God for the Nationalist Party. He enjoys the advantages of the status quo combined with the pleasures of what he thinks is a clear conscience.

And I think it would be only fair to add that it isn't only those who vote U.P. who quietly enjoy the South African status quo. People who are Progressives, even perhaps active Progressives, are often in the midst of a clandestine love-affair with the status quo. (I don't claim immunity myself, I may add). To take but one instance, some of the things that I have heard from members of the local students' Wages Commission suggest that Progressive people aren't always wholly progressive in practice . . .

I think we whites must all shudder and bow our heads when we think of the implications of these recent bannings, the implications of what is happening in our society—implications which involve us all and which partly accuse us all.

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There is one of these implications that I'd like to develop a little further. I said earlier that an obstruction of a natural process could lead to an inertness—in this case, an inertness among whites, who are unlikely to modify their views unless they are made to face up, before it is too late, to the thoughts and feelings of black people.

Let me apply this thought to the position of the Progressive Party. For all its talent, for all its strong arguments, it has not so far made much progress as a political force among the whites. (Though I support the Progressive Party in very many ways, I am not at the moment speaking as a Progressive, still less am I voicing an official Party view). Now it seems to me that the Progressive Party's arguments, many of which are in themselves very powerful, will make little headway among whites until they are backed up by a **natural pressure from blacks.** It is pressure from blacks, real pressure, that whites understand. When that pressure begins to be exerted, and when it becomes clear that it cannot be stamped out by bannings, prohibitions, legislation, etc., then (I think)—and not before then— many white people will begin to pay attention to the Progressive Party.

"That's it," Mr Vorster might say, "and that's why I am trying to stamp out the black pressure." Mr Vorster might say it; but many whites, even secretly some Progressives, would agree with him. "I ban people," Mr Vorster would say, if he were in the habit of speaking openly about such matters, "I ban people in order to preserve the traditional South African way of life."

But of course society, especially a society like ours, cannot be static. Black people **are feeling bitter resentments** whether they are allowed to express their feelings or not. These resentments are beginning to boil and bubble under the surface. Most whites continue complacently to live their traditional way of life.

It is difficult to escape the conclusion that, as things are going now, sooner or later something dreadful must happen. □

SOUTH AFRICA AND 'THE CUBIST SENSIBILITY'

by Peter Strauss

The Cubist movement was such a complex affair that it probably changed our sensibilities in a thousand different ways. But why not start talking about the Cubists bit by bit, at any rate? They have changed our lives so radically that we should never stop analysing them. I want to talk about a particular effect that became less and less evident as the movement developed. It is most inescapable in the early canvasses of 1907 and 1908. Let me give some examples: Picasso's **Les Demoiselles d'Avignon** (1907); his **Fruit and Wineglass,** and particularly his **Three Women,** both of 1908; Braque's **Houses at L'Estaque** of 1907. These pictures bring us into an extraordinarily close relationship with them, if we compare them with, say, works of the High Renaissance. It is as though a broad carpet that had separated us from the canvasses were rolled away, and we could step right up to them now—and are almost drawn into them.

In Renaissance paintings I am always aware of this carpet. It is a broad carpet, obeying the laws of perspective, probably marked off in little squares also obeying the laws of perspective, and it calmly separates me from what is behind it: the event. Of course the painting itself is three-dimensional—in fact, it is an extension of this carpeted hall I am standing in; like a mirror in a restaurant

it gives the illusion of twice as much space. And within this extension of the space of the hall the event takes place. It takes place in three dimensions but not around me; I am not involved in it; I watch it across the carpet. The painter has put the event behind a theatre proscenium; it becomes a spectacle. Da Vinci's **Last Supper** is the perfect example.

The Mannerists that followed on the Renaissance painters used three-dimensional space very differently, and they are probably to be taken seriously as the ancestors of Cubism, as well as of the horror comic. They used foreshortening and odd view-points and gesture in such a way as to lead the eye along a pattern of receding limbs rather deep **into** the picture. Space became active—a matter of grandiloquent gesture. In a new way, the space within the painting was linked to the space outside, in which the spectator was standing. The event in the picture was an extension of the events taking place in himself. For one thing, the space of the picture was usually an extension of the fact that the picture itself was towering over the spectator. The picture itself 'continued' this towering effect. The gestures of the figures in the picture were an extension of the spectator's own spiritual gestures. Unfortunately the emotion was invariably 'bad' emotion—grandiloquence—and if the new use of space, with its greater tactileness and its greater ability to involve the spectator in it as an extension of it, made a new intimacy possible, everything else about the art repelled any intimacy.

You need to jump all the way to Degas to find the same kind of space used to portray, say, a woman trying on hats. Degas used the unexpected viewpoint of the Mannerists (actually theirs tended to be in fact rather more predictable than his). He also used (to create an **active** space) a way of strongly suggesting planes at various interesting angles to each other and to the plane of the picture's surface. We are not looking at **his** images over a carpet, either. Nor are we looking through a window at a field of light, as with most of the Impressionists.

Degas is actually astonishing. If his pictures didn't have the air of being mere sketches, if his subject-matter were less charming and distracting—Degas would be a much more alarming artist than he appears. Fortunately, also, for his easy acceptance, his boldest experiments have the air of declaring themselves to be oddities. The Renaissance artists let us see the show as though we were sitting in the auditorium; Degas let us see it from the wings or from the flies. Which is a unique and magical experience, but one never need feel about it that this is the way the show ought to be seen. Degas brought us into a new and, at first, an odd-seeming intimacy with the world around us. But with him this could still seem like a holiday from 'proper' seeing. It took a man as tough-minded as Picasso to show us that the world outside us really is as close to us as his pictures make it seem.

For in the Cubist pictures I am talking about one is involved in the space of the picture as one never had been before. It is useless to use the old language and talk of the tactile qualities of three-dimensional form. It is that the shapes on the canvas have business to execute with our hands, and our hands have business to execute with them. The world that is inside the picture is a world that is 'to hand' and 'at hand.' We become aware for the first time just to what extent we perceive the world as an extension of our body, and space in terms of it. These Cubist paintings make our body 'continue' into the objects of the everyday world. And the world, instead of remaining a spectacle, becomes an environment—presses on us with its information and its demands.

The sensibility developed by this element of Cubism is paralleled in the twentieth century views on perception—in the work of the gestalt psychologists and the phenomenologists. It has obtained the greatest mass significance through the most democratic of art forms, the cinema. True, we all know films that use the screen to suggest spectacle. But we have also all come across camerawork that has the effect of using the screen to place us in an environment.

We find a similar sensibility at work in the few mature poems of the English war poet, Isaac Rosenberg. It was the sensibility that enabled him to depict so much of the horror of life in the trenches in the First World War—and also so much of its humanity and harsh beauty. Rosenberg was a poet whose development we can follow from very early on, and the transformation of his style is astonishing. In his early works we find ourselves vaguely floating, disembodied through an adolescent's world of longings and intimations. With a late work, however, we find ourselves caught within a precise field of tensions—the poem is a place, an environment, where conflicting energies are held in the unstable synthesis of a human moment. The world has contracted to a place where meaning is learned from things as close to you as the poppy you have stuck behind your ear, or the rat that jumps over your hand.

If, then, the sensibility of the early Cubist paintings and the poetry of Rosenberg is one which—as I believe — characterises our twentieth century relationship with the world, what is there to learn from it that might help us—and particularly the Whites among us, who are about as helpless as soldiers caught up in a war—to live meaningfully in contemporary South Africa?

What choices are open to us in the realm of action? We can choose to do what we can within the White political establishment—certainly a choice that may be a noble one—but one in which one's power is virtually nil, and above all one that may be temperamentally repulsive to some of us. We can do our bit in getting the Black labour movement under way. But not all of us have the qualities of character that are requisite in such work. Moreover it must inevitably be work that strives to make itself—and all White intervention—superfluous. It is work that the White must feel in some degree to be destructive of his own freedom of action. One would like to be able to help form the future consciousness of one's country. But Black consciousness, on which it will depend, has rejected us. We are truly at a loose end. True, we can be sure that this will not always be the case. The time will come when even the White liberal or radical will have his hands more than full, when there will be only too much for him to do and decide. It is the interim that is so agonising to us. And we feel it as a subtle destruction of our character, so

that we are afraid that when the time comes we will no longer be able to rise to what is demanded of us.

To me it seems that all we can do in the interim is live as fully and as consciously as possible, and the 'Cubist sensibility' can help us to do this. We need to feel every aspect of our environment as something close and pressing on us, involving us. This entails a breaking away from all idealism, all Utopianism, all theoretic analysis. The liberal sensibility has been subtly undermined by the utilitarian reasonableness of nineteenth century thought. But our actual lives in South Africa have necessarily been different. We feel daily around us the naked impact of humiliation and despair, the horrible fecundity of misunderstandings multiplying in our relationships with each other– and occasionally we feel the flash, the unmitigated directness, of communication, and a sense of the fundamental unity of being in the same country for good or ill. This unity is not the unity of a utilitarian community that understands itself and its common needs as part of an abstract system, or part of a community of ideals. It is the unity of people responding with intense imaginativeness to their own pressures and needs, and so also to those of others, with which they are inevitably involved. We understand each other because our jagged problems are locked together and complementary, like the pieces of a jigsaw or the planes in a Cubist picture.

So we should read not Mill but Fanon, that terribly distorted mind. Distorted he may be by his sense of injustice, by his bitterness, by his Black chauvinism–but the very distortion of his mind, so one thinks at times, is what he has to give to us, what he has to say to us. It should be the same with the writing we produce–we need a Fanon. We can no longer reach after ideal solutions or serene analyses: what we can produce is only the distorted moment of our being registered with urgent consciousness and humanity. We can make it clear to ourselves and to each other that we live in an environment in which the strengths and weaknesses of man reveal themselves with direct, though often ambiguous and difficult, intensity.

If we live and are conscious in this way we shall often find our consciousness intolerable to ourselves; but at least we shall know ourselves to be alive and human. □

BWANA GO HOME

(Bob Hitchcock: pub. Howard Timmins: 165 p.p. R4,75)

by Alan Paton

This book is easy to read, it is full of factual information, it is good lively journalism. But don't read it for relaxation, or to be cheered up, because it won't relax you and it won't cheer you up.

I am at a disadvantage because I have not been to independent Zambia at all. I last visited the actual country in 1958, when it was called Northern Rhodesia, and was part of the ill-fated Federation of Central Africa, one of the last attempts in history by the white man to impose his will on black men.

I must therefore rather relate the facts as Mr Hitchcock sees them, because I am in no position to confirm or contest them, I am going to assume that the facts are true, though it is possible that the whole sad story has been coloured by Mr Hitchcock's extreme disillusionment with Zambia and President Kaunda.

Indeed Mr Hitchcock can be said to have three themes. The first is Zambia and the President. The second is the inexorable growth of the guerilla movement and its immense threat to the rulers of Portugal, Rhodesia, and South Africa. The third is the warning, grave and authoritative, that if the white man in Africa doesn't come to his senses, the end of his tenancy is near.

Let us consider the first theme. Mr Hitchcock is not a racist and he does not write like a racist. On the contrary he believes in human equality. But every black Zambian who reads this book will regard him as a racist. His condemnation of modern Zambia is extreme. But so also is his condemnation of colonial North Rhodesia, where a white miner could earn R200 per month and pay his servant R4,00 where men like Kaunda could be thrown out of white-owned shops, and where the noble whitewash of "partnership" covered up the dirty structures of race discrimination.

Then came Mr Hitchcock's turn, not exactly to be thrown out, but to go with good intentions into a Zambian bar, and be totally ignored by the barman. Mr Hitchcock regards the Zambian army as "one of the most undisciplined armies in Africa" and gives examples of white