's head gets under way. Were it not for the magical powers that it cost him his dukedom to achieve, Prospero might be as oblivious to this as to the first plot against his crown; as unsuspecting as Alonso and Gonzalo certainly prove to the fate that hovers when they close their eyes. Shakespeare enlists almost as many instances of negligence in the play as he does of treachery and betrayal.

While it is true that each character fabricates his own island and that these private islands vibrantly differ, one thread comes close to running through them all: there is hardly a character in the play who does not imagine himself King. Gonzalo's famous speech on the golden age is given some ironic distance not only by its proximity to the ripening of Antonio and Sebastian's conspiracy but by the very premise with which it opens:

Gon. Had I plantation of this isle, my lord, —
Ant. He'd sow't with nettle-seed.
Seb. Or docks, or mallows.
Gon. And were the King on't, what would I do? (II.i.138-141)

Gonzalo proceeds to implant his ideal commonwealth, free of all forms of social institution since it partakes of the unblemished innocence of the island itself:

All things in common Nature should produce
 Without sweat or endeavour: treason, felony,
 Swork, pike, knife, gun, or need of any engine,
 Would I not have; but Nature should bring forth,
 Of its own kind, all foison, all abundance,
 To feed my innocent people. (II.i.155–160)

When Antonio objects that Gonzalo violates the very foundation of his state by making himself King of it, he comes to the heart of the matter for he shows that Gonzalo has taken cognizance of his own ambitions alone. Always an astute critic, Antonio has already had occasion to remark Gonzalo's readiness to impose his mental images on the globe. It is when Gonzalo, quite wrongly, insists that Tunis and Carthage are the same place that Antonio compares his words to the miraculous harp with which Amphion raised the walls of Thebes. In projecting his commonwealth Gonzalo has in fact, as has often been pointed out, looked at the island through the spectacles of Montaigne. Even his bold claim that he would find a perfection 'T'excel the Golden Age' derives from the essay 'Of the Caniballes' in which Montaigne argues that the tribesmen of the New World enjoy a purity and happiness beyond even the imagining of civilized man:

what in those nations we see by experience, doth not only exceed all the pictures wherewith licentious Poesie hath proudly embellished the golden age . . . but also the conception and desire of Philosophy. [The ancients] could not imagine a genuitie so pure and simple, as we see it by experience; nor ever beleieve our societie might be maintained with so little art and humane combination.¹⁰

Gonzalo's much later comment on the natural goodness of the islanders is also in this vein:

For, certes, these are people of the island, —
 Who, though they are of monstrous shape, yet, note,
 Their manners are more gentle, kind, than of
 Our human generation you shall find
 Many, nay, almost any. (III.iii.30–34)

It is in fact the troupe of Prospero's spirits that Gonzalo takes for islanders but this, as we shall see, neither invalidates his views nor those of Montaigne.

It is very probable that Shakespeare knew some of the reports of the New World to which Montaigne refers. The matter of Gonzalo's speech finds any number of parallels in the pages of Hakluyt's voyages.¹¹ Arthur Barlow, the first Englishman to

report on Virginia, remarked that its inhabitants 'lived after the manner of the golden age' and adds that in this region 'the earth bringeth forth all things in abundance, as in the first creation, without toile or labour'.¹² Jean Ribault, the voyager responsible for the first French settlement in Florida, writing two decades before the essay 'Of the Caniballes', comes remarkably close to anticipating Montaigne. He presents the New World as untouched by the fall, and draws — perhaps unconsciously — on Ovid's account of the golden age ('the earth itself, without compulsion, untouched by the hoe, unfurrowed by any share, produceth all things spontaneously')¹³ in describing its richness:

To bee short, it is a thing unspeakable to consider the thinges that bee seene there, and shal be founde more and more in this incomperable lande, which never yet broken with plough yrons, bringeth forth of things according to his first nature, wherewith the eternal God indued it.¹⁴

From this it is a short step to supposing that the productions of nature are superior to those of art. So the wild grapes, for example, far surpass those of European cultivation:

the fayrest vines in all the world, with grapes according, which without natural art and without mans helpe or trimming will grow to toppes of Okes and other Trees that be of a wonderful greatness and height.¹⁵

In line with this emphasis Ribault repeatedly exclaims that language is hopelessly inadequate to the task of describing what he sees. This is borne out in an obvious way by the fact that many of the names he throws up ('bays', 'cedars', 'cypresses', etc.) are merely European approximations. But in one telling instance we see that words really do betray his perception of the scene. For onto the local tribesmen, whom he presents as blessed with a specially privileged communal existence, his vocabulary imposes a structure of feudal relations, further reinforced by the nature of his gifts:

After we had a good while louingly entertained and presented them with like gifts of habersher wares, cutting hookes and hatchets, and clothed the king and his brethren with like robes, as we had given to them on the other side: we entred and viewed the country.¹⁶

The chieftain-'king', and the Indian headsmen whom he turns into a robed aristocracy are hardly in keeping with his visionary sense of a place where the lion lies down with the lamb. As is the

case with Gonzalo, the latter end of Ribault's commonwealth forgets its beginning.

The early period of American colonization, through which Shakespeare lived, was an age of shattered illusions. The idyllic image of the New World seldom survived the experience of settlement. The sequel to Jean Ribault's landing supplies a vivid instance. Recalled to France, Ribault left behind him under the care of his friend Captain Albert a small band of men who pledged themselves to a utopian constitution outlawing all forms of servitude; but, falling on hard times, these colonists soon reneged on their principles, and when Captain Albert tried to oppose their enslavement of a local Indian tribe, he was hounded through the countryside and put to death.¹⁷ Perhaps the best evidence of Shakespeare's indebtedness to the Bermuda pamphlets, the accounts of a colonial mission shipwrecked on its way to Virginia, is that during the few months the English were on the island there were three mutinies, and a case of murder.¹⁸ The purpose of this voyage may also have some bearing on Gonzalo's speech. Whereas under the original charter all Virginian land belonged to the king and was, in effect, communally farmed by the colonists, the wrecked ship was to bring a new charter which would institute the private ownership of land. According to contemporary report, conditions in Virginia greatly improved when this was finally effected.¹⁹ But quite apart from their internal brawls the colonists' exploitation of local tribesmen makes some of the grimmest reading in history. The atrocities were, however, only very sparingly reported at the time.

Stephano and Trinculo are clowns and the scene in which they identify Caliban is the funniest in *The Tempest*. It contributes strongly, nonetheless, to the statements of the play. At the moment Trinculo catches sight of Caliban his figure presents an almost total blank. For in order to hide from what he takes to be one of Prosper's punishing spirits Caliban has fallen flat on the ground and covered himself with his gaberdine. In this state he provides a perfect foil for the fantasies Trinculo and Stephano are ready to project. Monsters have always been associated with *terra incognita* but while most Elizabethan travel writers soft-pedalled the idea, their attempts at describing unfamiliar creatures often made strange reading. One of the writers in Hakluyt's collection has two goes at the alligator. He settles for the idea that the creature is really a dragon without wings but his first impression is of 'a monstrous kind of fish':

There are neere about this city of Mexico many rivers and standing waters which have in them a monstrous kinde of fish, which is marvellous ravening, and a great devourer of men and cattell. He

is wont to sleepe upon the drie land many times, and if there come in the meane time any man or beast and wake or disquiet him, he speedeth well if he get from him. He is like unto a serpent, saving that he doth not flie, neither hath he wings.²⁰

Little wonder it is some time before the nervous Trinculo lifts the gaberdine to see whether his fish-monster really has fins and scales. When he discovers a creature as warm-blooded as himself he is perfectly happy to mess in under the cloak.

While it is true that most travel-writers pooh-poohed monsters, Elizabethan ballad-mongers thrived on them; and Stephano who enters singing a sea-shanty belongs unmistakably to the subculture. No difficulty for him in accepting a creature with two heads and four legs. His only concern is with how much the thing will fetch. When Caliban turns out to be a man, the drunken butler succeeds in slotting him into the role of a servant and enslaving him to his bottle.

What the characters in *The Tempest* project onto the island they also project upon each other. The emotion may be fear, or greed: in the case of Prospero it is often anger. On Caliban's first entrance a curious parallel is established between Prospero and his drudge. They slang each other in the same way:

Cal. As wicked dew as e'er my mother brush'd
With raven's feather from unwholesome fen
Drop on you both! a south-west blow on ye
And blister you all o'er!

Pros. For this, be sure, to-night thou shalt have cramps,
Side-stitches that shall pen thy breath up; urchins
Shall, for that vast of night that they may work,
All exercise on thee; thou shalt be pinch'd
As thick as honeycomb, each pinch more stinging
Than bees that made 'em. (I.ii.323-332)

The reason for this mirror image (which a touch of mimicry would bring home in performance) becomes clear a few lines further on when Caliban rounds on Prospero and exclaims,

You taught me language; and my profit on't
Is, I know how to curse.

immediately demonstrates his gift,

The red plague rid you
For learning me your language!

and is answered,

Hag-seed, hence! (I.ii.365-367)

Throughout the play, master and servant both show off their mastery of the curse. But Prospero's anger is reflected back not only at himself. For just as Stephano, servant to Alonso, makes a servant of Caliban, so Caliban works his way into the role of his old master when he scolds Trinculo:

What a pied ninny's this! Thou scurvy patch!
 I do beseech thy greatness, give him blows,
 And take his bottle from him: when that's gone,
 He shall drink nought but brine. (III.ii.62-65)

Prospero has threatened earlier to give Ferdinand nothing but sea-water to drink (I.ii.465). When he sets the prince to carrying wood (III.i.9-13), accuses him of intending to usurp the island (I.ii.454-9), or cautions him against violating Miranda's honour (IV.i.15-31) Prospero, in his turn, projects Caliban. But in doing so he sketches in for himself — and for us — the all-too-human form that lurks in every royal paragon.

But for all his symbolic extensions, Caliban has an existence in the play independent of Prospero or anybody else. He is a solid creation and, although a thoroughly unsentimental one, he constantly casts back images far uglier than himself. When Antonio and Sebastian catch their first glimpse of him at the play's end, all they see is a marketable freak. They reveal that their interests are as mercenary as those of Stephano and Trinculo which is why Prospero asks them to acknowledge the badges of their men as he acknowledges the darker aspects of himself in Caliban (V.i. 263-276). As the half-comical servants' scheme draws to its bungled close, it throws the cold brutality of Antonio and Sebastian's plot into glaring relief. Caliban, the savage, exposes a wilderness at the heart of civilized man.

That Caliban speaks some of the finest poetry in the play has often been said. Nothing could be truer. The lines in which he voices his dreams re-echo Gonzalo's words on the abundance of the island, but with a music far more haunting:

Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments
 Will hum about mine ears; and sometime voices,
 That, if I then had wak'd after long sleep,
 Will make me sleep again: and then, in dreaming,
 The clouds methought would open, and show riches
 Ready to drop upon me; that, when I wak'd
 I cried to dream again. (III.ii.135-141)

But there is a gain, too, in the quality of discernment. For Caliban shows that he can accept what Gonzalo fails to — that his vision of bounty belongs to a world of dreams and clouds, in a

word, to the realm of imagination. The gap between the imagined and the real, which widens as the play progresses, is brought home most sharply at the moment when Miranda steps out of the cell (where she has been helping Ferdinand win his score of kingdoms at the chessboard) in order to survey, for the first time, the group of courtly brigands assembled by her father:

Mir. O wonder!
 How many goodly creatures are there here!
 How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world,
 That has such people in't!

Pros. 'Tis new to thee.

(V.i.182–184)

Modern audiences are likely to miss Shakespeare's pregnant placing of the 'new world' in Miranda's ecstatic exclamation. Because her response to Europe mirrors, and so reverses, Gonzalo's response to the island in the second act, we are left to consider the implication that beauty dwells in the eye of the beholder, an implication underlined by Prospero's reply. It is the brave and new Miranda who presents an image of the golden age. The play gives us characters whom we rejoice in, or wonder at, as well as uncomfortably recognize.

Poetry delivers a golden world, nature a brazen — so Sidney wrote in his *Apologie*. Shakespeare delivers both. For he is concerned in *The Tempest*, as elsewhere in his final works, not only to portray the harsh realities of strife but to press the claims of ideals created by magic, by art, and by love. His dual purpose is reflected in the mixed modes of a play which, while it chiefly mimes the real, gives substance also to the imaginary. So it is that Gonzalo's image of the commonwealth returns at the climax of the masque which Prospero conjures up as a blessing on Ferdinand and Miranda's marriage. The golden age imported by the learned courtier from literature to the island is now restored to art, and to an art, moreover, which celebrates rather than represents. It is Ceres who speaks:

Earth's increase, foison plenty,
 Barns and garners never empty;
 Vines with clust'ring bunches growing;
 Plants with goodly burthen bowing;
 Spring come to you at the farthest
 In the very end of harvest!
 Scarcity and want shall shun you;
 Ceres' blessing so is on you.

(IV.i.110–117)

Prospero's art mends life rather than imaging it. Caught up in its illusion, Ferdinand is transported:

Let me live here ever;
So rare a wonder'd father and a wise
Makes this place Paradise. (IV.i.123-125)

This is not his first intimation of the deeply restorative effects of Prospero's power:

Sitting on a bank,
Weeping again the King my father's wrack,
This music crept by me upon the waters,
Allaying both their fury and my passion
With its sweet air. (I.ii.393-7)

But we are to be reminded once again both of the imaginary status and precariousness of this achieved order as the masque first crumbles and then dissolves at the memory of Stephano and Caliban's imminent approach. Fictions are necessary, but it is at our peril that we mistake them for the truth.

The plot of *The Tempest* is made up of a series of interrupted actions. In some cases it is Prospero who intervenes to bring the wayward course of nature under the spell of his Art, and it is then that we see reality reconstituted in accordance with an ideal pattern. But at other times we see nature resuming its course as it slips out of the charmed circle of his control. It seems that Shakespeare had come increasingly to appreciate the need to remedy as well as to reflect. In *The Tempest* he accordingly lays great stress on the realization of the imaginary while not letting us forget that the only providence in the play is that of the magician, or artist. Unlike Gonzalo he probes the wound before he brings the plaster.

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NOTES

1. See *Samuel Coleridge Taylor: Shakespearean Criticism*, ed. T.M. Raysor (London, 1960), I, 118; II, 130.
2. In *Aids to Reflection* (1834). See *O.E.D.* under 'Projective. 5'
3. All quotations from *The Tempest* are from the New Arden text, edited by Frank Kermode (London, 1958).
4. 'This man, with lanthorn, dog, and bush of thorn Presenteth Moonshine'. (V. i. 136-7).
5. In connection with this passage R.R. Cawley cites several instances of explorers' being taken for deities or spirits. See his *The Voyagers and Elizabethan Drama* (Boston, 1937), 372-3. For a further case see Richard Hakluyt's *The Principal Navigations, Voyages and Discoveries of the English Nation*, first published 1589-1600 (London, 1927), VI, 192-3.
6. See J.G. Frazer, *Some Primitive Theories of the Origin of Man* (Cambridge, 1909), 159. Also S.E. Hyman, 'The Ritual View of Myth', collected in *Myth and Literature*, edited by J.B. Vickery (Lincoln, 1966), 53-4.

7. In an open letter addressed by Hakluyt to Sir Walter Raleigh. See Hakluyt, *Principal Navigations* (London, 1927), VI. 230.
8. *Shakespeare Criticism* (London, 1960), I. 121.
9. E.M.W. Tillyard appears to have been the first critic to comment on the congruency of the conspiracy plots in *The Tempest*. See *Shakespeare's Last Plays* (London, 1938), 50–3.
10. *The Essays of Montaigne*, translated by John Florio (London, 1891), 94.
11. If Frank Kermode is right in supposing that Shakespeare 'had read widely in the voyagers' (Introduction to the New Arden edition, XXVIIIn.), an opinion borne out by the researches of Cawley, we can be sure that he had browsed through Hakluyt's anthologies.
12. From 'Arthur Barlowe's Narrative of the 1584 Voyage' in *Virginian Voyages from Hakluyt*, edited by David and Alison Quinn (London, 1973), 8.
13. *The Metamorphoses of Ovid*, translated by Mary M. Innes (London, 1955), 31–2.
14. From 'The True and Last Discoverie of Florida made by Captain John Ribault in the yeere 1562' in *Divers Voyages Touching the Discovery of America* (1582), translated and collected by Richard Hakluyt. Edited by J.W. Jones (New York), 102.
15. *Divers Voyages*, 101.
16. *Divers Voyages*, 101.
17. See introduction to *Divers Voyages* by J.W. Jones, ciii–civ.
18. See William Strachey, 'True Reportory of the Wrack' in *Purchas his Pilgrimes* (Glasgow, 1905), xix. 5–72.
19. See Edmund S. Morgan *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (New York, 1975), 82–3.
20. From 'A relation of the commodities of Nova Hispania . . . by Henry Hawks merchant' in Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations* (London, 1927), VI. 282.

POSSESSION, SURRENDER, AND FREEDOM IN 'THE TEMPEST'

by A.M. POTTER

Of all the plays in the immensely rich Shakespeare canon, *The Tempest* has always exercised a particular fascination. There are a number of obvious reasons for this. It is accepted as the last complete play Shakespeare wrote, and as such is often seen as his final comment on a marvellously productive career in theatre. There are a number of other features which make the play unique: it is the only one of the plays in which Shakespeare himself invented the entire plot; and it is the only play in which the 'classical' unities of time, place, and action are rigorously observed. Add this to the magical atmosphere and setting of so much of the action, and one can perhaps understand why Heminge and Condell, Shakespeare's first editors, chose to place it foremost in the First Folio.

The purpose of this article is to trace the development through the play of the interrelated issues contained in the title: possession, surrender, and freedom in *The Tempest*. This complex theme, of major concern in the play, is not unconnected to the unique qualities of *The Tempest* mentioned above. It adds strongly to the sense of unity in the play, it augments the impression it makes of a carefully-wrought work of art, and it increases the sense of *The Tempest* as a last play, a final statement made at the end of a long and fruitful career. The starting-point for this study lies in the examination of a connected issue, the process of usurpation, which provides the foundation on which the theme of this article is built.

The act of usurpation, the forcible and illegal taking over of the lands and authority of one man by another, is, I would suggest, central to *The Tempest*. The four major acts of usurpation, or attempted usurpation, form the pivots upon which the entire action of the play hinges. The basis of the action (Prospero's presence on the island) is laid by the initial act of usurpation which ejects Prospero from the dukedom of Milan, brings him to the island (where he attains his superhuman powers), and motivates his treatment of Alonso and the rest of them when destiny places them in his power. The theme is further extended by the usurpation of the island from Caliban by Prospero (I.ii.331-2)¹; the attempted usurpation of the throne of Naples by Sebastian, at Antonio's instigation, after the shipwreck (II.1.193 *et seq.*); and the attempted usurpation of the island from Prospero by Caliban, Stephano, and Trinculo (III.ii.36 *et seq.*). These incidents comprise most of the action of the play. There are also

other references to this theme in the dialogue which strengthen our awareness of this as a major issue in the play. Prospero, for example, in his pretended anger at Ferdinand accuses the youth of a double act of usurpation:

. . . thou dost here usurp
The name thou ow'st not; and hast put thyself
Upon this island as a spy, to win it
From me, the lord on't. (I.ii.453-6)

Equally Stephano, before the attempt to take the island from Prospero, claims an authority not his due:

Trinculo, the King and all our company else being drown'd
we will inherit here. (II.ii.164-5)

And in the opening scene, which encapsulates in a line or phrase many Shakespearean themes, the Boatswain upbraids Alonso for attempting to usurp *his* authority over the little kingdom of the ship (ll. 12-13). This concern with the theme suggests an interest far deeper than a convenient dramatic 'hook' on which to hang the action of the play, but rather a concern with an issue directly related to the central themes and concerns of the play.

We are told, conventionally, that the Elizabethans were taught to see the crime of usurpation as the worst of all possible crimes.² It was the combination of all the other sins that a man could possibly commit rolled up into a bundle, the very 'puddle and sink' of crime, taking its abhorrent nature from the fact that it repeated the first great crime of Satan when he rebelled against and attempted to usurp the authority of God Himself.

Since usurpation is the major disruptive factor in the play, it still reflects very strongly the qualities of the traditional Elizabethan/Jacobean view but Shakespeare works with it in his normal fashion of leading his audience from the known (the *données* of conventional beliefs and aptitudes) to the unknown (the issues to be explored in the play). The sense of the profound disorder which the process of usurpation causes in the state (which Shakespeare dealt with at length in the history plays) is no longer a major issue here. As will become apparent below, the concern is rather with the effect on the individual who contemplates or carries out an act of usurpation. Even more important, the act of usurpation, while still being seen superficially in terms of the taking over of land and authority, is extended to the process of usurping power over and controlling people. Both these factors will naturally lead to an acknowledgment of the necessity of surrendering all such

possessive desires. In other words, the *physical* process of usurpation which creates a situation of evil and disorder, is made to evoke a much more personal, inner sense of that disorder, the major disruption occurring in the soul of man. Shakespeare had already begun to explore such a process earlier in the tragedy *Macbeth*.

For the needs of this article, it is not necessary to go to any great lengths to place these ideas in a broader religious/philosophical context. The basic reason is that the theme is fully developed within the play, and is in that sense self-explanatory. Also, traditional attitudes to possessions and possessing are too widely known to require detailed re-explanation. Within the Christian context (the broad context in which the play was written) there is a very clear view summed up, in its essentials, in Christ's dictum that 'It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God'.³ This rejection of material possessions and the act of possessing is found in all the great religions⁴ and could be said to represent one of the broad movements of human thought which has evolved, among other ideas, a body of anti-materialistic attitudes over the centuries. In other words, one need not force Shakespeare into a rigid, orthodox Christian framework by identifying such attitudes in his plays, but rather place him in a less restrictive and more broadly humanist framework within which he evolved his own particular views on the subject.

The essential principle of the anti-materialistic attitude is that by focusing on possessions, or on the act of possessing, man lays stress on things which bolster and reaffirm the sense of ego or self, and through this cuts himself off from the chance of communion with God which can only be achieved by the abnegation of ego or individualistic self. Again, if we turn to Christianity for reference to this issue, this is what Christ was referring to when he said 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven'.⁵ Meister Eckhart, the fourteenth-century Christian mystic, explained this beatitude by saying 'the man who is poor in spirit is receptive of all spirit, and the spirit of all spirits is God'.⁶ As suggested, similar statements may be found in other religious systems. The point I would like to stress here is that hostility to material objects does not lie in their intrinsic value (or lack of it) but rather in *their adverse effect on man's inner life*. This will be particularly relevant in the present study of *The Tempest*.

From this comes an important corollary, equally relevant to the issues dealt with in *The Tempest*. It is obvious from all this that the things of this world are inferior, and a desire to possess them reflects therefore the indulgence of man's lesser or baser nature,

while concern for the world of the spirit is a far superior motivation, reflecting the exercise of man's finer nature.

Equally significant is the further point that by living according to the dictates of that better nature, man becomes free, whereas living according to the dictates of one's worse nature is the worst form of enslavement because one is placing oneself under the control of something lesser than or inferior to oneself. Shakespeare has already touched on this issue in, for example, *Othello*, where in the final scene of the play, both Othello and Iago are referred to as 'slaves', since each has, willingly or unwillingly, given way to his baser nature.⁷ *The Tempest* builds on, and draws to a logical conclusion, ideas that have initially been explored in earlier works.

The dichotomy between man's baser and higher natures is presented diagrammatically (there is no other word to describe it) in the first scene of Act II. Gonzalo's idealised fantasy of what he would do with the island presents an image of the possibilities of life if the best of human nature were to be manifested. On the other hand, the cynical undercutting of Gonzalo's dreams by Antonio and Sebastian represents what happens if the worse side of human nature is allowed to take control. It is significant to note, in relation to the theme we are examining, that Gonzalo's view does away with all personal possessions and with all means of control by one person over another, either legal or physical through violent coercion:

Gonzalo: Had I the plantation of this isle, my lord —

Antonio: He'd sow't with nettle seed.

Sebastian: Or docks, or mallows.

Gonzalo: And were the king on't, what would I do?

Sebastian: Scape being drunk for want of wine.

Gonzalo: I th' commonwealth I would by contraries
Execute all things; for no kind of traffic
Would I admit; no name of magistrates;
Letters should not be known; riches, poverty,
And use of service, none; contract, succession,
Bourn, bound of land, tilth, vineyard, none;
No use of metal, corn, or wine, or oil;
No occupation; all men idle, all;
And women too, but innocent and pure;
No sovereignty —

Sebastian: Yet he would be king on't.

Antonio: The latter end of his commonwealth forgets the beginning.

Gonzalo: All things in common nature should produce
Without sweat or endeavour. Treason, felony,
Sword, pike, knife, gun, or need of any engine,
Should I not have; but nature should bring forth,

Of it own kind, all foison, all abundance,
To feed my innocent people. (II.i.137-57)

The action of the rest of the play extends this basic polarity, and elaborates on the ideas expressed here, concentrating in particular on the effects on the individual of 'good' or 'bad' action. The first act of usurpation, that of Antonio against Prospero, which Prospero recounts to Miranda, operates within the same parameters. Antonio's schemes are defined in terms of a manifestation of the worst possible side of his nature which is directly opposed to Prospero's noble belief in human improvement and simple honesty:

I thus neglecting wordly ends, all dedicated
To closeness and the bettering of my mind
With that which, but by being so retir'd
O'er-priz'd all popular rate, in my false brother
Awak'd an evil nature; and my trust,
Like a good parent, did beget of him
A falsehood, in its contrary as great
As my trust was; which had indeed no limit,
A confidence sans bound. (I.ii.89-97)

Immediately, however, we see that the act of usurpation for all that it gives Antonio power, does not make him free. In fact, it places him in a position of subservience to the King of Naples, who aided him in his insurrection against Prospero:

This king of Naples, being an enemy
To me inveterate, hearkens my brother's suit;
Which was, that he, in lieu o' th' promises,
Of homage, and I know not how much tribute,
Should presently extirpate me and mine
Out of the dukedom, and confer fair Milan
With all the honours on my brother. (I.i.121-127)

The notion that evil leads only to enslavement is extended and made more specific in the attempted usurpation of the island from Prospero by Stephano, Trinculo, and Caliban. Freedom is the prime motive for Caliban's decision to serve Stephano:

'Ban, 'Ban, Ca — Caliban,
Has a new master — Get a new man.
Freedom, high-day! high-day, freedom! freedom, high-day,
freedom! (II. ii. 173-176)

But Caliban has simply 'got a new master', and the irony of thinking that he will attain freedom through service to the

drunken Stephano emphasises the irony of Antonio's position which is identical, even if on a higher social level.

A further reference to freedom is to be found in the song the conspirators sing:

Flout 'em and scout 'em,
 And scout 'em and flout 'em;
 Thought is free. (III. ii. 116–118)

But the invisible Ariel plays a different tune on his pipes, and Caliban says in puzzlement, 'That's not the tune'. This suggests the fundamentally wrong approach of the conspirators in their attempt to be free: they are following the wrong principles or pattern of action ('tune') in order to obtain freedom. The results of their plot are a comment on the results of every other evil action in the play. They end up hunted by dogs and trapped in the mire. Their pursuit by animals, as if they themselves were wild beasts, suggests that they have been acting according to the dictates of their own animal or base nature, while the trapping in mud suggests much the same thing, i.e. entrapment by their base physical natures.⁸ The overriding sense is that indulgence of the baser side of one's nature is a powerful form of entrapment and leads to restriction, *loss* of freedom, and degradation.

This sense is extended by the many occasions on which Prospero, directly or through Ariel, controls or inhibits the working of baser human nature in the course of the events on the island. The feast, traditionally a symbol of the blessings of life (cf. *Macbeth*), is denied the 'three men of sin' (III.iii.52) and they are charmed into a motionless state when they try to draw their swords immediately afterwards, as Ferdinand has been earlier (I.ii.466); while in Act II all except Sebastian and Antonio are put to sleep by Ariel's charm. This scene is worthy of closer examination, since it adds a further, more illuminating dimension to the issues under discussion.

It has become customary⁹ to say that Sebastian and Antonio do not fall asleep here as they are too evil (i.e. too disordered and unharmonious within themselves) to be affected by the ordering power of Ariel's music. It is not quite so simple, in fact, for in the lines that follow Shakespeare proceeds to draw interesting parallels between the state of waking sleep in which Antonio and Sebastian find themselves, and the state of mind of men carrying out evil actions. As Antonio tries to prompt Sebastian into killing the king and usurping his power, the following interchange takes place:

Sebastian: What, art thou waking?
Antonio: Do you not hear me speak?

Sebastian: I do; and surely
 It is a sleepy language, and thou speak'st
 Out of thy sleep. What is it thou didst say?
 This is a strange repose, to be asleep
 With eyes wide open; standing, speaking, moving,
 And yet so fast asleep. (II. i. 200–206)

Sebastian describes himself and Antonio as 'standing, speaking, moving, / And yet so fast asleep'; in other words, they are manifesting all the outward signs of consciousness and yet they seem to be in a state of unconsciousness. They are, it should be remembered, plotting murder and rebellion and I would suggest that acting in an evil way is here seen as acting as if in a state of unconsciousness, in this case unconsciousness of one's better nature. Their sleep here is not a physical sleep but the sleep of ignorance of their higher potential for good; they are in fact morally unconscious; they lack awareness of what Ariel calls 'Their proper selves' (III. iii. 60).

The development of later action supports this view, for as the play progresses and the condition of most of the characters improves, this improvement is defined by Prospero in terms of the awakening of a superior level of consciousness:

The charm dissolves apace,
 And as the morning steals upon the night,
 Melting the darkness, so their rising senses
 Begin to chase the ignorant fumes that mantle
 Their clear reason. (V. i. 64–68)

Their understanding
 Begins to swell, and the approaching tide
 Will shortly fill the reasonable shore
 That now lies foul and muddy. (V. i. 79–82)

The idea that consciousness of true self and moral consciousness are one can obviously be very closely linked to Prospero, the central character of the play, a man who has spent his life expanding his consciousness and who makes a clear decision at the end to manifest that better side of his nature. This is expressed in his decision not to take revenge on the men who have treated him so badly: 'the rarer action is / In virtue than in vengeance' (V. i. 27–8). Prospero, the man in control of the action, manifesting superior knowledge and insight at all times, equally manifests superior morality and the two are linked: consciousness equals moral consciousness, unconsciousness of man's superior nature: unconsciousness equals moral unconsciousness, finding its expression in imagery of entrapment, darkness,

foulness, and sleep. Middleton Murry makes the same point when he comments on Prospero's statement at V.i.32: 'My charms I'll break, their senses I'll restore, / And they shall be themselves'. He says:

'Themselves' — not what they were, but what they should be. This is no stretch of interpretation. Gonzalo drives it home afterwards. 'All of us found ourselves, when no man was his own'.¹⁰

Other characters, other parts of the action, reinforce and extend these central ideas. The sense of a choice between the better and worse sides of one's nature and the rewards or punishments that each choice gives, is summarised in Prospero's interchange with Ferdinand when Ferdinand is released from *his* bondage and is betrothed to Miranda:

Prospero: . . . But
 If thou dost break her virgin-knot before
 All sanctimonious ceremonies may
 With full and holy rite be minister'd,
 No sweet aspersions shall the heavens let fall
 To make this contract grow; but barren hate,
 Sour-ey'd disdain, and discord, shall bestrew
 The union of your bed with weeds so loathly
 That you shall hate it both . . .

Ferdinand: As I hope
 For quiet days, fair issue, and long life,
 With such love as 'tis now, the murkiest den
 The most opportune place, the strong'st suggestion
 Our worser genius can, shall never melt
 Mine honour into lust. . . . (IV. i. 14–28)

This can be linked back to the lovers' personal commitment to love each other, made earlier when Ferdinand says in response to Miranda's enquiry as to whether he will be her husband:

Ay, with a heart as willing
 As bondage e'er of freedom. (III. i. 88–9)

It is significant here that Ferdinand expresses fair and holy commitment to her in terms of a choice between bondage and freedom — and clearly here freedom is seen as the expression of one's better self, of the finest and best of which a human being is capable. It is not the simple freedom from duty and restraint that, for example, Caliban seems to think it is (very obviously not here, because Ferdinand is *taking on* a commitment rather than surrendering one, and committing himself to someone, rather than freeing himself of that person) but rather freedom from evil,

freedom from being enslaved by one's worsser passions. Ferdinand's onerous log-bearing duties extend the point — freedom is only achieved through self-discipline and self-control, and it involves commitment, service, a strong sense of duty, and humility.

This is in itself a response to Gonzalo's noble but rather utopian view of the possibilities of creating a perfect world which has been quoted earlier. A 'brave new world' can only be created if man is prepared to transform his inner vision; one cannot start with externals but with the inner man. If one cannot understand this, then it would be easy to dismiss as hopelessly idealistic Miranda's response when she sees the band of castaways that includes usurpers, traitors, and potential murderers, coming towards her:

O, wonder!
How many goodly creatures are there here!
How beauteous mankind is. O brave new world,
That has such people in it. (V.i.182–185)

But Miranda genuinely *does* see a brave new world, because she herself is pure, and views the world in that light. Her view of the world is just as valid as, for example, Antonio's — it is the self-same external reality they see — the difference lies solely in the state of their inner being. Obviously, in 'realistic' terms, she is totally out of touch. She lacks the tempering quality of experience in her dealings with the world; but need experience turn one cynical? The play does not attempt to answer such a question, for it does not attempt a 'realistic' appraisal of life (although this is in itself arguable at times).¹¹ Rather, it attempts to present the possibilities inherent in human nature, both good and bad, and to examine the effect of the manifestation of these possibilities in human experience. This brings us quite naturally to a consideration of Prospero, the man whose experience forms the centre of the play and whose position in the development of the possession/surrender theme is vital for its understanding.

It is significant to note that Prospero is deeply involved in the acts of possession that fill the play which find their external manifestation in the crime of usurpation. Just as he was displaced from his rightful position by Antonio, so he himself has carried out an act of usurpation by taking over the island from Caliban:

This island's mine, by Sycorax my mother,
Which thou tak'st from me. (I.ii.331–332)

One could justify this by saying that Prospero's rule of the island is far superior to anything Caliban could have to offer and thereby

show, I suppose, that Shakespeare is still concerning himself here with the question of rightful rebellion, as he did much earlier in his career in, for example, *Richard III* or *Richard II*. I do not deny that this is possible, but would like to try and show that the act of usurpation of the island is more satisfactorily seen in terms of the themes which this paper is attempting to elucidate, since it is then part of a major thematic movement, whereas the question merely of usurpation would be an isolated issue here, outside the main concerns and course of development of the play.

The levels and variety of Prospero's powers are numerous, far greater than any normal man's, and the consequent temptation to egocentricity proportionately high. He has absolute power over the island, not simply in terms of earthly authority in the style of a king, but in terms of godlike powers over the natural elements (the storm at the beginning of the play is purely his doing, appallingly violent, and yet controlled with such precision by him and his servant Ariel that not a hair of anyone's head is hurt). Anything or any person that comes within his domain is completely within his control. People are put to sleep or woken at his slightest whim; swords are frozen in their sheaths; magical feasts appear and disappear at his word; Caliban groans and aches with cramps or pinchings; he, Stephano and Trinculo are chased by packs of dogs; strange and beautiful music, that can charm even the basic Caliban, fills the air; and goddesses themselves appear to charm the young betrothed couple with a show that is both created by Prospero and ended at his change of mood. He himself sums up his power in a speech near the end of the play that significantly ends with a renunciation of that power:

I have bedimm'd

The noontide sun, call'd forth the mutinous winds
 And 'twixt the green sea and the azur'd vault
 Set roaring war. To the dread rattling thunder
 Have I given fire, and rifted Jove's stout oak
 With his own bolt; the strong-bas'd promontory
 Have I made shake, and by the spurs pluck'd up
 The pine and cedar. Graves at my command
 Have wak'd their sleepers, op'd, and let 'em forth
 By my so potent art. But this rough magic
 I here abjure; and, when I have requir'd
 Some heavenly music — which even now I do —
 To work mine end upon their senses that
 This airy charm is for, I'll break my staff,
 Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,
 And deeper than did ever plummet sound
 I'll drown my book.

(V.i.41-57)

For what we see increasingly towards the end of the play is the

all-powerful Prospero involved in this and similar acts of surrender, the act of surrender of possessions, power, and authority creating the dominant mood of the closing scenes of the play. He gives Miranda to Ferdinand, a sacrifice of no less than a third of his life:

I
 Have given you here a third of mine own life,
 Of that for which I live; who once again
 I tender to thy hand. (IV.i.2-5)

He gives up his power over Alonso, Antonio, and the rest of them by taking a significant decision in favour of mercy rather than vengeance: 'the rarer action is/ In virtue than in vengeance'. Virtue here means the refusal to further take advantage of the absolute power he has over them, it means a conscious and deliberate decision to act according to the dictates of his better rather than his worse nature. Other than getting his dukedom back from his brother, he lets them be, having no further influence whatsoever on their lives.

Similarly, he gives the island where he has ruled with such power, back to Caliban and surrenders Ariel, the instrument and agent of that power, back to the elements from whence he came. Whether Ariel stands for the controlling and ordering power of art, as has been often suggested, does not matter here; all one need notice is a sense of a supernatural power, given for a brief time to a human being to command which also, like all other types of control that Prospero has exercised in the play, must be surrendered. And finally, the epilogue spoken by Prospero is expressed in terms of lack or loss, rather than possession or achievement:

Now my charms are all o'erthrown,
 And what strength I have's mine own,
 Which is most faint. (II. 1-3)

Now I want
 Spirits to enforce, art to enchant
 And my ending is despair
 Unless I be reliev'd by prayer
 Which pierces so that it assaults
 Mercy itself, and frees all faults. (II. 13-18)

It is a comment on the frailty and insignificance of human powers from an individual who has tasted their possibilities to the full and the reference to prayer suggests a final act of surrender: the placing of one's life in the hands of a power far superior to any

that human beings, even Prospero, can hope to possess.

The final lines of the play contain references to crime — and to freedom:

As you from crimes would pardon'd be
Let your indulgence set me free. (II. 19–20)

This can be seen in terms of a conventional plea by the actors for applause but the reference to crimes suggests a further reference to a theme that has been persistent throughout the play: the linking of crime or sin with enslavement and lack of crime with freedom; freedom not being a simple lack of restraint but defined in the sense of man fulfilling his higher nature wherein true freedom lies:

Freedom is not absence of determination; it is spiritual determination, as distinct from mechanical or even organic determination. It is determination by what seems good as contrasted with determination by irresistible compulsion.¹²

But the final act of surrender of which the play speaks goes beyond a specific reference to any character in the play and suggests a universal act of surrender which will happen to all of us whether we will it or not:

Our revels now are ended. These our actors,
As I foretold you, were all spirits, and
Are melted into air, into thin air;
And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
As dreams are made on; and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep. (IV. i. 148–158)

This describes the final dissolution of the earth itself and all the trappings of man's wealth and power in a universal act of surrender that sees man's life, so substantial-seeming, so full of bustle, so much to be taken *seriously*, as nothing more than a dream to be surrendered on waking — to that higher sense of human potential which has been hinted at throughout the play? We cannot say precisely, but the speech has a resonance about it which seems to invite interpretation along such lines.

It is to this passage in particular that critics of the play have pointed as evidence of *The Tempest* being Shakespeare's

'farewell' to the theatre. As I have tried to show, the passage is part of a larger, all-pervading issue which is developed consistently throughout the play on a number of levels. But its placing in this larger context does not detract from the impression that it makes of a farewell to the theatre; rather, it adds a sense of depth to it, heightening our awareness of the Elizabethan theatre as being not just a place of entertainment but, particularly in the hands of its greatest playwright, a metaphor for life itself for a 'farewell to the theatre' has become, in essence, a final comment on life itself.

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NOTES

1. All references to the text of the play are to Peter Alexander's edition of *William Shakespeare: The Complete Works* (London and Glasgow: Collins, 1970).
2. See, for example, E.M.W. Tillyard, *Shakespeare's History Plays* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1964), pp. 64–70.
3. *St Matthew* 19:24.
4. For an indication of the universality of the issue of power over others as a worldly obsession, see Aldous Huxley, *The Perennial Philosophy* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1969), pp. 139–144.
5. *St Matthew* 5:3.
6. J.M. Clark and J.V. Skinner (eds.), *Meister Eckhart* (London: Faber and Faber, 1958), p. 123. This entire passage in 'The Book of Divine Consolation' is very illuminating on this issue.
7. At V.ii.246, 280, 295, and 335.
8. Cf. the references to the four elements in *Antony and Cleopatra*. Cleopatra, for example, at her death, says she is 'fire and air'; her 'other elements' she gives to 'baser life' (V.ii. 287–8). These baser elements are earth and water which, if mixed together, make mud.
9. See for example D. Traversi, *Shakespeare: The Last Phase* (London: Hollis and Carter, 1965), p. 213.
10. J. Middleton Murry, 'Shakespeare's Dream' in *Shakespeare: The Tempest; A Casebook*, ed. D.J. Palmer (London: Macmillan 1968), p. 113.
11. Another fascinating study would be the degree of 'realism' that is to be found in so 'artificial' a play. Shakespeare's treatment of the character of Prospero — quirky, sensitive, bad-tempered — would be relevant here, together with such factors as Prospero's acceptance at the end of the potential for evil within himself (symbolised by his acknowledgement of Caliban as his 'own') and Shakespeare's refusal to provide an idealised comic ending by making out that Antonio and Sebastian have miraculously reformed after their plots have been thwarted.
12. William Temple, quoted in V. Gollancz, *A Year of Grace* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1950), p. 363.

SCHOOLS, MOVEMENTS, AND THE EMERGENCE AND DECLINE OF CRITICAL ORIENTATIONS

by N.W. VISSER

It is a commonplace of contemporary thinking that whereas scientific inquiry has come to be a group activity involving many participants and masses of complex and expensive equipment, the study of literature continues to be a solitary pursuit. Certainly it is true that in science today even the theorist must work within a community of sorts. For one thing, if he does not keep in constant communication with other theorists in his specialized field he will find his work outdated even before it is published; and for another, he needs the help of experimental scientists in testing the concepts to which his theories give rise. The abiding image of the literary critic, on the other hand, is of the solitary individual confronting a text, or, if he is of a more scholarly bent, working alone in a library.

In so far as it pertains to the characteristic activity of the generality of people working in the field of literary studies, this image is doubtless correct. As soon, however, as we consider the major reorientations that have taken place in literary studies in this century, we begin to think not of individual critics but of groups. In Anglo-American literary studies only three critics are customarily credited with having single-handedly redirected the course of the discipline in this century: T.S. Eliot, I.A. Richards and Northrop Frye. Eliot and Richards, on closer inspection, prove not to be genuine exceptions to the general rule that major reorientations are brought about by groups, for the major impact of their work was that it was taken as the point of departure for British and American New Criticism. The group of British critics which formed around F.R. Leavis and *Scrutiny* and the American group which derived from the activities of John Crowe Ransom and the Fugitives were never able to recruit Richards and Eliot as members, nor were these groups precisely or simply followers; nevertheless, Richards and Eliot provided many of the principles and criteria on which the groups were to build and pointed the direction in which they were to move, even if the exemplars did not altogether move in that direction themselves.

Frye is a genuine exception. Here we have the extraordinary case of a single individual having an immeasurable impact on literary studies, on pedagogics, even on curriculum design. His disciples, and for many years practically every English department in North America had at least one, did not form a 'school' in the usual sense of that admittedly slippery word; the great majority of them were not, nor had they ever been, in direct

association with Frye. His influence was not spread, like Leavis's or Ransom's, as much through personal influence as through published writings, but almost exclusively through his books, and very largely through a single book — *Anatomy of Criticism*. No doubt European literary studies can furnish similar instances of one person having such enormous impact — Gustave Lanson in France at the turn of the century, for example — but in Anglo-American criticism, Frye stands virtually alone. And though it would be fatuous to claim him as an exception that proves the rule, an exception he certainly is. Other seminal figures in literary criticism in this century have had their impact on the course of literary studies largely through their influence on, leadership of, or participation in identifiable groups.

The influence of groups on the course of literary studies raises a number of interesting questions: what, for instance, were the conditions underlying the success with which, in different places and at different times, mere handfuls of people transformed literary studies? What characteristics do these groups have in common? And what do the answers to these questions suggest about current efforts to redirect literary studies? In seeking answers to these questions I shall refer to only four of the major critical groups of this century: Russian Formalists, British New Critics, American New Critics, and French Structuralists. This is not to suggest that other groups are less worthy of examination; indeed a comprehensive study would have to survey the Chicago Neo-Aristotelians, the Prague Structuralists, the Geneva School (whose influence was imported into the English-speaking world largely through the efforts of J. Hillis Miller), the Munich School of stylistic critics (of whom Karl Vossler and Leo Spitzer were probably the best known), the Zurich Circle (which formed around Emil Staiger and the journal *Trivium*), the currently flourishing Constance Group of Hans Robert Jauss and Wolfgang Iser, the Moscow-Tartu school of Soviet semiotics, and any number of others. My purpose, however, is not to produce a comprehensive survey, nor a narrative account of modern critical schools, nor even a comparative study of the critical theories which they have promulgated. Rather my interest is in isolating some of the characteristic features of the collective effort which gives rise to innovative critical theories. These four groups should be sufficiently representative to provide an inventory of typical characteristics, and furthermore they are among the best known, most influential, and most thoroughly documented critical movements of this century.¹

As a first step in answering the questions posed I would argue that it is no accident that theoretical reorientations are in the main produced by groups. Discussions of American New

Criticism typically express considerable astonishment at the rare good fortune that brought together people of the calibre of Ransom, Allen Tate, Robert Penn Warren, and Cleanth Brooks at Vanderbilt University ('of all places!' was once the implicit exclamation, since Nashville was taken to be the very centre of Mencken's 'Sahara of the Bozart') over a period of a few years, and similar statements have been made about the other groups. Behind such statements lies an assumption that in each case the group's success can be accounted for by an entirely fortuitous coming together of people of vastly superior ability. In short, success is taken to be simply the aggregate of individual talents. I doubt very seriously that the members of these groups have been individually more brilliant than any number of other critics and theorists working elsewhere at the same time, and would suggest that the success of the groups is not attributable simply to the abilities of the individual members (though in many cases that ability was undeniably high) but is rather the consequence of group activity. A group of people sharing common interests, directing their attention to the same issues, and discussing each other's suggested solutions to those issues are likely to identify difficulties, formulate methods, and move through topics much more quickly than a person working alone.

Louis D. Rubin, after witnessing a reunion of the Fugitive group some thirty years after the demise of the magazine which gave them their name, described how during the tape-recorded discussions, 'the dynamics, so to speak, of the Fugitive group were revealed in action. For those of us who watched, it was exciting to see how each of the Fugitives drew profit from the insights of the others, how a structure of ideas was pyramided, so to speak, as each member's response helped another to develop his own ideas still further'.² Of course what Rubin says about the 'dynamics' at work among the reunited Fugitives applies with equal force to the time some thirty years earlier when Sidney Mtttron Hirsch presided over their discussions in his brother-in-law's living room in Nashville, and applies as well to the gatherings at the Leavises' in Cambridge, at the home of Osip Brik in St Petersburg or of Roman Jakobson in Moscow, and at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes in Paris. Whatever the differences among the groups, the pyramiding effect of which Rubin speaks was a critical factor in the theoretical progress they made; so much so that the groups made possible what their individual members on their own could not in all likelihood have accomplished. Indeed during one of the sessions which Rubin witnessed, Ransom explicitly acknowledged the importance of having worked within a group: 'I know it saved many painful years for me in such little progress as I was capable of making'.³

In an important sense, then, it was not the individual members who made these groups successful, but the groups which made their members successful. And the manifest contribution of group activity to the achievements of modern theoretical orientations makes these groups a worthwhile object of study in their own right, especially since what we can learn from them might in turn reveal something about the present state and future course of our discipline.

We might begin by looking at the origins and membership of the groups. The available evidence indicates that they originated in small discussion groups, one of two of which were initially informal though fairly regular gatherings, while the others formalized their proceedings more quickly and even gave themselves titles. Although a couple of them were, initially at least, as concerned with the writing of literature, and especially of poetry, as with critical or theoretical matters, the others were from the outset concerned primarily with critical theory. In each case the group came to achieve a sufficient sense of having a particular contribution to make that it turned to the publication of a journal or to some other means of joint publication, a move that requires not only a sense of common purpose but also, and probably more importantly, at least a rudimentary sense of group identity. We shall see how problematic this sense of group identity is when we turn in a moment to the concept of school.

The membership of the groups bears out what Thomas Kuhn has stated about those scientists who have brought about new theoretical orientations in the mature sciences. 'Almost always', Kuhn notes, 'the men who achieve these fundamental inventions of a new paradigm have been either very young or very new to the field whose paradigm they change'.⁴ Major reorientations in literary studies have similarly been brought about by coalitions of students, younger academics, and people who were in one way or another outsiders. Leavis in his 'Retrospect' to *Scrutiny* remarks that 'the core of the contributing connexion (to *Scrutiny*), at any rate in the earlier years, were young graduates . . . at the research stage', and he describes the journal as 'an outlaws' enterprise'.⁵ *The Fugitive* was founded by a group of young teachers, students, and outsiders, and, though less an outlaws' enterprise than *Scrutiny*, was opposed by the Head of the English Department at Vanderbilt. French Structuralism and the Moscow Linguistic Circle and the Society for the Study of Poetic Language (*Opojaz*), whose combined efforts brought about Russian Formalism, were likewise the creations of students, younger academics, and outsiders.

We are familiar enough with the cliché of youthful achievement in science but we less readily apply it to literary studies where,

instead, the prevailing assumptions have emphasized experience and maturity. Yet Ransom was only thirty-four when *The Fugitive* was launched, while Tate was twenty-three, and Warren joined the group as an eighteen-year-old sophomore. The *Scrutiny* group shows much the same pattern. When it began publication in May 1932, Leavis, whose *New Bearings in English Poetry* was just being released, was thirty-seven, and L.C. Knights twenty-six. And consider the quite incredible fact that Jakobson chaired the Moscow Linguistic Circle at the age of nineteen and had published his seminal study *Modern Russian Poetry* by the age of twenty-five. It is true that these critics produced some of their most important work in their middle and, especially in Jakobson's case, later years, but the fact remains that the initial impetus for the orientations they helped to develop was provided in their youth. It seems, then, to be the case that major innovations in literary studies are as much the product of youthful endeavour as they are in scientific inquiry. Accordingly, the familiar notion that literary studies can be differentiated from scientific disciplines on the basis that while the best work in the former is somehow the necessary product of maturity, that in the latter is the product of youth, has to be discounted; and so one more item that has been taken as evidence for some essential difference between the fields falls away.

The term 'outsiders' carries in literary studies implications not anticipated in Kuhn's reference to scientists who are 'new to the field whose paradigm they change'. Kuhn appears to be referring simply to people who have specialized in one field moving into another. While there are instances of much the same thing in literary studies — Richards was trained as a psychologist; Ransom had studied classics and philosophy — the outsiders who join in creating innovative theoretical perspectives often come from outside the institutional establishment altogether, or, if they are inside, are viewed with considerable suspicion by many of their colleagues. Leavis's turbulent career at Cambridge is the best known case in point in the English-speaking world, but equally influential critics and theorists have also been outsiders in this more extreme sense. Victor Shklovsky would be an example among Russian Formalists, and it is interesting to note that among French Structuralists some of the most prominent lacked the necessary credentials to teach in French universities. It would be difficult to overestimate the contribution which theorists who have been viewed as interlopers, mavericks, 'outlaws', and so forth have made to the formation and theoretical development of the groups to which they belonged, and, accordingly, to literary studies as a whole.

The significance of group activity forces us to come to terms

with the problematic notion of school. One common thread seems to run through the groups and through historical studies devoted to them: the denial that they are in fact schools, at least in so far as that term implies uniform beliefs and procedures. Indeed the notion of school is beset on all sides. Scholars emphasize the diversity of interests and commitments among the members of a putative school; the members themselves assert their independence, each declaring that he is not a Structuralist or New Critic or whatever. Even the very name by which the group comes to be known is often created or at least elevated to the status of commonly applied label by the group's opponents, and that name is often chosen as much for its polemical content as for its descriptive adequacy. So successful has this tactic been that the manifest contributions made to literary studies by, for example, the Russian Formalists are diminished by the pejorative content of the term used to demarcate that contribution. 'Formalism' (usually absorbed automatically into the broadly condemnatory tag, 'empty formalism'), 'Structuralism', 'New Criticism', have all to a greater or lesser extent been transformed into terms of abuse, which in turn has been taken by opponents as licence to forgo careful study of the critical and theoretical efforts of the groups so labelled.

We know too much about the actual development of these groups to make any easy assumptions about uniformity or unanimity. Often they have been subject to dissension, rivalry, factions, schisms, even full-scale purges. Nevertheless the term 'school' is worth preserving, provided we take the important constituents of the concept to be something other than uniformity in any absolute sense. The concept can be more accurately understood as involving a group of people who are for some time in direct association, who participate in regular and to some degree formalized discussion (which in turn usually grows into joint publication), and who share a sufficient number of basic premises and common interests that the similarities of their efforts outweigh the differences. Disagreement among members of a school is conducted within an overriding commonality of norms and procedures, within a common language so to speak. Such disagreement, however acrimonious, is something like a family quarrel; it is different in kind from disagreements with those outside the commonality, with those who speak some other language.

If we take 'school' to refer to a group of people in direct communication with one another, working on topics of common interest, then the spread of a critical theory involves a shift from school to something like a movement, and during the transition a shift in the nature of the group activity involved occurs as well. In

the early stages of development, methods elaborated by social scientists for the study of small groups can tell us a great deal about the development and structure of a school.⁶ With sufficient information we can trace the process of recruitment and initial expansion. We could note such things as the key role played by Donald Davidson who recruited both Ransom and Tate into the group that evolved into the Fugitives, with Tate in turn recruiting Warren. We could trace the origins of the *Opojaz* to a seminar at Petersburg University in which Boris Eichenbaum, Boris Tomashevsky, and Juri Tynyanov were students; and we could lay bare the importance for the emergence of French Structuralism of the meeting between Jakobson and Claude Lévi-Strauss in New York during the early forties. In themselves such details are of little more than anecdotal interest, but with their help we could begin to examine the kinds of relationships that formed among participants in the groups and grasp their consequences. With the shift from school to movement, however, these elements of group participation and personal interaction begin to fall away. Of course some of the spread of a theoretical orientation can be accounted for by the departure of some of the group's members for new centres of learning, where they begin to influence new groups of people. But not all the groups broke up in this way, and the spread of a theoretical perspective is not always a consequence of personal contact and influence.

What does happen is that as the theory becomes known through the publications and proselytising of the members of the original group, it begins to attract recruits, many of whom have no direct or sustained association with the original members. Personal factors begin to diminish in importance and we must now look to features of the theory itself in order to account for the gradual reordering of theoretical allegiances within the discipline which it brings about. At this later point in the development of the theory, the activity of literary studies, now undertaken increasingly under the influence of the newly established theoretical orientation, remains in many respects a group activity but the network of relations among the theory's advocates is looser, more impersonal, more abstract — the advocates keeping abreast of each other's progress mainly in the pages of the scholarly journals, and meeting only infrequently at professional conferences and similar gatherings. It is now the theoretical orientation that unites the group and not the group that, through a complex of personal influences and interactions, gives rise to the theory. We might further note that not only the establishment but also the spread of a new persuasion involves mainly the young and outsiders, for it is chiefly among them that the theory finds adherents. It is partly for this reason that the

factionalizing of literature departments is so often along generational lines — Young Turks against older entrenched advocates of prevailing methods; an Old Guard in short. The former are not committed to existing orientations and are therefore more at liberty to throw in with new causes, whereas the latter have in many cases already gone through the struggle to establish what was once a heretical position and is now a comfortable and accepted orthodoxy.

If the theory is to spread beyond the original group and if it is to attract enough adherents to transform the discipline, then a substantial portion of the theory's success must derive from its specific features. Of course, conversion to a theory will invariably depend to a certain extent on its compatibility with personal predisposition; however, if we look not at individual cases but at the broad dissemination of a theory, it is possible to isolate certain features that would seem to account for its success. Here again Kuhn's analysis of the development of successful scientific theories is helpful: successful theories have been sufficiently unprecedented to attract an enduring group of adherents away from alternative modes of inquiry, and they have been sufficiently open-ended to leave a number of interesting problems to solve. According to Kuhn, the commitment to problem-solving, or puzzle-solving as he usually calls it, is the dominant characteristic of scientific inquiry.⁷ Few literary scholars would be comfortable with the term 'problem-solving' as a description of their characteristic activity, but there is an analogous feature in literary studies — one having equally to do with fruitfulness — that would enable us to translate Kuhn's insight into our own field. Successful critical theories make it possible to say new things about literary works, at the same time providing the means for saying them. Fredric Jameson notes that the development of a new theory 'releases quantities of new energies, permits hosts of new perceptions and discoveries, causes a whole dimension of new problems to come into view, which result in turn in a volume of new work and research'.⁸ As Jameson goes on to relate and as we shall see shortly, this capacity of a theory to provide new things to say about literary texts comes eventually to be as important in the decline of a critical orientation as in its rise.

While the capacity of an innovatory critical theory to provide new things to say about literary works clearly accounts to some extent for the success it has in recruiting new members, that capacity alone cannot be the whole story. After all, not all members of the profession and particularly not those who are committed to an existing approach, want new things to say. Equally clearly, we cannot claim that the new method attracts recruits and converts opponents because of some demonstrable

logical superiority to existing approaches. As Kuhn suggests, a theorist who argues the defence of his theory can only hope to show what the discipline involved will be like for those who choose to follow his example. The force of his argument can only be persuasive; it cannot be made logically compelling for those who decline to adopt his perspective.⁹ We might pause here to recall the melancholy statement of Max Planck who noted that 'a new scientific truth does not triumph by convincing its opponents and making them see the light, but rather because its opponents eventually die, and a new generation grows up that is familiar with it'.¹⁰ Leaving to one side the question of 'truth', scientific or otherwise, Planck's comment makes the important point that theories are positions which people, and more important, groups of people, hold. Accordingly, competition between theories must be understood to involve competition between groups of people.

The wider dissemination of a critical theory is marked by two apparently contradictory tendencies: at the same time both a hardening and a watering down of the theory's analytical concepts and procedures. When we recognize that these tendencies refer to different sets of people, we come to see them not so much as contradictory impulses but as complementarities. The watering down of concepts and procedures underscores the point that the spread of a theoretical orientation, like the spread of most systems of belief and commitment, becomes progressively syncretic. In this respect we can view a critical theory as potentially subversive; while it may not convert its opponents outright, it will nevertheless often, in its watered down form, infiltrate their own theoretical stance, without, however, forcing any substantial rethinking of that stance. In some measure, infiltration comes about simply as a result of the practical advantages the theory makes available. In Britain and America, for example, however much they managed to keep the New Critics at arm's length, even the most traditionalist members of the profession cannot pretend that their work was utterly unmarked by the advances in analytical subtlety and sophistication which New Criticism made available. From a somewhat different perspective, we should note that successful infiltration is not just qualified submission at the level of practice. It is also a guarded, partial, and usually unspoken compromise with the social-professional forces at work within the discipline. It is, in other words, an adjustment as much to people as to ideas — a tacit way of defusing conflict, even if only through co-optation.

At the point where it has most thoroughly pervaded the discipline, a critical theory will ordinarily already have behind it its most exciting period of vigorous articulation, clarification, and compelling attraction, and be in the process of being supplanted

by a newer approach. At such a point the original school and even the wider movement which it spawned are for all practical purposes defunct, even if adherents remain behind to keep the flag flying; defunct, that is, to the extent that they can no longer hope to generate the kind of enthusiasm that attracts large numbers of new adherents into the ranks, or to continue to vitalize and give shape to the discipline. Senior figures in the movement may continue to haunt the lecture circuit where they will be warmly received and politely listened to; they may even during this period produce some of their soundest work but their message will be largely ignored by those not already enlisted in the movement.

If the process of watering down describes a theory's capacity to influence those it fails to convert, hardening pertains to quite another group. It is what typically occurs at the hands of the theory's advocates once the theory passes out of the hands of its original proponents. The early writings of a critical school are characterized by a strong polemical stance. It is a mistake, however, and one that is all too readily made by converts, to attach too much weight to the polemics. They do indeed point to the group's dominant concerns and points of departure but in fact the slogans which attract so much attention (and which often later become embarrassments to the group), the sharply aphoristic statements of principles, and the blanket condemnations of existing positions must be understood as elements of a strategy, the purpose of which is to carve out a place within the discipline for the group's interests and methods. Moreover, for all the overstatement that accompanies the establishment of a new theory, the group's principal concepts are usually presented as tentative positions, as hypotheses valuable for their heuristic potential. Only when the method passes into the hands of epigones do the concepts harden into absolutes. We could instance here the history of the concept of autonomy, which was elevated to the status of rigid dogma not by the early major New Critics who are wrongly castigated by opponents of the orientation, but by those who came after. Boris Eichenbaum in his retrospective essay on the development of Russian Formalism comments tellingly on the problem of epigonic debasement of a theoretical perspective: 'We are surrounded by eclectics and late-comers who would turn the formal method into some kind of inflexible "formalistic" system in order to provide themselves with a working vocabulary, a program, and a name. A program is a very handy thing for critics, but not at all characteristic of our method.'¹¹

Having examined some of the impulses and personal and social forces involved in the origin and spread of a critical theory, we

can turn to the other side of the equation — its demise. It can happen that the demise of a critical school or movement is brought about by external forces, though in such cases the concepts promulgated by the group apparently continue to exert some influence. The Russian Formalists, having heard and responded to the admonition of Trotsky in his celebrated and not altogether condemnatory analysis of their position in *Literature and Revolution* (1924), were virtually silenced by Soviet Proletkult bureaucrats in the thirties just as their ideas were attaining new levels of sophistication. That their influence was not entirely effaced is evidenced by the recent emergence of Russian structuralist and semiotic theorists, among them Juri Lotman and Boris Uspensky whose debt to the Formalists is manifest in everything they have written. The disintegration of French Structuralism can likewise be attributed in part to external forces. The great French intellectual adventure of the sixties which glimpsed in the near distance a unified field theory for the 'human sciences' grounded in linguistics, may with some accuracy be said to have come unravelled in the streets of Paris in the spring of 1968. After a good deal of acrimonious dissension, purging, and eventual regrouping, some of the original participants, notably Tzvetan Todorov and Gérard Genette, continue to work the old vein with considerable success but the hoped-for intellectual synthesis and the excitement which its prospect generated no longer sustain their efforts.

More often the reasons for the demise of a critical orientation derive from limitations inherent in critical theories themselves. Innovative critical theories indeed provide new things to say about literary works but only, perforce, a limited number of things and a limited number of ways of saying them. Provided that the new things and new ways are found worthwhile by a sufficient number of the members of the discipline, the theory will bring about genuine renovation of literary studies. Once the major and more important minor works in the literary canon have been subjected to the norms and procedures of the theory, however, and once the method gains a level of familiarity such that it no longer is capable of surprising one with the insights it can achieve, the theory can bring about little more than increasingly arid and mechanical replications. E.D. Hirsch has commented on the demise of British and American New Critical 'close reading', noting that New Critical commentaries 'as they multiplied became more and more diversified, and more and more remote, ingenious, abstract, and decadent'. He goes on to argue that 'the excitement and relevance [New Criticism] carried at first has declined into mechanical exercises which engage students only a little less than their teachers. For naturally, if every reading

of a standard text merely becomes a new addition to a growing list, one very probable consequence will be a sense of futility, relativism, and skepticism. The only thing to be looked for is a new "approach" or a "novel and interesting perspective".¹²

In addition to the problems of exhaustion, replication, and decadence, one further recurring pattern in the gradual decline of theoretical orientations can be isolated. Fredric Jameson, who was quoted earlier on the emergence of new theories, is equally cogent regarding their decline. Just as the pursuit and application of a new theoretical model opens up new areas for research, so in the very activity of application does it usually come to reveal problems it is incapable of resolving. According to Jameson, 'In the declining years of the model's history, a proportionally greater amount of time has to be spent in readjusting the model itself, in bringing it back into line with its object of study. Now research tends to become theoretical rather than practical, and to turn back upon its own presuppositions (the structure of the model itself), finding itself vexed by the false problems and dilemmas into which the inadequacy of the model seems increasingly to lead it.'¹³

In both cases — reaching the stage of exhaustion and replication, and the progressive laying bare of the theory's internal inconsistencies and inadequacies — the model has lost the richness, the fruitfulness, and simply the newness to attract new recruits on any significant scale. Those aspects of the theory which could at one time command commitment now exercise their attraction for the most part only on those who are already too deeply committed to change, who have invested so much of their time, their labour, their very careers in the orientation that abandonment is not a genuine option. Furthermore, it is important to keep in mind that however radically innovatory a group's theory might initially be, the dynamic of the group will almost certainly become increasingly conservative over time. To an ever greater extent the theory will come to define the group and find its members together, until finally it becomes the group's very *raison d'être*, so that to abandon it is to forsake the colleagues, mentors, and friends who have shared in erecting and furthering the theory. When one is thoroughly enmeshed in the set of social and professional relations that come to surround an orientation, one can opt out only at the cost of leaving others behind. At this late stage the group now begins to diminish through attrition rather than expand through recruitment.

After this somewhat gloomy prognostication, we can turn to the last of the three questions posed at the beginning of this essay: what can past theoretical reorientations suggest to us about current efforts to redirect literary studies? We are aware, perhaps

overly so, that literary studies are in a period of crisis, though it would be just as accurate to describe the period as one of exciting ferment. Still, it is understandable that even the most dedicated pluralist blanches at the cacophony that has come to pervade the profession and readily joins in agonizing over the apparent chaos. If Kuhn is correct in arguing that a state of crisis in science typically presages the emergence of a new theoretical paradigm, then there are perhaps some grounds for optimism that the same will hold true for literary studies. At the same time, we must remember that literary studies have never had the degree of theoretical consensus characteristic of the mature sciences. The symptoms of crisis cited by Kuhn for the mature sciences — a proliferation of competing articulations, a willingness to try anything, expressions of explicit discontent, and recourse to philosophy and to debate over fundamentals¹⁴ — come close to describing the ordinary state of affairs in literary studies. Ours is a 'pre-paradigm' discipline, or, as Wayne Shumaker once put it, 'criticism has arrived . . . at the point which physical science had reached about the time Bishop Sprat issued his famous call for a simple and factual prose'.¹⁵ What allows us to suppose that literary studies really are in a state of crisis is that in recent years these symptoms have become considerably intensified, which may in turn suggest that the discipline is indeed moving towards a major transformation.

Such a transformation is a sufficiently exciting prospect in itself, but perhaps the time has come to demand from literary theory something more than just another orientation. Perhaps we are ready to move beyond the point of development identified by Shumaker — ready to attain a genuinely higher level (rather than simply a different mode) of theoretical adequacy, and even to bring about the degree of consensus regarding the aims and methods of literary studies long characteristic of the mature sciences. The enormous growth of interest in literary theory in recent years, seen especially in the proliferation of new journals devoted to the field, suggests a serious effort to redefine the bases of literary studies.

It is entirely possible that out of the apparent chaos of competing theoretical models and methodologies will emerge a new dominant orientation, but if it is to be more than simply another critical approach, it will have to be very different from those that preceded it. It will have to be the product of a concerted effort towards a broad consensus (which is not the same as dogmatic unanimity) regarding the nature and aims of literary studies; it will have to be more alive to the contribution that cognate disciplines — sociology, anthropology, linguistics, semiotics, aesthetics, philosophy of science, to name only a few

— can make to its development; and it will have to open itself to these other disciplines without losing sight of its own distinctive concerns; it will have to avoid mere eclecticism, premature foreclosure of discussion, reformist zealotry, polemical posturing and slogan mongering — indeed most of the features that have come to characterize theoretical discussion in recent years.

If a new critical school is to emerge, and if it is to provide us with a theoretical perspective that lifts the discipline to a higher level of theoretical sophistication and a higher degree of consensus about the aims and methods of literary studies, we may be certain that its success will not easily be achieved, any more than the same level of success was easily achieved in the mature sciences, where it grew slowly through lengthy and often difficult exchange among scientists. We can be equally certain that the process will be protracted, complicated, unsettling, and, for those who can stand up to it, extremely exciting.

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NOTES

1. American New Criticism is the most fully documented of the groups. Especially valuable are Louise Cowan, *The Fugitive Group: A Literary History* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1959); John L. Stewart, *The Burden of Time: The Fugitives and Agrarians* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1965); and Thomas Daniel Young, *Gentleman in a Dustcoat: A Biography of John Crowe Ransom* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1976). Victor Erlich's *Russian Formalism: History-Doctrine*, 3rd. ed., rev. (The Hague: Mouton, 1969) traces the emergence of the Moscow Linguistic Circle and the *Opojaz*. Information on British New Criticism can be found in Leavis's 'Retrospect', written for the reprint of *Scrutiny*, Vol. 20 (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1963); in George G. Watson, *The Literary Critics: A Study of English Descriptive Criticism* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1962); and in Ronald Hayman, *Leavis* (Totowa, New Jersey: Rowan and Littlefield, 1976). For further information I am indebted to the late Professor Edward Wilson of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, who took part in the early years of the *Scrutiny* venture and knew all of the leading participants. No single work on the French Structuralists details the founding of the group. I have had for the most part to rely on scattered comments in articles and anthologies and on discussions with people who were familiar with the group.
2. Introduction to *Fugitives' Reunion: Conversations at Vanderbilt — May 3-5, 1956*, ed. Rob Roy Purdy (Nashville: Vanderbilt Univ. Press, 1959), p. 23.
3. *Fugitives' Reunion*, p. 87.
4. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd. ed. (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1970), p. 90. Accepting Kuhn on this point does not commit one to his account of scientific revolutions or 'paradigm shifts'. For a critique of his account, see Stephen Toulmin, *Human Understanding*, Vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 96-130.
5. 'Retrospect', pp. 6 and 1 respectively.
6. The value of examining the structure and development of groups which give rise to theoretical orientations has been emphasized by Kuhn (pp. 176-78) and Sal P. Restivo, 'Towards a Sociology of Objectivity', *Sociological Analysis and Theory*, 5, No. 2 (1975), 155-82. Perhaps the best model developed thus far for such an undertaking is 'network analysis'. For a

convenient summary of its development, methods, and applications, see Jeremy Boissevain, *Friends of Friends: Networks, Manipulators and Coalitions* (Oxford: Basic Blackwell, 1974).

7. Kuhn, pp. 10 and 205.
8. *The Prison-House of Language: A Critical Account of Structuralism and Russian Formalism* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1972), p. v.
9. Kuhn, p. 94.
10. Quoted by Kuhn (p. 151) from Planck's *Scientific Autobiography*.
11. The Theory of the 'Formal Method', *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays*, ed. and trans. Lee T. Lemon and Marion J. Reis (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1965), p. 102.
12. 'Value and Knowledge in the Humanities', *In Search of Literary Theory*, ed. Morton W. Bloomfield (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1972), p. 61.
13. Jameson, p. v. Murray Krieger's *Theory of Criticism: A Tradition and its System* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Univ. Press, 1976) would appear to be a perfect illustration of the effect Jameson describes.
14. Kuhn, p. 91.
15. 'A Modest Proposal for Critics', *Criticism: Speculative and Analytical Essays*, ed. L.S. Dembo (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1968), p. 73.