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CONTENTS

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On completing the twenty-fifth year of publication, *Theoria* has steady support from those who want an audience for their views. They come to our forum not only from this University but from other centres and other countries. Who is likely to hear them is not an easy subject for statistical analysis nor perhaps should it be. But when authors of recent titles from the Cambridge University Press and Penguin Books acknowledge a debt for material which first appeared in *Theoria* and when we have correspondence from a scholar in Madrid and a library in Kiev, there seems to be evidence that matters raised here may have an interestingly remote echo.

We wish to remind contributors that articles should be submitted by 15th March for possible inclusion in May or by 15th August for inclusion in October.

Two of the articles in this issue record extension lectures delivered as part of a series in the Department of English, Pietermaritzburg, 1971.

THE EDITORS.

BANTU EDUCATION: A CRITICAL SURVEY

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

by W. G. McCONKEY

The book-education of our African people began as a project of the London Missionary Society, soon to be followed by the Glasgow Missionary Society which in 1824 opened a school destined to become its famous Lovedale institution. Other missionary organisations followed and education advanced slowly but steadily with evangelisation. The Cape government subsidised the mission schools regularly from 1854, Natal from 1856, Transvaal and the Orange Free State from 1903.[1] At Union in 1910 there were 86 300 African children at school, the vast majority of them in the lower primary classes.[2] From Union till December 1953 African education was a joint undertaking of the missionaries and the four provincial administrations, though since 1922, when it had taken the right to tax Africans away from the provinces, the Union government had been responsible for the financial allocations. These allocations were very largely determined by the level of receipts from African taxation and were chronically inadequate. Then in 1945 the Smuts government made the education of Africans, like the education of the other ethnic groups in South Africa, a charge on the general revenue account of the Union, and parliament made increasingly substantial provision. From 1945 to 1948 enrolments rose from 588 580 to 749 179[3] and conditions of service of teachers were greatly improved. The outlook was hopeful, but not for long.

Critics of African education

Traditionally, the Nationalist Party (and many non-Nationalists) had looked with dislike at African education as it had developed under the missionaries and the provinces. It gave the pupils wrong ideas, they said, of their place in South Africa. It was 'too academic', and did not prepare them for their ascribed levels of employment. It produced 'synthetic' or 'imitation' Whites. It was 'teaching Natives to compete with Europeans'. The 'sound policy' was 'that the Natives should be educated in their own manner, and should learn to be good Natives as tribal Natives, and should not be imitators of the White man.'[4]

Such attitudes had their origins in the farmer-missionary recriminations of a century and a half ago and in Poor White

versus Black competition for employment in the earlier stages of South Africa's industrialisation. They welled up again in the 1940s when rapid wartime industrial expansion drew large numbers of African labourers into cities ill-prepared to receive them.

Education for apartheid

The Malan government won power under its *apartheid* banner in 1948 and in January 1949 appointed a Commission under the chairmanship of Dr. W. W. M. Eiselen to consider and report upon, *inter alia*:

(a) the principles and aims of education for Natives *as an independent race* . . . ,
(b) the extent to which the existing educational system for Natives . . . should be modified . . . to prepare Natives more effectively *for their future occupations*,
(c) the organisation and administration of Native education,
(d) the basis on which such education should be financed.
[The italics are mine.]

The Commission recommended[5] a radical restructuring of African education. Control was to pass from the provinces and the missionaries to a proposed new Department of Bantu Education. Provincial schools (few in number) would become government schools. Management of mission primary schools (the vast majority) would pass to new Bantu local authorities and of mission post-primary schools to new Bantu regional authorities.[6] Mission schools not so handed over would cease to have claim to full state aid.[7] The time had come for the missionary to 'stand aside'.[8] In terms of another recommendation, training in academic high schools and in vocational and polytechnic schools was to be provided at government cost only for those who could 'be absorbed by the (Bantu) development plan or the present Bantu society',[9] i.e. the training was to lead to skilled employment and advancement only in the tribal Bantu society, but not to such employment in the general South African economy — in which the vast majority of Africans are in fact employed. Further, the tribal vernacular was to be the sole medium of instruction throughout the primary school and, in due course, throughout the secondary school. This also seemed to be preparation for a tribal life — in which millions of Africans had ceased to be interested — to the detriment of preparation for life in the here and now of practical everyday employment. Proposals for the financing of education lacked

preciseness but had an ominous ring. 'If,' wrote a member of the Commission in a minority report, 'the words "responsibility for the funds required for Bantu education" and the words "direct forms of responsibility to finance their own education" are to be understood as meaning that under present circumstances the Bantu are to be made responsible, in principle, for financing their own education or own development in general, I cannot agree with the paragraph. Such a policy would introduce the dangerous principle of differential taxation.'[10]

Some reassuring recommendations

Whatever one might feel about these recommendations relating to the 'political' side of education, recommendations on the more professional aspects were reassuring. Expressing concern at the high drop-out rate even in the lower primary school, the Commission recorded its opinion[11] 'that a Bantu child who does not complete at least Std II (i.e., the fourth school year) has benefited so little that the money spent on his education is virtually lost'. The financial loss, it calculated,[12] amounted in the year 1948-9 to 'the not inconsiderable sum of over a million pounds.' The Commission therefore held out the prospect of compulsory education in the near future, and stated the 'main objective' of its proposed educational development scheme as follows:[13] 'to provide by 1959 sufficient places in the first four classes of primary schools to accommodate the estimated number of children in the Bantu population in the age groups 8 to 11 years, inclusive.' It also recommended[14] that teacher-training be drastically speeded up: starting from the 6 000 students in training courses in 1949, the numbers were to rise steeply to 15 000 in 1959. And the proportion of university graduate teachers in secondary schools was to be raised from the unsatisfactory 45 per cent of 1949 to something nearer 100 per cent.[15] Weighing these reassuring passages in the Report against the more ominous major recommendations, African teachers waited uneasily to see how the new system would reveal itself in practice.

The Bantu Education Bill came before parliament in 1953.

The Bantu Education Act, No. 47 of 1953

The Act was framed in very general terms. It provided for the transfer of control of native education from the provincial administrations to the Union government's Department of Native Affairs, for financial assistance to Bantu community schools, for the establishment of government schools and the take-over of

existing provincial schools as government schools, for grants-in-aid to state-aided schools, for the registration of all schools other than government schools, etc. These administrative matters having been attended to, the Act proceeded to empower the Minister to make regulations governing conditions of service of teachers, syllabuses, medium of instruction and other important and sometimes potentially controversial matters (there were 19 sub-heads). Practically everything would depend on the Minister.

The policy made clear

The Minister's policy statements had little comfort for the African educationist. The old policy, he stated, by 'blindly producing pupils on the European model' had created among Natives the 'vain hope that they could occupy posts within the European community despite the country's policy of *apartheid*'.[16] That was all to change. Financially, there was to be a reversion to the pre-1945 system, which had linked the financing of African education with specifically African taxation. In future, the sum to be made available for Bantu Education from the general revenue account would be fixed at R13 m per annum. Costs of future expansion would thus have to come from African taxation. Present *per capita* costs were too high — higher than for 'any other Native community in Africa'.[17] (It is noteworthy that those whose criteria for African education are the standards of the less developed parts of Africa see no inconsistency in adopting as criterion for White education the highest standards in the world's most advanced nations.) In future, the emphasis would be on the fundamental education facilities which could be provided from available funds: education in Sub A and B and probably up to Std II, in reading, writing and arithmetic through mother tongue education, as well as a knowledge of English and Afrikaans, and the cardinal principles of the Christian religion.[18] Drastic economy measures would be applied. A double-session system would be introduced in sub-standards A and B (first two school years), enabling each teacher to teach two classes, each class to have three hours of instruction instead of the usual four and a half hours.[19] Both the teacher and the classroom would thus be able to take two different groups of pupils every day. The same would apply to furniture, school requirements and class reading books. There would be automatic promotion of pupils during the first four years (lower primary school) and an examination would determine how many would go beyond this stage, subject to (a) what could be afforded and (b) the employment prospects for those more highly

educated.[20] Male teachers who, if married, drew cost-of-living allowances, and teachers generally whose qualifications, and therefore salaries, were too high, would be gradually replaced in the lower primary and, in some cases, the upper primary schools. Churches which proposed to retain control of their schools must face loss of grant. 'Deliberate attempts will be made to keep the institutions of advanced learning more and more away from the urban environment and to establish these as far as possible in the native reserves. It is the policy of my department that education should have its roots entirely in the native areas and in the native environment and native community. There Bantu education must be able to give itself complete expression and there it will have to perform its real service. The Bantu must be guided to serve his own community in all respects. There is no place for him in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour. Within his own community however all doors are open.'[21]

Depressed unit expenditure

Thus launched, the new Department of Bantu Education was to function from its establishment under dire financial stress. Despite relaxations from time to time of the principle of African taxation paying for all African educational expansion, expenditure per pupil dropped steadily from R17,08 in the financial year 1953-4 to R11.56 in 1962-63 before slowly rising to R14.48 in 1968-9 and more quickly to R18.37 in 1970-71, the latest year for which figures are available. Allowing for the depreciation of the Rand, R25 would have been required in 1970-71 to buy the goods and services bought in 1953-4 for R17,08. Comparison with unit expenditure in White schools throws a sharp light on the financial straits of the African. Expenditure per White pupil in 1953-4 was R127,84 in the Cape and R126,11 in Natal; in 1968-9 it was R266,38 in the Cape and R285 in Natal.[22]

There are valid historical reasons for much of the gap between African and White unit expenditures, e.g. the later development of African education and the different distribution of the two groups of pupils between less expensive lower primary and more expensive secondary education. *But the gap should be gradually narrowing. It has, on the contrary, been growing wider. Expressed as a fraction of state expenditure per White pupil in South Africa as a whole (R228), state expenditure per Black pupil in 1968-9 was the lowest recorded since Union in 1910.*[22A] Later comparative figures are not available.

The following pages will describe some of the consequences of this most unsatisfactory provision.

Continued wastage

First, the Eiselen Commission's 'main objective', education for all for at least four years by 1959, is receding further into the future. Continuing wastage — and the financial wastage estimated by the Eiselen Commission is the least important aspect — is illustrated by the following figures:[23]

	Enrolments	
Sub A	1967	578 807
„ B	1968	435 232
Std I	1969	397 062
„ II	1970	324 208

About a quarter of a million of the children who entered school in 1967 were thus to leave school having benefited so little, by Eiselen criteria, that the money spent on their education was virtually lost, and were to seek a livelihood thus unprepared in the lowest levels of South Africa's general economy.

The latest official statement on compulsory education suggests that in certain African areas it may be possible to do something about it — by 1980.[24]

Deterioration in teacher-pupil ratio

Second, nothing was to come of the proposed speeding up of teacher training in the years 1951-59. The figures below speak for themselves:

Table A

Number of students in training as teachers

	1951	*1953*	*1955*	*1957*	*1959*
Eiselen proposals ...	7 200	8 600	10 400	12 500	15 000
Students eventually in training	5 736	6 344	5 899	5 378	5 656

The number was to drop to 3 697 in 1961 before gradually rising — to 7 548 (half of the Eiselen 1959 target) — in 1970.[25]

Training college staffs declined. In 1949, for 5 935 students there were 420 teachers, a ratio of 1 : 14. In 1969, for 7 052 students there were 338 teachers, a ratio of 1 : 21. The number of graduate teachers decreased from 177 to 107, the percentage of graduates from 42 to 32.

Inevitably, the teacher-pupil ratio in the schools deteriorated steeply. In 1953, there were 858 079 pupils and 21 148 teachers, giving a teacher-pupil ratio of 1 to 40,6. In 1960, there was a teacher for every 54 pupils. As the ratio deteriorated, parents contributed increasingly to 'privately paid teachers' funds'. In 1969 there were, outside the Transkei, 2 063 145 pupils and 34 305 teachers in state and subsidised schools. But the state subsidised only 28 099 of these teachers, *or one teacher for every 73 pupils.*[26] Levies on parents by Bantu school boards raised enough money to pay the other 6 206 teachers and to bring the ratio to 1 : 60. (With effect from 1 October 1971, privately paid teachers then in employment were taken on to the Government-paid establishment. While this step did not improve the staffing position — these mostly untrained and poorly-educated helpers-out cannot so suddenly or so easily be transformed into qualified teachers — it eased in one respect the financial demands on the parents).

Such deterioration contrasted with the improved ratio over the same period in White state schools where all teachers are government-paid:[27]

Table B

	Pupils	*Teachers*	*Pupils per teacher*
1953	536 058	21 635	25
1968	789 279	37 056	21

Another comparison may also help to put our teacher supply in perspective. An article in UNESCO's *Courier* for January 1970 shows the proportion of teachers to population in 19 different countries (not including South Africa). Pointing to the 'space nations', the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R., and to other advanced countries such as the U.K., Canada, France, Australia, New Zealand, the article states, 'Generally speaking, about one person in every hundred in these countries is a teacher.' South African White education would fall comfortably into this group. Not all communities are so happy. In the United Arab Republic one person in 222 was a teacher; in Kenya one in 278. For South Africa's African population the proportion (1969 figures) was one in 330![27A] It should be made clear that the Government was not at all unhappy about the very bad teacher-pupil ratio in its African schools. Replying to a question in Parliament, the Minister said on 20 May 1963 (when the ratio was 1 : 58):[28] 'The hon. member . . . asked why there should be a saving on bursaries now while there is such a shortage of trained teachers. Actually there is no shortage in the number of candidates offering themselves for

training in the pre-matriculation course, the higher primary education diploma and formerly also the lower primary education diploma. The number of candidates offering themselves for these courses is far greater than the number we are able to accommodate, and for which we can make provision in the schools.'

Qualitative deterioration

Third, nothing was to come of the proposed improvement in the proportion of university graduate teachers on secondary school staffs. The Eiselen Commission had expressed dissatisfaction that only 45 per cent of the 974 teachers in African high and secondary schools in 1949 were university graduates. In 1969, there were 2 680 teachers, in high and secondary schools, of whom only 591 or 22 per cent were graduates. Of the additional 1 706 such teachers taken into service since 1949, only 169, or not quite 10 per cent, were graduates.

Economy and the lower primary teacher

In view of the emphasis on lower primary education, and on economy generally, recruitment of teachers was at first directed to the training of young women for the Lower Primary Teachers' Certificate.[29] This qualification (two years training after Form I — non-Bantu Std VI) was entirely inadequate, particularly in view of the requirement in the newly drafted syllabuses that both English and Afrikaans should be taught as subjects *from the first school year*. Teachers whose own general schooling had ended at Form I could not reasonably be expected to teach such a lower primary course efficiently, as the Transkeian Commission, among other authorities, made clear. That Commission wrote:[30] 'The Commission found the general attainment and academic background of students in the final year of the L.P.T.C. completely inadequate and fears that these immature young women will generally be unable to cope successfully with the responsible and challenging tasks awaiting them . . .' Recruitment had again to be directed to the course for the Higher Primary Teachers' Certificate, representing two years of training after the Junior Certificate examination in Form III.

Accommodation

Classroom accommodation in African schools is generally inadequate. Some of it is good. Much of it is temporarily acceptable. Much is quite unfit for school use. Most of it is badly overcrowded, at least during certain hours of the day. Toilet accommo-

dation, at least by standards applicable in White schools, would seem to be, in most cases, seriously inadequate; in rural reserve schools, even very large schools, it may be non-existent. Financing of school buildings is usually on a Rand for Rand basis. The local Bantu school board raises half the cost (± R1 400) of the proposed classroom from the parents. The project is then approved by the Department if funds are available and when the building is about roof high the Department authorises the payment of the government's R700 to the school board concerned. In towns in White areas the municipality, after obtaining approval of the plans from the Department of Bantu Administration, may erect lower primary schools in its African townships and recover the parents' half of the cost by levies on house rentals. The standard Bantu Education classroom has a cement floor, no ceiling and scanty fittings. R700 per classroom is a large sum for parents living, in most cases, below the bread line.

In rural reserves where parents cannot always raise such sums, school for many children is a wretched wattle-and-daub hut, grimy and dark (windows cost more than mud walls) with a leaking roof and no sanitation. Some classes, for lack of even this accommodation, may be conducted, of necessity, in the open air.

Sanitary conditions at too many rural reserve schools reduce prescribed lessons on such topics as 'breeding places for flies which cause diseases such as enteric, stomach diseases, typhus and sore eyes'[31] to exhortations of the type: 'Don't do as I do: do as I say.'

End of school feeding

School feeding was an early casualty. It was restricted in 1949 to schools which had participated in the scheme before 1 April of that year, and the amount voted for the service (R1 740 000) was not to be increased after that date.[32] The end came early in the Bantu Education era. It was announced[33] that at the beginning of 1956 African school boards would be required to decide 'whether the school feeding would be continued in the schools under their jurisdiction, or whether the funds should be used, instead, for the extension of educational facilities. The Department advised the latter course.' Of the R1 282 974 voted for school feeding in 1955-56, R398 298 was diverted to the building of classrooms. After a further heavy diversion of feeding funds to classrooms the Minister of Native Affairs put the case very persuasively in parliament:[34] 'At the present time the feeding scheme is in operation only in 20 per cent of the school board

areas, and I have no doubt that without any pressure being brought to bear upon them they will also abandon it. Rather than giving this double benefit to a handful of children they would also prefer to see that the amount involved is spread out more fairly; in other words to make room for new pupils.'

They were persuaded. The vote has disappeared. Its disappearance is deeply regrettable: there is a high incidence of death in the African population from diseases associated with malnutrition such as gastro-enteritis and kwashiorkor in the very young, and tuberculosis. Deaths from tuberculosis in 1970 numbered 824 among Whites, 6 608 among Coloured, 957 among Indians and 55 398 among Africans.[35] (The African population is *four* times as large as the White.) There is also evidence of harmful effects of protein deficiency on intellectual growth.

The churches receive notice

In August 1954 the Secretary for Native Affairs advised those in charge of teacher-training institutions — the great majority of which were conducted by missions — that the government had decided that the training of all teachers for government and government-aided schools should in future be conducted in Departmental training institutions only. Managements of mission training colleges were invited to say whether they proposed (a) to rent or sell their schools to the Department, or (b) to close the teacher-training school and, instead, conduct a primary or secondary school in the buildings. If they were not prepared to do either, they might train teachers for their own schools entirely at their own expense, but the Department would not necessarily employ teachers so trained.[36]

At the same time, letters were sent to all superintendents or managers of aided mission schools inviting them to state by the end of the year whether they wished (i) to retain control of their schools as private, unaided institutions; (ii) to retain control of them as aided institutions, with the subsidy reduced to 75 per cent of the salaries of approved teachers; or (iii) to relinquish control of them to Bantu community organisations. Whatever their choice, the Minister might in his discretion decide for transfer to a Bantu community.[37]

In June 1955, however, the Minister announced in parliament[38] that subsidies for aided mission schools would be speedily ended. Until 31 March 1956 subsidies would be 75 per cent of the salaries of approved teachers; thereafter until 31 December 1956 the proportion would be 50 per cent; for 1957 it would be 25 per cent,

and thereafter no subsidies would be paid. In 1957 churches which wished to retain control of their schools as unaided institutions were informed that they must apply for registration as private schools. If granted registration, they would have to follow Departmental syllabuses. They might draw up their own syllabus for religious instruction, but it would have to be submitted for Departmental approval.[39]

For most of the churches it was the end of the road. It is beyond the material resources of any church in the 1970s to provide education for great masses of very poor children without grants-in-aid from the state as tax-raising authority. That the churches should make such financial provision on such short notice was an impossible requirement. Even had the money been available, there was no guarantee that they would be permitted for very long to continue their work. Many of the churches had already had to abandon cherished schools because they happened to be situated in areas allocated to Whites in terms of the Group Areas Act. They accepted the inevitable and surrendered or closed their schools.

The Catholic Church and some very few non-Catholic school management committees decided to maintain their schools as private schools as long as possible. In 1970, out of 10 125 schools for Africans there were only 420 church schools, of which 266 were in Natal.[40] Quantitatively the church schools are now an insignificant minority of the schools in African education. (This is in marked contrast to the situation in Coloured Education where church schools are still aided and still the vast majority of all schools, but there, as it happens, the majority of church schools are controlled by churches well disposed to 'the country's policy of *apartheid*'.)[41] Qualitatively, however, the church schools serving Africans still hold an honourable place, as the following analysis of Senior Certificate examination results in the Natal region in 1970 indicates.[41A]

Table C

*Distribution of candidates**

	No. of candidates	*M.1*	*M.*	*S.C.*	*F.*
Government schools	305	13	141	96	55
Community schools	115	—	34	37	44
Church schools	126	7	75	26	18
	546	20	250	159	117

Table D

Percentage distribution

		M.1	*M.*	*S.C.*	*F.*
Government schools	100	4,26	46,23	31,48	18,03
Community schools	100	—	29,57	32,17	38,26
Church schools	100	5,56	59,52	20,64	14,28

* M.1 = First Class Matriculation
M. = Matriculation, but not in First Class
S.C. = Senior Certificate without Matriculation exemption
F. = Fail

The surviving church schools are under severe financial stress. Several have recently had to close down because of lack of funds. If grant-aided to the extent of teachers' salaries, they could still provide sound education for African children at less expense to the state than education of similar quality in any alternative class of schools that might take their place. At a time when educational provision for Africans is so grossly inadequate it would be deplorable if such efficient schools were to have to close because of denial of such grants-in-aid.

Cost of Bantu Education to parents

The Bantu Education vote provides for a supply of readers in Afrikaans, English and the vernacular for primary classes. As the estimated expenditure on such books, plus library books, for the year 1971-2 is R1 024 000, the estimated expenditure per pupil might be about 45 cents. The actual numbers of these books found in the schools is, it follows, quite inadequate. All other books and stationery are bought by the parents. The table shows, for primary classes, average costs as given by principals, and for secondary forms the amounts given in a government school prospectus.

Table E

Sub A	50c to 75c	Std VI	R4,50 — R5,50
„ B	R1 to R1,50	Form I	R20
Std I	R1,50 — R3	II	R30
II	R3 — R3,50	III	R12
III	R3 — R4	Pre-IV	R12
IV	R3,50 — R4,50	IV	R40
V	R4,20 — R5,00	V	R15

Building fund and private teachers fund contributions may amount to R2 per annum and school fund contributions from R1 to R4. Some of these payments are levies, some are 'supposed to be voluntary but we get it from them all'. The 'homeland-orientated' policy, by directing new high-school development away from the cities and into the 'homelands', restricts the educational opportunities of children of the most highly educated and advanced Africans who are generally to be found in the urban areas. If they cannot find local high school places they must go off to distant boarding schools — if they can afford it — or leave school.

Maintenance costs

The greatest item of expense in keeping a child at school is his maintenance and, especially at secondary level, the forgoing of his possible earnings if he had gone to work to supplement the meagre family income. African parents are variously at a disadvantage under this heading.

(i) In Natal at least, African children used to be admitted to school at the age of six years. Now they must be seven, and must produce birth certificates. Seven years is one year or more after the age of admission for White children. This late admission involves at least an extra year of maintenance before any particular standard is reached.
(ii) The Bantu Education course extends over 13 years, unlike the 12-year course for children of other races.
(iii) Following on the deterioration in the qualifications of secondary teachers, African high schools now have an additional class, Form Pre-IV, or the Special Form. This consists of bright pupils who have passed the Junior Certificate examination well, *but at poorly staffed secondary schools where no instruction was available in Mathematics, or other key subject for their proposed matriculation course*. In order to proceed to matriculation they must now give up a year to intensive study of the missing subject at high school before entering Form IV in the following year. Advancing normally through school, the White pupil can matriculate at 17 or 18 years of age, the African at 20.

A look inside some schools

Before discussing such general topics as examination achievement, syllabuses, language requirements, media of instruction, it is proposed to illustrate the impact of the financial and other restrictions on the internal economy of a representative number

of schools, mostly in Pietermaritzburg and environs, briefly visited last year in the helpful company of an inspector of schools.[41B]

To begin with, some explanatory notes on special terms and abbreviations to be used:

Double sessions: Reference has already been made to the double-session system, as announced by the Minister in 1954. The official time-table[42] shows a first session of 2¼ hours (8 — 10.30, less a 15-minute break) followed by a joint session of 50 minutes attended by both first-session and second-session children. At 11.20 the first-session children go home and the second-session children stay for instruction until 1.50 pm (less a 15-minute break). Each class thus has only 2¼ hours of instruction in something approaching normal class conditions. The joint session packs ±100 children into a classroom designed for 50, and is less useful. As African children are admitted to school later than other children and will leave school very much earlier, the shortened school day is the more to be regretted. Where the double-session system is used in the Standards the loss is much greater. There the short day takes the place of the 5½-hour day prescribed at that level. The children are virtual educational half-timers. The system was condemned by the Transkeian Commission in 1962[42A] as a cause of lower primary wastage, but still flourishes in 1972.

Platoon classes: In higher primary schools where a teacher is available for each class, but not a classroom for each class, a classroom may be used by two classes or 'platoons' in succession. Platoon A attends from 7 am till 11.45 am (less a 15-minute break) and Platoon B from 11.45 am until 4.30 pm (less a 15-minute break). Instruction time for each class is thus 4½ hours instead of the usual 5½.

Sub A: Substandard A, the first school year. Grade 1.

Sub B: Substandard B, the second school year. Grade 2.

L.P.: Lower Primary School, with four classes, Sub A and B and Standards I and II.

H.P.: Higher Primary School, Standards III, IV, V and VI.

Combined: Combined Primary School, with eight classes (Sub A to Standard VI), or six classes, (Sub A to Standard IV).

L.C.: Leaving Certificate. A certificate awarded to candidates for the Std VI Certificate who fail to pass the examination in the 1st or the 2nd class and thus fail to qualify for promotion to Form I but who attain a lower standard considered worthy of being distinguished from outright failure. In this way 80 per cent of a Std VI group may 'pass', but only 40 per cent be promoted. Introduced in 1960 to eliminate the weaker 'passes' from secondary schools.[43] A similar step was taken at Junior Certificate level in 1963 when a new Third Class Pass was introduced which did not qualify the holder for promotion to Form IV.[44]

Secondary: Secondary School for the three lower secondary classes, (Forms I, II and III). Form III pupils write the Junior Certificate examination.
High School: Secondary School with classes up to Form V, i.e. Senior Certificate and Matriculation level.
The regular school course thus lasts 13 years.

Schools A to Q briefly characterised in the following pages are in the areas of the Pietermaritzburg Urban Bantu School Board, the Edendale Board and the Pietermaritzburg Rural Board.

As the table indicates, the schools within the White municipality have the most generous supply of teachers, those in the peri-urban Edendale area the next best and those out in the rural reserve the worst.

Table F

Pupils and teachers — Community Primary Schools, April 1971[42B]

Board	*Schools*	*Pupils*	*Subsidised teachers*	*Ratios*
Pietermaritzburg Urban ...	5	3 617	62	1 : 58
Edendale	8	8 987	125	1 : 72
Pietermaritzburg Rural ...	28	18 646	208	1 : 89

Eight privately-paid teachers bring the ratio in Edendale to 1 : 68, and 17 privately-paid teachers bring the ratio in the Rural Board's area to 1 : 83.

Table G

Pupils and teachers: Community Secondary Schools, April 1971

Board	*Schools*	*Pupils*	*Subsidised teachers*	*Ratios*
Pietermaritzburg Urban ...	1	487	12	1 : 41
Edendale (high school) ...	1	843	22	1 : 38
Pietermaritzburg Rural ...	3	1 081	22	1 : 49

A privately-paid teacher at Edendale brings the ratio at the high school to 1 : 37, and one in the rural area brings the ratio there to 1 : 47.

As well as these community schools there is a Government Commercial-Technical High School in the area, with 550 pupils and 36 teachers (1 : 15).

In the aggregate there were 34 211 pupils and 487 subsidised teachers in all these schools, giving a ratio of one subsidised teacher to 70 pupils.

School A. Combined. Pupils 1 698. Staff: 22 subsidised (1 : 77); 25 in all (1 : 68).

The school, as built in 1955, had eleven standard Bantu classrooms with brick walls, corrugated iron roof, no ceiling and cement floors. It also had a woodwork room and a domestic science room, luxuries not seen in any primary school built in this area since that date. The school must have been full in 1957 when its enrolment was 565. In that year it had 15 subsidised teachers (1 per 38 children). Today, with the roll at 1 698, it has 22 subsidised teachers (1 : 77). Three privately paid teachers help out. While the roll was increased by over 1 100 since 1957, only seven new classrooms have been built. The staffroom is used as a classroom, as is a dark and ill-ventilated enclosed passage. Both are badly overcrowded as are, indeed, all the standard classrooms which are designed to accommodate classes of 50. Toilet accommodation was about adequate in 1957.

Enrolment:

Sub A (i)	115	Std III (d)	73
Sub A (ii)	116	Std IV (a)	71
Sub B (i)	76	Std IV (b)	72
Sub B (ii)	83	Std IV (c)	72
Std I (a)	98	Std IV (d)	59
Std I (b)	83	Std V (a)	67
Std II (a)	88	Std V (b)	64
Std II (b)	86	Std V (c)	64
Std III (a)	70	Std VI (a)	66
Std III (b)	72	Std VI (b)	66
Std III (c)	72	Std VI (c)	65

Only Stds V and VI have a normal time-table. Class size here ranges from 64 to 67.

All sections of Stds III and IV are badly overcrowded, seven of the eight very badly so. Average size of class: 70.

Each section of Std III shares a classroom on the platoon basis with a section of Std IV, the one group using it in the morning and the other in the afternoon. As parents dislike the afternoon session, the classes alternate monthly, Std III coming in the morning in March, in the afternoon in April, etc.

Stds I and II have only the double-session half-day of three hours five minutes instead of the prescribed 5½ hours of instruction.

The beginners — Sub A — make their first acquaintance with school in badly overcrowded conditions — three groups of 58 and one of 57. During the 50-minute joint session there is one group of 115 and one of 116.

Library: There is the nucleus of a school library for these 1 698 children, the books just filling two 30-inch shelves in a cupboard in the headmaster's office. Better is promised.

Girls in Stds V and VI have 1½ hours cookery and 1½ hours needlework weekly, and boys 1½ hours handwork and 1½ hours gardening.

Std VI Exam Results, 1970:

1st Cl.	2nd Cl.	L.C.	Fail	Total
2	76	70	36	184

80 per cent 'pass'; 57½ per cent are eliminated from secondary education; 42½ per cent may move up to Form I.

School B. Combined (range Sub A to Std IV). Pupils 671. Staff: 4 subsidised (1 : 168); 6 in all (1 : 112).

In respect of staffing, this is the worst school seen. No teacher has passed the Junior Certificate examination. Two have the Teachers Fourth Class Certificate, two the Lower Primary and two are unqualified.

Buildings: Four dark old wattle-and-daub classrooms, and three new Bantu Education classrooms being erected on the Rand for Rand basis, the last one nearing completion.

Toilet: There is one pit latrine for the principal and his five women assistants; there are no toilet facilities for the 671 pupils.

Enrolment:

Sub A (i)	73	Teacher No. 1	Std I (i)	56	Teacher No. 4
Sub A (ii)	72	Teacher No. 1	Std I (ii)	54	Teacher No. 4
Sub A (iii)	58	Teacher No. 2	Std II (i)	53	Teacher No. 5
Sub B (i)	52	Teacher No. 2	Std II (ii)	54	Teacher No. 5
Sub B (ii)	50	Teacher No. 3	Std III	61	Teacher No. 6
Sub B (iii)	50	Teacher No. 3	Std. IV	38	Teacher No. 6

All classes except Stds III and IV work on the double-session system.

Teacher No. 1 has two shockingly large classes of beginners, 145 in the joint session.

Teacher No. 2 has two over-large classes — 110 in the joint session — and in addition has to teach the Sub A syllabus in the morning and the Sub B in the afternoon.

The classes taken by teachers 4 and 5 have the brief double-session day instead of the prescribed 5½ hours.

Teacher No. 6 — the principal — cannot possibly do justice to his class of 99 children, 61 in Std III and 38 in Std IV.

There is gross overcrowding in every classroom. When the first teacher's 145 beginners are together for the mid-morning combined period there is about 3½ sq. ft. of space per pupil. In the combined periods of the other groups it would be about 5 sq. ft.

School C. H.P. Pupils 767. Staff 10 (1 : 77).

This new Bantu Education building has nine standard classrooms but no auxiliary rooms.

Enrolment:

Std III (a)	88	Std V (a)	93
Std III (b)	91	Std V (b)	92
Std III (c)	90	Std VI (a)	61
Std IV (a)	93	Std VI (b)	62
Std IV (b)	97		

For a higher primary school (Stds III to VI) with a prescribed school day for all of 5½ hours of instruction, a teacher-pupil ratio of 1 :77 is shocking. There are not enough teachers for platoon teaching. The choice is between monster classes in unhealthy overcrowded rooms, all day and every day, and infant-style double sessions involving very heavy loss of instructional time for both first and second sessions.

Std. VI Exam Results, 1970:

1st Cl.	2nd Cl.	L.C.	Fail	Total
9	31	45	19	104

85 out of 104 'pass'; 40 qualify for Form I.

School D. L.P. Pupils 961. Staff: 10 subsidised (1 : 96); 11 in all (1 : 87).

This school in a municipal African township was erected by the Pietermaritzburg municipality to Bantu Administration specifications in 1965. Half the cost came from Bantu Administration, the other half being advanced by the municipality and recovered from the parents by a levy on the rental of township houses.

It is the best recently built lower primary school building seen. The walls are of brick and the roof of corrugated asbestos. Good window space gives good lighting. The interior walls are of brick at lower-primary friction level, making for economy in maintenance, and the rest of the walls and the ceilings are painted white. Ceilings have been fitted to carry the electric light installed as an extra because the rooms are also designed to be used for night classes. The floors are of cement. There is good blackboard space. Display boards for teaching aids would have been better than the picture rails fitted but would have cost more.

Buildings and grounds are well kept and make a generally pleasing impression. Influenced no doubt by the cheerful buildings, the staff seemed alert and energetic.

Plans for a duplicate school have been held up because it has not been possible to get government approval of tenders. As time goes on, simplifications are made, building costs rise and new higher tenders are again referred back.

Enrolment:

Sub A (i)	104	Std I (a)	81
Sub A (ii)	103	Std I (b)	82
Sub A (iii)	107	Std I (c)	84
Sub B (i)	120	Std II (a)	80
Sub B (ii)	120	Std II (b)	80

The entire school works on the double-session system. The substandard classes, particularly Sub B, are too large; those in Stds I and II are of reasonable size except when combined, but with double sessions children in the standards are practically half-timers. All rooms are overcrowded, those of the substandards shockingly so (up to 120 children in rooms built for 50) during the mid-morning combined period.

Combination may be piled on combination. On the morning of the visit two normal first-session groups were in one classroom under one teacher. A teacher was absent ill and the principal had had to go to town on official business. When the second-session classes arrived at the beginning of the 'combined' period the teacher would take her flock of over 200 children outside on the grass.

School E. L.P. Pupils 653. Staff: 11 subsidised (1 : 59); 12 in all (1 : 54).

The buildings are those of a former Indian school and consist of a new brick building and an old corrugated iron building.

The brick classrooms, with wooden floors, good blackboard space and cork display boards running the length of the back walls, are very satisfactory but for the lighting which is poor because of a broad verandah on one side — necessary protection against weather — and a row of gum trees on the other. The display boards carry lots of useful teaching aids prepared by the teachers.

Conditions are much less satisfactory in the dingy wood-and-iron 'hall' and interleading open side-rooms. The rooms are hot, ill-lit and with four classes going on there is distracting noise.

As African schools go, the school is well staffed, possibly because its enrolment is down 100 this year as a result of movements of parents from the area.

Enrolment:

Sub A (a)	83	Std I (b)	44
Sub A (b)	66	Std I (c)	44
Sub A (c)	64	Std II (a)	46
Sub B (a)	86	Std II (b)	46
Sub B (b)	83	Std II (c)	41
Std I (a)	50		

The substandards work in double sessions, but classes for both sessions are reasonably sized, teachers even allowing some slow learners to attend both sessions. Each section of Stds I and II — average size 45 — has its own teacher and works a normal school day.

School F. Combined. Pupils 1 230. Staff: 18 subsidised (1 : 68; 20 in all (1 : 61½).

Apart from serious overcrowding in many classrooms, this school is very well housed. The main building was erected in pre-Bantu Education days to house a combined primary and secondary school. It is brick-built and consists of 16 standard-size classrooms with ceilings, board floors, display boards running along the back walls and full-length blackboards, and also a bright, well-equipped handicrafts room, a headmaster's office and a staff-room. A wood-and-iron woodwork room has been added.

Building and grounds are well kept and make a favourable impression.

Staffing is, on the other hand, quite inadequate.

Enrolment:

Sub A (i)	94	Std III (b)	76
Sub A (ii)	94	Std IV (a)	69
Sub B (i)	90	Std IV (b)	68
Sub B (ii)	92	Std V (a)	54
Std I (a)	69	Std V (b)	55
Std I (b)	74	Std V (c)	55
Std II (a)	64	Std VI (a)	67
Std II (b)	66	Std VI (b)	67
Std III (a)	76		

The substandards work in double sessions, the Std III groups in platoons. The eleven groups taught as normal single classes — average size 64, range 54 to 74 — are too large for effective teaching.

Std VI Exam Results, 1970:

1st Cl.	2nd Cl.	L.C.	Fail	Total
8	48	63	14	133

89 per cent 'passed', but only 42 per cent can go on to Form I.

School G. L.P. Pupils 208. Staff: 3 (1 : 69).

This rural community was visited so that the inspector might approve of a site for the first classroom of a proposed new lower primary school to replace the present premises. The community had raised R700,00, its share of the cost of a first classroom, estimated to cost ±R1 400,00. After the site had been selected a visit was paid to the existing school about a mile away.

The accommodation is disgraceful. There are three 'classrooms':

1. A wattle-and-daub hut, approximately 12′ x 22′, with two holes in opposite walls where windows had once been fitted. Both were covered with sacking. Light and ventilation came from the open space between the top of the rear wall and the inverted V of the corrugated iron roof. Here were accommodated the 32 children in Std II.

2. A dilapidated corrugated-iron building, approximately 18′ x 21′. Seven windows, each fitted for six panes. Only seven panes of the 42 remain. Very hot, despite the 24-hour ventilation. Here were accommodated Sub A in two sessions (35 and 42) together with Std I (48), all under one teacher.

Rooms 1 and 2 belong to a church. The school uses them rent-free.

3. A large, windowless Zulu hut. Light and ventilation come only through the low doorway. There is a blackboard on an easel at the side of the doorway. The pupils sit in the dark around the circular wall of the hut. Some lessons are taken outside. Here Sub B is accommodated in double sessions (27 and 24) under an unqualified teacher.

There are no latrines, the 208 children, and presumably staff also, going to 'the bush'.

School H. Secondary (9th to 11th school year). Pupils 145. Staff: 4 (1 : 36).

This is a new secondary school opened in January 1969. There are 68 pupils in Form I, 56 in Form II and 21 in Form III.

There is no university graduate on the staff of this secondary school. All four teachers hold the Higher Primary Teachers Certificate. The principal has six or seven subject passes towards a degree. One other teacher has matriculated. The other two have the Junior Certificate as highest academic qualification.

The building is of cavity bricks made from local river sand, a sound economy. The roof is of corrugated iron, unceiled, and the floors are of cement. Light and ventilation are adequate. There is good blackboard space in each classroom but picture rails, an economy substitute for display boards, have not been much used.

Mathematics is not taught, all pupils taking General Arithmetic. The science subject taught is General Science, but there is as yet no science equipment. The school library consists of 71 English books (including a number presented by Mr. Binns, the author, and some textbooks), 22 Afrikaans books and 17 Zulu books. R100,00 has been allocated to the school for books this year.

School I. H.P. Pupils 742. Staff: 14 (1 : 49).

Enrolment:

Std III (a)	49		Std V (a)	53	
Std III (b)	48		Std V (b)	54	
Std III (c)	48		Std V (c)	52	*159*
Std III (d)	50	*195*	Std VI (a)	53	
Std IV (a)	57		Std VI (b)	55	
Std IV (b)	57		Std VI (c)	56	
Std IV (c)	56	*170*	Std VI (d)	54	*218*

With 14 classes, 14 classrooms and 15 teachers (including the Principal), this school of 742 higher primary pupils in a Pietermaritzburg African township is very lucky. The classes are all big, but the average size is only 53 and the range 48 to 57. The teachers are all qualified, 12 holding the Higher Primary Teachers Certificate and three the L.P.T.C.

In the Std VI Examination of 1970, 81 candidates out of 154 qualified for admission to secondary school, a result comfortably above the national average. 100 per cent of the candidates 'passed'.

Girls are taught some needlework in the classrooms. No other homecrafts are taught. The woodwork shop for boys was burnt out during riots in 1959 and the shell now houses two classes of an adjoining secondary school.

A small kitchen with a disused coal stove and three boilers remains as a relic of the school meals service.

School J. L.P. Pupils 871. Staff: 16 (1 : 54).

Enrolment:

Sub A (i)	86	Std I (c)	50
Sub A (ii)	88	Std I (d)	49
Sub A (iii)	84	Std II (a)	44
Sub B (i)	68	Std II (b)	44
Sub B (ii)	70	Std II (c)	44
Sub B (iii)	69	Std II (d)	44
Std I (a)	44	Std II (e)	45
Std I (b)	42		

This urban school, built about thirty years ago, is by a substantial margin the best-staffed lower primary school seen. The substandards have to be taught in double sessions, but both morning and afternoon sessions are of manageable size, the only overcrowding being during the period when first and second sessions are combined.

The accommodation is reasonably adequate, though one of the Sub A groups is taught on the verandah. The classrooms are airy, with good window space and walls about 12 ft. high, recently repainted by the municipality. The furniture is average, with backless forms for the substandards, where they are the normal issue. Old four-seater desks serve reasonably well in the standards at this school where small classes permit of some mobility.

One of the teachers has been following a special course in the elementary teaching of oral English and gave a lively demon-

stration of the method. The staff generally impressed as spirited and zealous practitioners.

Visitors to this school and to the higher primary school next door (*School I*) must receive an unduly favourable impression of the general level of educational provision for Africans.

School K. L.P. Pupils 1 348. Staff: 18 subsidised (1 : 75); 20 in all (1 : 67).

Of the twenty teachers, five have the Higher Primary and 15 the Lower Primary certificate.

This school is a warren of 20 overcrowded rooms, most of them part of a long defunct training college which was erected well over a century ago. As well as the old college classrooms, present classrooms include old dormitories and staff bedrooms, also living rooms and bedrooms in what was the old manse, a small ill-lit rondavel, and a storeroom of about 350 sq. ft. The 19th century rooms have the advantage of high ceilings but they are dark and grimy.

In contrast with the dingy and depressing buildings were the extensive and well-kept school vegetable gardens and the atmosphere of purposeful industry which pervaded the school. Commenting on some unusually well-filled exercise books, the principal said that the teachers concerned were often at school at 6.30 am and until 5 pm dealing with the mass of corrections.

Enrolment:

Sub A (a)	105		Std I (a)	55	
Sub A (a)	107		Std I (b)	49	
Sub A (c)	116		Std I (c)	50	
Sub A (d)	112	*440*	Std I (d)	54	
Sub B (a)	70		Std I (e)	46	*254*
Sub B (b)	77		Std II (a)	71	
Sub B (c)	76		Std II (b)	56	
Sub B (d)	71	*294*	Std II (c)	58	
			Std II (d)	60	
			Std II (e)	57	
			Std II (f)	58	*360*

The substandards work in double sessions.

Generally speaking, the parents are poor, few of the fathers earning more than R30,00 per month. Most of the mothers also work, usually as washerwoman or part-time domestic servants, earning ±R10,00 per month, less bus fares.

A milk and soup operation is run in co-operation with Padmro, a private charitable organisation, milk being served to children aged 7 and 8 years and soup to those aged 9 years and over. 400 children pay 1c a day for the milk or soup; in addition, 60 particularly needy children receive free milk and 60 older children free soup.

Inadequate numbers of readers were available in most classrooms. These are supplied on official requisition, but often in smaller numbers than those indicated on the requisition form. There was over a year's delay between requisition and supply, books requisitioned in May 1970 being expected in August 1971.

School L. H.P. Pupils 1 224. Staff: 19 subsidised (1 : 64); 20 in all (1 : 61).

This school has 18 class units, 12 housed in classrooms and six in various rented premises in the neighbourhood.

The average size of the five Std VI classes is 55, of the four Std V classes is 70, of the four Std IV classes is 74 and of the five Std III classes is 75.

A check on the number of government supplied readers on stock in Std III (c) showed 42 English books, 37 Afrikaans books and a small surplus of Zulu books. There are 77 children in the class.

Std VI Exam Results, 1970:

1st Cl.	2nd Cl.	L.C.	Fail	Total
16	103	84	10	213

95 per cent 'passes'. 56 per cent go up and 44 per cent are 'eliminated' from Form I. A very good result in the circumstances.

School M. L.P. Pupils 1 342. Staff: 13 subsidised (1 : 103); 14 in all (1 : 96).

This school consists of a block of three regular classrooms and about six casual structures scattered over some square miles of country. The classroom block and one subsidiary structure were seen.

The three classrooms are austerity jobs with no display boards or picture rails. With no ceilings and brick lower walls there is poor reflection of light. It would have been better if the upper walls had been painted white instead of the deep yellow chosen. Three sections of Std II occupy these three classrooms. They work in double sessions.

The one subsidiary structure seen was a wattle-and-daub hut, with too little window space, walls so decayed that one wondered how they stood, and a rusted and much perforated iron roof. This wretched hut was 'school' to 245 beginners with their two teachers:

Sub A (i)	134	(66, 68)
Sub A (ii)	111	(54, 57).

School N. Secondary. Pupils 554. Staff: 9 subsidised (1 : 62); 10 in all (1 : 55½).

There is no university graduate teacher on the staff of this secondary school. Quantitatively, too, the school is very badly understaffed.

Its accommodation is also grossly inadequate. There are five standard classrooms. In addition, two church halls at some distance from the school, and from each other, are in use. A new block of five classrooms is roof-high. Needs for the more distant future include a science lab., an office, a staff room, a storeroom and a latrine block. At present there are three toilet seats, one for the staff and two for approximately 300 teenage girls. At the mid-morning interval the boys set off in an impressive column for a nearby clump of wattles.

Enrolment:

Form I (a)	76	Form II (c)	85
Form I (b)	115	Form III (a)	51
Form II (a)	88	Form III (b)	51
Form II (b)	88		

Average size of classes: Form I, 95; Form II, 87; Form III, 51.

There are no desks for the 115 pupils in Form I (b). They sit on backed forms and have rows of small backless forms in front of them on which they pile their books and on which they write, unless they find it easier to write with the books in their laps.

The library is 'not functioning yet'. There is no science laboratory, but there is some science equipment, including one balance, in a cupboard in the classroom which also serves as the headmaster's office.

The course for the Junior Certificate consists of the three languages, Arithmetic, Social Studies, General Science and Agriculture. Mathematics is not taught.

Generally speaking, Agriculture is not a stimulating subject for study by urban or peri-urban children preparing for city life.

As taught without laboratory or field work, at schools as poorly equipped as this and to classes as large as these, it becomes a series of bookish exercises in the memorisation of not particularly relevant fact.

Cost of books amounts, in many cases, to more than a month's parental wages. Sixteen books are required by each pupil in Form II. By the 7th May, each pupil had obtained, on the average, only nine books. This failure retards progress. In three classes totalling 261 pupils there were only 15 Arithmetic textbooks. The textbook favoured is apparently being reprinted.

J.C. Exam Results, 1970:

1st Cl.	2nd Cl.	L.C.	Fail	Total
0	11	15	73	99

Only 11 out of 99 qualify to pass up to Form IV. As none have passed in the First Class, and none have Mathematics, admission to a high school for even these 11 cannot be taken for granted. With the staffing and accommodation provided, little better was to be anticipated. Yet these children had above-average scholastic potential. Otherwise they could not have passed the Std VI and other hurdles. Their maintenance over the three-year course — to the age of eighteen years — must have been a heavy burden on poor labouring families. Parental frustration in the area must be deep.

School O. Combined. Pupils 1 612. Staff: 16 subsidised (1 : 101); 18 in all (1 : 90).

Accommodation: 5 brick or stone classrooms; 7 daub classrooms with iron roofing; 2 daub classrooms with grass roofing. Total: 14. Toilet facilities: none.

The substandards and Stds I and II work the double-session day:

Three teachers teach 392 children in Sub A.
Two teachers teach 339 children in Sub B.
Three teachers teach 340 children in Std I.
Two teachers teach 156 children in Std II.
Two teachers teach 105 children in Std III.
Two teachers teach 120 children in Std IV.
One teacher teaches 75 children in Std V.
Two teachers teach 85 children in Std VI.

Std VI Exam Results, 1970:

1st Cl.	2nd Cl.	L.C.	Fail	Total
0	12	27	20	59

66 per cent 'passes'; 20 per cent promotion passes.

School P. Combined. Pupils 2 080. Staff: 28 (1 : 74).

This was a government school, i.e. a school provided and maintained by the province, until 1954. It is well-built, well fitted and includes a woodwork shop and a homecrafts room. It is now grossly overcrowded.

Staffing: In 1957, there were 894 pupils on the roll and 22 subsidised teachers. In 1971, with 2 080 on the roll, there are only 28, including the principal, a woodwork teacher and a homecrafts teacher. The teacher-pupil ratio has deteriorated from 1 : 41 to 1 : 74. All teachers have at least the LPTC qualification; academically, three have passed Senior Certificate, twelve Junior Certificate, ten Std VII and three Std VI. These are modest qualifications.

Enrolment:

Sub A (i)	110	Std III (c)	70
Sub A (ii)	110	Std IV (a)	69
Sub A (iii)	110	Std IV (b)	68
Sub B (i)	108	Std IV (c)	69
Sub B (ii)	112	Std V (a)	55
Sub B (iii)	110	Std V (b)	56
Std I (a)	88	Std V (c)	57
Std I (b)	92	Std V (d)	56
Std I (c)	87	Std VI (a)	66
Std II (a)	122	Std VI (b)	66
Std II (b)	127	Std VI (c)	66
Std III (a)	70	Std VI (d)	66
Std III (b)	70		

Every class in this school is working under unfavourable conditions.

The substandards work in double sessions. In addition, the subdivided classes are much too large, and the average class unit of 110 in the combined period — in a classroom built for 50 — represents crude disregard of educational standards.

Stds I and II must also work in double sessions with halving of the effective school day.

Stds III and IV work on the platoon system. All the groups are far too big (68, 70).

Stds V and VI work a normal school day. The Std VI groups are far too big and teachers cannot give the individual attention which is so specially necessary in the case of children whose earlier

schooling has been in unsatisfactory conditions throughout. In spite of these handicaps, Std VI examination results in 1970 were better than the national average:

1st Cl.	2nd Cl.	L.C.	Fail	Total
22	101	73	37	233

84 per cent 'pass'. 53 per cent qualify for advancement to secondary education as compared with the national average of 44 per cent. While the score does credit to the school, its implications for the standard of the examination are depressing.

Having inherited a homecrafts room and a woodwork shop, the school is able to offer instruction in these subjects to Stds V and VI.

School Q. Combined. Pupils 1 051. Staff: 13 subsidised (1 : 81); 14 in all (1 : 75).

The school has the free use of a stone church building which is also used by the church on Sundays. It is solidly constructed but there are not enough windows in relation to width for school purposes. With its cement floor it is very cold in winter. It houses three classes.

There are seven wattle-and-daub rooms on the main site, all of them in decay. The sky shows through large holes in two grass roofs. Two wattle-and-daub rooms at some distance from main site and from each other were not seen. There is no toilet accommodation.

Five classes were being conducted outside on the grass at the time of the visit.

Enrolment:

Sub A (i)	87	Std II	103
Sub A (ii)	87	Std III	94
Sub A (iii)	88	Std IV	71
Sub B (i)	75	Std V	86
Sub B (ii)	75	Std VI (a)	73
Std I (a)	69	Std VI (b)	74
Std I (b)	69		

All lower primary classes work in double sessions. The average class size in Stds III to VI is 80 pupils.

This school is working under shockingly bad conditions in respect of both staffing and accommodation. Its furniture is also inadequate and, like most schools seen, it has quite inadequate numbers of the books which the Department provides.

As in many schools seen, the amount of written work on record in the exercise books seemed small for the time of the year. Writing in cramped conditions in overcrowded classrooms — or sitting on the grass — is uncomfortable. Slates leave no records. Teachers who have to correct sets of 80 books tend to set fewer exercises than teachers who have sets of 30, particularly when, as is normal in Bantu primary schools, they have no 'free periods' for corrections or preparation.

Std VI Exam Results, 1970:

1st Cl.	2nd Cl.	L.C.	Fail	Total
0	28	45	8	81

Ninety per cent 'pass'; 35 per cent qualify for promotion.

Coverage

Time and various departmental commitments set a limit to the number of schools which could be visited. Space limitations here make it impossible to record details of every school visited. Descriptions of set-up at individual schools have therefore had to be confined to the primary and junior secondary levels where more than 99 per cent of all African children are enrolled, as indicated below:

1970 enrolments in percentages: all Bantu Schools

Type of school	*Percentage of total enrolment*
L.P.	68,70
H.P.	26,54
Forms I to III	4,04
Forms IV and V	0,32
Tech. and Trade	0,14
Teacher Training	0,26

Minority stages and types of schooling have had to be treated more generally, though not, I hope, inadequately in terms of the space available.

The community primary schools described include all such schools visited which prepare candidates for the Standard VI examination.

High standards in examinations?

If the Community schools whose internal structures have been outlined are representative of primary and junior secondary schools generally, how does one account for the alleged remarkable examination achievements which are proclaimed from time to time? Let us see.

The editorial in the *Bantu Education Journal* of April 1971, though less strident than much Bantu Education publicity, may be taken as fairly typical of attitudes on examination results. It expresses itself as 'very satisfied' with the 1970 results in two Departmental examinations (Std VI and Junior Certificate). It is 'especially proud of the success that most schools achieved in the matriculation examination'. In the Std VI examination, of 110 000 candidates, 82 000 (74,5 per cent) 'were successful'. In the Junior Certificate examination, of 25 000 candidates, 17 200 (69 per cent) 'passed'. In the matriculation examination, of 2 850 candidates, 1 850 (65 per cent) 'passed'. Then 'factors contributing' to the 'high standards' are suggested: (a) 'today we have better-trained teachers than 20 years ago', (b) 'our in-service training centre is one of the best in the country', and, inevitably, (c) 'because of the use of the mother-tongue medium in the primary school, the pupils obtain a sound foundation on which to build'.

Later, the editorial points out that the Zulus of Natal (where Bantu Education's standards had been criticised!) had done far better in the matriculation examination than all the other provinces and homelands, and mentions exceptional Natal achievements: four schools had scored, respectively, 100 per cent, 95 per cent, 97 per cent (this school, a church school, actually also scored 100 per cent), and 100 per cent. It continues, 'According to statistics at our disposal, the average percentage of passes for the Zulu in Natal before 1955 was never more than 35 per cent.' The writer had checked his statistics carelessly. That mine of statistical information, the Eiselen Commission's Report — of which Bantu Education surely must have a copy — records on p. 91 the latest matriculation figures available at the time of its compilation. Natal's 'percentage passed' stands as 68.5 for 1947 and 64,5 for 1948.

Now some comments on the earlier statements:

(i) A national average of 74,5 per cent 'passes' in Std. VI is not a cause for satisfaction. Among the schools described earlier in this article are eight primary or combined schools (schools A, C, F, I, L, O, P and Q) with Std VI classes, most of them working in conditions so deplorable as to make a satisfactory standard of school work impossible. Yet their average 'pass' mark in the same 1970 Std VI examination was 87,6 per cent (1 017 'passes' out of 1 161). It cannot be a cause for satisfaction that these eight schools should thus show themselves, in terms of Bantu Education's own examination, superior in scholastic achievement to the national average.

The average percentage of 'passes' of these eight schools is also higher than the average (75 per cent) for the Natal region, presumably because the eight were made up of a disproportionately large number (5) of schools in the urban and peri-urban areas, and a disproportionately small number (3 — schools C, O, and Q) in the more populous but more deprived rural reserve. As a group, therefore, the eight schools described must be considered appreciably superior to average Bantu Education schools.

(ii) Similarly, a 69 per cent 'pass' mark in the Junior Certificate examination gives little cause for satisfaction. Only 42,5 per cent earn promotion passes. (The standard of a Third Class pass is discussed in *Theoria* 32).[45]

(iii) The Matriculation results of 1970. I deal first with the factors alleged to be contributing to 'high standards'.

(a) *'Better trained teachers'*. In view of what has been said about the qualifications of secondary teachers, this factor may be dealt with briefly. The Annual Report (1969) refers very delicately to the situation:[46] *'Generally the qualifications are not up to the ideal of graduate standard for all positions at secondary schools.'* Let us be more precise. The proportion of graduates, White and African, on African secondary school staffs has dropped since Eiselen-Commission days from 45 to 22 per cent. The proportion of graduates among African secondary teachers, 40 per cent as recorded in Eiselen, was 36 per cent in 1961; 25,5 per cent in 1965; and 18.5 per cent (459 out of 2 477) in 1969.[47]

(b) *'In-service training'*. Only 302 teachers had the benefit of in-service training courses. The number is small, and the short courses held cannot be regarded as compensating for the lack of full degree courses.

(c) *The 'sound foundation' from mother-tongue primary education.* This must be dismissed as another routine attempt to make propaganda, without adducing evidence, for the debatable cause of mother-tongue medium *throughout the eight years of primary school.* No causal connection is shown between medium of instruction and comparatively good results or comparatively bad results.

Let us now proceed to consider whether the matriculation results of 1970 indicate a high standard of instruction in African schools. In the Republic, of 2 608 Bantu Education candidates,

869 (33,3 per cent) passed with Matriculation exemption (336 of these with passes in Mathematics and 254 in Physical Science), 859 (32,9 per cent) passed without earning matriculation exemption, and 880 (33,7 per cent) failed. I shall discuss the Natal (Zulu) distribution in a later paragraph.

As a basis for comparison, let us consider the results recorded of White students in 1968, the latest year for which details are readily available, and a quite normal year. Of 36 940 full-time candidates, (13 187 per cent) matriculated (i.e. qualified for university entrance), 17 520 (47,4 per cent) gained plain senior certificates and 6 233 (16,9 per cent) failed. The White students score substantially better, as in the light of their many visible advantages one might anticipate.

But there are other factors which might make one hesitate to take a better average White score for granted. The 13 187 successful White matriculants represented about 20 per cent of the 66 000 White children who entered school for the first time in January 1957. The 17 520 who gained plain senior certificates represented another 26,5 per cent of that original intake. So nearly half of the original quite unselected intake acquired a senior certificate of some kind while still at school. Ability ranged from excellent to merely average.

The 2 608 Bantu Education candidates of 1970, on the other hand, were a very highly selected group. They amounted to 0,7 per cent of the 361 144 African children who entered school for the first time in January 1958. They had been screened time after time for educational achievement, informally when those at the tail of their classes decided, or had it suggested to them, that they had little to gain from further attendance, formally by examination at the end of Std II in 1961, formally again in the Std VI examination in 1965 when 52 per cent of those who had come so far were eliminated from secondary education. They were further screened by the achievement tests of the Department's psychological services when they applied for places in Form I. Dropping their casualties at the end of Form I and Form II, the survivors reached the Junior Certificate barrier in 1968, where only 39½ per cent of them gained promotion passes, and only 8 per cent First Class passes. Leaving out of account the informal selection processes, and relying only on the Std VI and J.C. examinations, the First Class J.C. passes could represent more or less the top 4 per cent of the Std VI of 1965, and all promotion passes more or less the top 19 per cent, though of course with so many variable factors in play one cannot quantify precisely. There would be further screening in

applications for scarce Form IV places, and internally at the end of Form IV. All things considered, the African senior certificate candidates of 1970 were a very highly selected group indeed, and their examination achievement, one-third matriculation, one-third gaining plain senior certificates and one-third failing, is no testimonial to the quality of their schooling over their long school years. Subject to a small allowance for individual examination upsets, they should all have matriculated. That they did not do so is no particular reflection on the devotion to duty of their high-school teachers, most of whom were ill-equipped to build on eight years of unsound primary school foundation.

The Zulu achievement

The Natal (Zulu) achievement in 1970 was, as noted in the *B.E.J.* editorial, exceptionally good: 78,6 per cent 'passes', 49,4 per cent full matriculation passes. I suggest three factors which contributed to this result: (i) the survival, in Natal, of church schools with a long tradition of academic achievement; (ii) the stimulus given by their success to the newer, and now larger, government high schools; and (iii) the large number of substantial bursaries awarded by the Natal Region of the S.A. Institute of Race Relations, and other Natal organisations, which enable many intelligent children of poor parents to go forward to matriculation.

The quality of the Natal performance owes much to five particularly successful schools which scored not less than 70 per cent of full matriculation passes each. These five schools entered 204 of the 546 candidates entered by the 18 Natal high schools, i.e. 37 per cent of the candidates. They scored 100 per cent of the first-class matriculation passes, 60 per cent of other matriculation passes, 18 per cent of the plain Senior Certificates, and 5 per cent of the failures. Obviously, they are not typical schools.

Two are government schools, three Church schools. I visited two of each. Comparatively, they are well housed. The Church schools are not new, but they are not overcrowded. Of the two government schools, one in 1957 took over as its main teaching block the new building just erected by a missionary board to celebrate its famous school's centenary. It is not far from Durban. The other government high school is a new building of comparatively inexpensive construction but well designed and functionally satisfactory. With two science laboratories and other practical rooms, a pleasant staffroom, and offices for the principal and vice-principal, it is the best Bantu Education school building seen. It also seemed the best equipped. It stands on a pleasant site adjoining

the 'tribal' University of Zululand and presents to visiting academics a pleasing example of the positive side of separate development. It has an all-African staff. The older government school — a larger institution, is enterprisingly run. Its standard equipment, like that of the others of the five, may best be described as adequate, but it has acquired, largely by its own fund-raising, a language laboratory, and it issues its quarterly newspaper. It must be quite a publicity asset. Pride of place on the front page of a recent issue went to a photograph of two 'distinguished guests' — a judge and a doctor on shore from a luxury liner. Both gentlemen — Afro-Americans — 'were taken on a tour of our school' and 'were impressed by all they saw'. If they had inquired whether the school was a typical African school they would of course have had quite truthful answers. But one wonders whether they inquired.

Two of the Church schools are financially helped by religious teachers who receive no cash payment. The third has a racially-integrated staff remunerated on a common salary scale. *The teacher-pupil ratio at the five schools ranges from 1 : 18 to 1 : 21.* With, on the average, two applications for every place, only very good students need be accepted.

Consider, in contrast, the Community high school seen near Pietermaritzburg, under pressure from the parents, among whom Board and staff live, to admit their academically qualified children *who must get in or abandon their schooling,* and the school's resulting teacher-pupil ratio of 1 : 37.

In the circumstances

Bantu Education is as good as the circumstances permit, the overriding circumstance being the allocation, for the education of 70 per cent of our population, of about one half per cent of the Gross National Product. (In 1969 we spent R49,9 m on Bantu Education out of a G.N.P. of R10 889m). Because of this financial policy, and the universal skimping which arises from it, sound ideas suffer long delays before finding any, or at best, inadequate expression. The Department has been aware for many years of the need for in-service training of existing teachers. It is good, in the circumstances, that an in-service training centre should have been set up in 1969, and that in that year 302 teachers should have derived benefit. For many years, the Department has realised the desirability of enabling able African children to jump from Std V to Form I and reach Senior Certificate in twelve years (like White, Indian and Coloured children) instead of 13. It is good,

in the circumstances, that the 1969 Report should record the administration of tests at Std V level with a view to the continuation of the promotion of selected Std V pupils to Form I at *four* secondary schools.

A danger is that, anxious to give credit where credit is due, one may come to regard what is *good in the circumstances* as just plain *good*.

Consider the 1968 Report.[5] The Department, it states frankly, would need, for its 2 400 000 pupils, a staff of 60 000 teachers for a teacher-pupil ratio (i.e. 1 : 40, not an extravagant assessment) which could be considered in 'any way satisfactory'. It has only 41 000, of whom, the government provides 33 500 and the other 7 500 are privately paid, mainly untrained persons. So 'the Bantu teacher has to carry an abnormally heavy burden', large numbers of them 'an almost superhuman task'. So 'emergency measures' continue. The Department 'is conscious of the struggle that they have to wage' and has 'the greatest appreciation for the devotion and diligence that they show under extremely difficult circumstances'. But 'their sacrifices are not in vain as they succeed in giving their pupils a good basic training and the results in public examinations such as Std VI, J.C. and Matriculation are better than ever before'. The Department is 'very proud of the quality of work being produced by its teachers, with the backing of an equally devoted and efficient inspectorate'.

Now it is right and proper that the Department should seek to boost the morale of its outnumbered troops thus fighting a superhuman fight on low rations and with inadequate weaponry. 'Never . . . was so much owed by so many to so few' is a stirring precedent. But such rhetoric, if not backed up by adequate material reinforcement, must soon show diminishing returns.

There is also the danger that the Department, in its zeal to sustain morale, may overpersuade itself. It does not always escape this danger. Consider the tabulated statement in the Introduction to the 1969 Report of 'aspects where the Department has achieved particular success'.

'Bantu pupils who have reached Matriculation standard, or have completed training as teachers in a two-year course after Std VIII, show proof of the following':

1. *They use clear, neat, uniform and easily legible handwriting* . . . (Possibly, though page 9 of the Report records: 'There is a decline in the standard of Writing.' But what a no. 1 achievement to boast of after 13 years of schooling!)

2. *They write their mother-tongue fluently and correctly, and speak it faultlessly.*
   (High praise, when the median Senior Certificate Bantu A-language mark is about 52 per cent. Would the writer apply the words *fluently, correctly, faultlessly,* to the language of White pupils earning about 52 per cent of the marks for their A-language in this examination?)
3. *They have no need to be ashamed of their knowledge of both official languages whether in written or in spoken form.*
   (Not, whatever the standard, if they have done their best in the circumstances.)
4. *Most of them are also able to converse freely in at least one other Bantu language.*
   (I think this a big exaggeration. In any case, it seems an extraordinary claim in support of the efficacy of Bantu Education. Its pupils are not taught a second Bantu language at school. They may pick up some facility in one outside, but the separatist ethnic ordering of schools and housing areas is making it more and more difficult to do so.)
5. *When they work with figures they are neat and accurate to such an extent that they have gained recognition for the outstanding quality of the work they perform in this sphere.*
   (The writer should have kept his feet on the ground by checking with the Junior Certificate Arithmetic results recorded in the same Report. Junior Certificate is the highest level at which Arithmetic is examined in the high school. The median mark gained is shown as 36,5 per cent.)[49]

The Transkeian Commission

The Transkeian Commission, reporting in 1962, when the teacher-pupil ratio was about 1 : 55, said, *inter alia: 'The Commission's own observations in those schools visited seem to indicate an almost frighteningly low standard of education in all subjects.'*[50]

The appointment of another, visibly impartial, Commission would seem overdue.

Some of the more obvious needs of African Education are:

i. *An overall teacher-pupil ratio not worse than the 1 to 40 stipulated by the Department as the minimum in any way satisfactory.*

ii. *Compulsory education from the age of 7 years for at least four years, as a first stage.* To be applied first in areas of thick population, later where scattered population raises questions of transport and boarding.

iii. *The reduction of the age of* admission, *where places are available, to 6 years.* This should be effected in four stages, each reducing the age of admission by three months thus avoiding an unmanageable flood of enrolments on first introduction.

iv. *The elimination of the double-session system.*

v. *The elimination of the platoon system.* (This system seems to be becoming more widespread. The 1970 Report records no cases in Natal. It was noted in several schools in the Pietermaritzburg area in 1971.)

These requirements make conflicting demands and cannot be met simultaneously. Some would give priority to compulsory education. It could be better to reduce the teacher-pupil ratio substantially as a first step. To hold in schools, staffed as at present, children who have 'had' school would be to make classes more unwieldly than ever and less responsive, leading to increasingly authoritarian teaching methods, more and more memorisation and recapitulation instead of thinking, and less and less fruitful interaction between teachers and pupils.

All these requirements depend on:

vi. *Emergency programmes for the training of primary and, even more urgently, secondary teachers.* Training colleges should be expanded and new colleges provided. University courses should be used to full capacity. At present — considering the magnitude of the need — they hardly merit the name of pilot schemes. As a matter of economy, and common sense, new training institutions should be provided where the population is, and not where, theoretically, it ought to be.

vii. *The language policies should be reviewed.* It is absurd that masses of poor children, deliberately segregated from people speaking other languages, should have to learn two strange languages as well as their own, under the conditions prevailing in Bantu Education classrooms, *from their first school year.* The Eiselen Commission recommended the introduction of the new languages in gradual stages. The Transkeian Commission too, seeing the present system in action, recommended that the introduction of the languages be staggered. Further, the Transkeian Commission condemned, as 'a violation of important education principles', the regulations governing medium of instruction. These prescribe that compulsory mother-tongue medium be enforced up to, and including, Std VI, and that in the next year instruction should forthwith become triple-medium, Religion and other non-

examination subjects being taught in the mother-tongue, two examination subjects (other than the three languages) being taught in one White official language, and the two remaining examination subjects — of the seven-subject examination course — being taught in the other White official language.

For Whites, the sole path to educational salvation is held to be education through one language, the mother-tongue. Education through two media has been condemned as injurious to mind and soul, an impediment to educational development. The African mind is apparently considered tougher.

viii. *A strong schools medical service should be established.* Individual medical examination must remain a long-term goal, but medical staff including specialists in pediatrics, public health and hygiene, and nutrition should be early appointments.

ix. *The provision of books should be reviewed.* In support, I quote from the Eiselen Minority Report:

> One cannot get past the fact that effective education depends on the book . . . Injudicious saving on schoolbooks, by means of curtailment of output or by ineffective machinery for their distribution, brings in its train an enormous national expenditure in connection with the prolongation of school attendance, the deterioration of standard, and post-school inefficiency in work.

x. *The question of grants-in-aid for the surviving church schools should be reconsidered.*

xi. *Technical education should be greatly expanded.* This is another disregarded Eiselen recommendation. Total enrolment[51] in trade, technical and vocational schools in 1969 was 3 390. It has been growing since but is probably still well below the 6 000 set by Eiselen as goal for 1959. When the duration of certain building courses was substantially reduced about ten years ago it was understood that qualified trainees, after two years experience in relevant employment, would be able to take trade tests and, if successful, acquire full artisan status. This essential provision seems to have fallen into disuse, if it was ever given effect to. The Bantu Education Department should take the initiative in establishing, or re-establishing, the necessary liaison.

xii. *Adult education should be vigorously developed.* In all South Africa (including the Transkei) and South-West Africa there were in 1969 only 237 teachers engaged in night schools or continuation classes for Africans, and *all were privately paid.*[52] Most of the night school students were enrolled in *lower primary* courses. The lower primary wastage figures given earlier show the vast

scope existing for instruction for adults in basic literacy. State neglect of this fundamental educational service (valuable for the illiterate or barely literate students themselves and also valuable because of the understanding it gives them of the school work of their children) mocks ministerial protestations of concern for the promotion of general literacy.

xiii. *A massive school building programme is needed* to provide reasonably adequate accommodation for all children now in school or estimated to be in attendance in the foreseeable future, and to replace structures unfit for school use including old unsuitable church buildings. These in many cases have fallen into decay because, no rent being paid, it is now apparently no one's business to keep them in repair. Particularly where populations are mobile, buildings, given good ventilation, lighting and sanitation, need be neither elaborate nor very expensive. Architectural monuments can become a liability when teaching methods change and new spacial arrangements become desirable. Where the need for a school is known to be temporary, as sometimes on farms, even wattle-and-daub has its place, provided light and ventilation are adequate and the building is kept in good repair.

xiv. *The sine-qua-non is adequate financing.* A welcome return has recently been made to the principle of financing Bantu Education from the Consolidated Revenue Fund. It is hoped that statements made in the course of the debate to the effect that one must not expect 'the White parents to finance the education of the Bantu' are merely inter-party sparring and do not reflect the spirit which will govern actual Budget allocations.[58] The matter of the African's contribution to national wealth needs frank discussion. His direct income tax or alternative special taxation amounts to a small fraction of the total White income tax. But direct individual taxation is only one item, and not the largest, in the government's revenue receipts. Company Tax brings in nearly twice as much. The great majority of industrial workers are Africans. They are not the group best able to exact from managements the greatest share of the profits that the traffic will bear. Should the full amount of taxation on such profits be regarded as 'White' taxation? Can we distinguish with any preciseness between White and Black contributions? Wages received would be a misleading criterion. Then there is mining taxation, where equally difficult problems of allocation arise, and customs and excise. Excise duties on tobacco and liquor bring in a couple of million Rands. Bottles and packets are not labelled, 'For Whites only'. To credit more than half of these excise receipts to 'White taxation' might give unhappy impressions of the White man's habits.

We could, with credit to our reputation and profit to our economy, double, or treble, the proportion of our Gross National Product which we now spend on the education of the great mass of our population. The long-term benefit to an expanding and increasingly sophisticated industrial economy would be immense.

The economic aspect has been stressed. It is important. High priority in aims must go to securing a national product which will make it possible to provide a healthy life and reasonable life expectation for every child born in South Africa. Economic growth is also important as a means to more important ends. South Africa with its heterogeneous population needs, in greater degree than more homogeneous countries, a generous spirit, and some generosity of provision, in its education policies. It needs, whatever lines its political development may follow, more education in human relations, more tolerance, more appreciation of the good qualities of others, more co-operativeness and goodwill reaching beyond one's own group. Our schools for all groups need less emphasis on what is peculiar to group tradition, more emphasis on cultivation of common interests, more pride in common achievements (the immense material development of South Africa within the span of a century is, more than some of us are prepared to acknowledge, a great common achievement). We need to nourish the will in all our peoples to do greater things together in future. In striving for such ends we may, incidentally, be of some service to the wider world, which shares on a larger scale so many of the problems which are at once our challenge and our opportunity.

Pietermaritzburg

[1] Horrell, M., *African Education, some Origins and Development until 1953*, pp. 7, 19, 23 and 25. S.A. Inst. of Race Relations, Johannesburg.
[2] *Bulletin of Educational Statistics for the Union of S.A.*, 1947, p. iii.
[3] *Statistical Year Book*, 1964, p. E-16. Bureau of Statistics, Pretoria.
[4] *House of Assembly Debates* 1945, col. 4537.
[5] *Report of the Commission on Native Education 1949-1951*, para. 908. U.G. No. 53/1951. (The Eiselen Commission).
[6] *ibid.*, para. 913. [7] *ibid.*, para. 915. [8] *ibid.*, para. 910. [9] *ibid.*, para. 1031. [10] *ibid.*, p. 180, para. 26. [11] *ibid.*, para. 1027(e). [12] *loc.cit.* [13] *ibid.*, para. 1031. [14] *ibid.*, para. 1033. [15] *ibid.*, paras. 459-60.
[16] *Bantu Education Policy for the Immediate Future*, p. 7. Minister of Native Affairs. Dept. of Native Affairs, Pretoria.
[17] *Senate Debates*, 1954, col. 2607. [18] *ibid.*, col. 2606. [19] *ibid.*, col. 2608.
[20] *Assembly Debates*, 1954, col. 6212-6252.
[21] *Senate Debates*, 1954, col. 2618.
[22] *Assembly Debates*, 20 Feb. 1970, col. 1529.

[22A] This assertion, made in Parliament by the hon. member for Houghton (*Assembly Debates*, 1970, vol. 8, col. 3668) was disputed by the Deputy Minister (*ibid.*, col. 3690) but no year between 1910 and 1969 has been suggested in which the disparity between White and African unit expenditure was greater than in 1968-9. Apparently the hon. member had probed a tender spot. Expenditure per African pupil, which had taken six years to rise from the R11,56 of 1962-3 to the R14,48 of 1968-9, was to rise in two years to R18,37 in 1970-71; and R25 is promised for 1971-72 (*Assembly Debates*, 1971, vol. 15, col. 7249). The major visible sign of the increase is the taking on to the govt. paid establishment of the privately-paid teachers with effect from 1 Oct. 1971.

[23] *Annual Report for 1969 of the Department of Bantu Education*, pp. 31-2 and *Bantu Education Journal* (*B.E.J.*), May 1971, pp. 20-1.

[24] *Daily News*, Durban, 21 Dec. 1971.

[25] *Annual Reports*, and *B.E.J.* May 1971.

[26] *Assembly Debates*, 17 Feb. 1970, col. 1196.

[27] For 1953, *Statistical Year Book 1964*, p. E-9; for 1968, *Assembly Debates*, 17 Feb. 1970, cols. 1197-8.

[27A] *Annual Report 1969*, p. 33. Table 5.

[28] *Assembly Debates*, 1963, vol. 17, cols. 6345-6.

[29] Chief Information Officer, Dept. of Native Affairs, as quoted in Horrell, M., *A Decade of Bantu Education*, p. 51.

[30] *Commission of Inquiry into the Teaching of the Official Languages and the Use of the Mother Tongue as Medium of Instruction in Transkeian Primary Schools*. Report 1962, p. 20. R.P. 22/1963.

[31] *Syllabus for the Lower Primary School Course* — "Health Education", p. 50. Department of Bantu Education.

[32] Horrell, M., *A Decade of Bantu Education*, p. 102.

[33] *ibid.*, p. 103, quoting *B.E.J.* for Dec. 1955.

[34] *Assembly Debates*, 11 June 1957.

[35] *Assembly Debates*, 22 Feb. 1971, in reply to a question.

[36] Horrell, M., *Decade*, pp. 20-1. [37] *ibid.*, p. 21.

[38] *ibid.*, p. 22, quoting *Assembly Debates*, 1955, vol. 19, col. 7664.

[39] *ibid.*, p. 22. [40] *B.E.J.*, June 1971.

[41] Horrell, M., *The Education of the Coloured Community in South Africa, 1652-1970*, p. 103.

[41A] My analysis of figures kindly supplied by Regional Director of Bantu Education, Natal.

[41B] In the debate on Bantu Education the Deputy-Minister 'could not accept' figures from my article 'Standards in the Bantu Junior Certificate Examination' (*Theoria*, no. 32) on the grounds, *inter alia*, that he doubted whether I had 'really visited these places'. I had not: it is an offence for a White person to enter a 'Bantu Area' without permission. Mrs. H. Suzman, M.P., who had quoted the figures, was then good enough to write asking the Deputy-Minister whether I might have his permission to visit a representative number of schools and he kindly agreed.

I record with appreciation the assistance received from the Secretary, Department of Bantu Education and from the Regional Director in Natal and members of his staff in terms of the Deputy Minister's authorisation. I thank in particular those who supplied me with information requested and those who accompanied me on my visits to schools and gave such helpful insights on these occasions.

As a former teacher and public servant I express my deep fellow-feeling with officials and teachers engaged in the work of the Bantu Education Department. They have in abundant measure the stimulus which some valuable characters find in coping with difficult circumstances. They also have many frustrations.

[42] *Syllabus for the Lower Primary School Course*, p. iii.

[42A] *Report*, pp. 12-13.

[42B] Figures kindly supplied by the Regional Director, Natal.

[43] *Assembly Debates*, 1964, cols. 388 ff.

[44] For a discussion see 'Standards in the Bantu Junior Certificate Examination' in *Theoria*, vol. XXXII, pp. 1-23.

[45] *ibid.* [46] *Annual Report 1969*, p. 13. [47] *ibid.*, pp. 63-64. [48] Introduction, p. 1. [49] *Annual Report 1969*, p. 104. [50] Report, p. 18, para. 8 (b). [51] *Annual Report 1969*, pp. 31-32. [52] *Annual Report 1969*, pp. 58 and 95. [53] *Assembly Debates 1972*, vol. 7, col. 3272.

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H. W. D. MANSON
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THE COUNSELLORS : THE FESTIVAL
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THE POETRY OF TED HUGHES*

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Our main responsibility as readers is in the end to modern literature, simply because it needs to be made use of before the particular value of its contemporaneity is lost, before the moment is past when it can become a part of our ideas and feelings in the most natural and effective way. If the poet's genuinely in touch, that moment is really the moment when he writes the poem. So there's no need to apologize for talking about a modern poet — one can't do that too soon; in fact it's always too late already.

However, I'm not easy about it — with a new poet there's always too much one doesn't understand, too much that hasn't been tested. One can't know just how heavily one's going to put one's foot in it. So I *am* asking you for tolerance for blanks and incompletenesses and doubts and uncertainties. Not to mention the probable blunders.

One of the noticeable things about modern critics is that they make no move to measure the importance of contemporary writers against that of the great writers of the past. Today, critics tend to read writers as talents, and not as men with authority — who are saying something. It would certainly be a brave man who would be prepared to make an evaluation of Ted Hughes in comparison with Donne or Blake or Wordsworth. What one can do is show that some such evaluation will have to be made eventually — the poems ask for it. They ask for it because they're so clearly written in a tradition: they're a kind of sequel. Moreover Hughes is no longer a talent, he's a poet who has completed himself, who can now say things with complete purity and individuality. And he has the effect on previous poetry that Eliot saw as a characteristic of all *truly* new poetry: he makes it look different, he changes the direction of its resonance, so that new aspects of it suddenly seem important.

The specific tradition to which Ted Hughes belongs is a tradition of metaphysical verse — or say philosophical poetry — that had its origins in the self-questionings of thinkers in the seventeenth century, when confronted with new scientific discoveries and theories. Dr. Johnson called these poets 'metaphysical' with pejorative intention, largely because he saw philosophy as a

* A lecture given at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg in June, 1971.

serious business in its own right, which poetry could not deal with except in a spirit of frivolous bravado. And of course it's quite true that the use of philosophical ideas in seventeenth century verse was more often than not a pretty light-hearted affair, little more than impertinent foolery. But this is not the whole story. The seventeenth century really did develop ways by which poetry could discuss the fundamental problems of man's nature and existence: his relation to God, to the creation he is part of, to death, to time; the split in his being; his dissatisfaction with his own nature; the question of free will; the relation of soul to body, of man's finiteness to the infinite. Moreover, these problems were dealt with by poetry in a non-discursive form, ultimately by enactment, not by argument. An example of this is Marvell's *Dialogue between the Soul and Body*, a fliting-match in which each participant feels the other as a prison and a torture. The poem is theoretical enough in some of its implications, but ultimately the agonized split in man's nature is *felt* not analysed, felt in the conflict of divergent impulses and in the wry humour of the whole.

It is difficult to evaluate the importance to us moderns of this poetic form which enables a poet to enact his philosophical explorations in a symbolic way: a mode of thinking that frees his intuitions and keeps his thought sane, but which doesn't allow of any easy translation back into conceptual thought. One can at least say that the value of such a form of thinking is not limitless. We tend anyway to talk about the significance of poetry in too grand terms.

On the other hand, what can be said with assurance is that, in our time, philosophy — and moreover philosophy dealing with basic assumptions and questionings about the nature of our existence — is perhaps the discipline that is most vitally significant for our lives and for our future. We live in an age where we are, in a quite new way, affected and perhaps imprisoned by things that are man-made, ultimately by man's ideas about himself. This applies to the raw experience of our senses, the structure of the society we live in, our education, the basic assumptions that are communicated by our amazingly efficient network of communications. No other civilization has ever transformed its ideas so swiftly into actions that directly affect its members. The seeming sterility of so much academic philosophy may make it seem strange to claim that it is in philosophy that the basic battle is fought. But in fact the philosophies that our civiliza-

tion lives by have not been sterile: they have been extraordinarily successful and productive, and for this reason are practically unassailable, perhaps rightly so. I am thinking of course primarily of the philosophies underlying the natural sciences, and the philosophical adaptations made of these to enable them to be used as a basis for sciences of man such as sociology, economics, and especially psychology.

The scientific benefits of these philosophies have been immeasurable; the psychological side-effects of them might yet prove disastrous. To quote Yvor Winters: '. . . the study of history seems to show that if any doctrine is widely accepted for a long period of time, it tends more and more strongly to exact conformity from human nature, to alter human nature.' This sentence takes on particular significance if compared with what Winters says elsewhere while speaking about determinism, one of our most ineradicable inheritances from the nineteenth century, the machine age — a doctrine that we are always coming up against, in its crudest forms, in our own minds, and have never succeeded in digesting — Winters writes: '. . . a belief in any form of determinism should, if the belief is pushed to its local ends, eliminate the belief in, and consequently the functioning of, whatever it is that we call the will. . .' And indeed our problem is of this kind. It is as though science's necessary refusal to accept subjective experience as primary, whole and indivisible, its creation of objectivity by an analysis of subjective experience, involving a destruction of its entity and primality, acts indirectly against man's confidence in himself as an originator of action — corrodes his primitive conviction as a creature. Man comes to see himself more and more as a passive adaptor rather than a maker of creative decisions. If the trend goes too far — if men should ever really abdicate — we can expect the most terrifying forms of authoritarianism.

In this situation 'the traditional values of literature' are no adequate protection of our humanity; what is required is a radically unevasive, as it were 'non-fictional', criticism in depth of existing philosophic ideas, a criticism which isn't intimidated by the terrific realities of modern science. With regard to philosophy we really are justified in thinking in the most apocalyptic terms — with regard to poetry surely we're not.

Which is not to say that poetry doesn't have its place in this struggle. For one thing, poetry is essentially the assertion of experience, of the primal knot where man and world meet to make consciousness. It has this power because its medium is

language — language as opposed to the communication of objective information. It can for a moment restore one to that centre in one in which one's human power and responsibility lies. And so it can act as refreshment — or as a warning, when it tells one that this centre is missing from one's calculations.

But although the poet can draw on the existential vitality of the language he deals in, often, in order to liberate these creative forces in the language he will need to be using his intelligence strenuously to overcome what is divisive or falsifying in the terms he is using or in his own concepts. Hence the value of the Metaphysicals' method. Marvell's problem in the *Dialogue* is clearly the conflict between opposing yearnings, which he ascribes to the Soul and to the Body respectively; this split in him is what prevents him from having a sense of wholeness and purpose. He must struggle to resolve the conflict, which I believe he does in the last two lines of the poem, when the two are as close together as an artist and his material, each gaining its greatest degree of significance only through the other.

> So Architects do square and hew,
> Green Trees that in the Forest grew.

But it is not so much the seventeenth-century poets that haunt our contemporary poetry — the distinctions that we find in poets of our time seem to owe more to William Blake. The problem he defines is not that of the division between mind and body, or soul and body, but of the division between the analytic mind and the imagination. This distinction between the mental and the imaginative, and Blake's sense of how the mental can form a world of its own, hostile to man, lies at the bottom of much of Ted Hughes's verse. But Blake's sense of the transcendent power of the imagination, ultimately in control of all the facts, his sense of a world that is fundamentally in harmony with the best part of the human consciousness, is no longer available to our time. The objective world has got too big for us: it has moved too far away on the one hand, has invaded our own territory on the other. In one of Hughes's poems, *Ballad from a Fairy Tale*, he seems to be writing specifically about the impossibility for him of Blake's interpretation.

We can take Blake's poem about the tiger as an example. The poem shows the agonizing tortures of the tiger's energies when forced to take on a finite shape, and it gets beyond these tortures by showing how the tiger's energy is able to assimilate its physical

form completely to itself. But one of the assumptions necessary to the poem is that the tiger as a creature is complete and self-justifying; it isn't a failed experiment, a half-success, a fluke — that is for Blake unthinkable. But since the theory of evolution this view of a creature — as something incomplete —becomes perfectly thinkable, as Hughes's poems on caged jaguars show us most forcefully.

The first of these poems appears in Hughes's first book, *Hawk in the Rain*. Its thesis is that the jaguar, though caged, is really free. Having envolved into a harmony with his environment, he has no need of his native wilderness, the wilderness is in the instincts of his body and that is enough. He is blind to all else, and the awed audience watch the horizons move across the cage floor, spellbound by the jaguar's hallucination.

If there is something undeniably romantic about this view of the jaguar, it is otherwise in a later poem, which comes from Hughes's third book of serious poetry, *Wodwo*. The poem is called *Second Glance at a Jaguar*, and in fact it revokes the earlier poem.

Skinfull of bowls, he bowls them,
The hip going in and out of joint, dropping the spine
With the urgency of his hurry
Like a cat going along under thrown stones, under cover,
Glancing sideways, running
Under his spine. A terrible, stump-legged waddle
Like a thick Aztec disemboweller,
Club-swinging, trying to grind some square
Socket between his hind legs round,
Carrying his head like a brazier of spilling embers,
And the black bit of his mouth, he takes it
Between his back teeth, he has to wear his skin out,
He swipes a lap at the water-trough as he turns,
Swivelling the ball of his heel on the polished spot,
Showing his belly like a butterfly,
At every stride he has to turn a corner
In himself and correct it. His head
Is like the worn down stump of another whole jaguar,
His body is just the engine shoving it forward,
Lifting the air up and shoving on under,
The weight of his fangs hanging the mouth open,
Bottom jaw combing the ground. A gorged look,
Gangster, club-tail lumped along behind gracelessly,
He's wearing himself to heavy ovals,

Muttering some mantrah, some drum-song of murder
To keep his rage brightening, making his skin
Intolerable, spurred by the rosettes, the cain-brands,
Wearing the spots off from the inside,
Rounding some revenge. Going like a prayer-wheel,
The head dragging forward, the body keeping up,
The hind legs lagging. He coils, he flourishes
The blackjack tail as if looking for a target,
Hurrying through the underworld, soundless.

One of the concerns of the volume called *Wodwo* is to find out whether there is a region of man's personality which enables him to call himself free, undetermined, originating his own actions. The poems discuss the problem for other creatures besides man. The jaguar of this poem is a real jaguar, not a romantic one — and it's a disturbing sight. For one thing this jaguar is not free — and the poem makes one see that a jaguar never could be free. He is caged, but this is not his real imprisonment. The reminders of the cage simply serve to turn our eyes further inwards to the true imprisonment of the jaguar, which is an imprisonment in his own anatomy. He takes the black bit of his mouth between his teeth and strains at it. His body is at odds with itself. He's 'trying to grind some square/Socket between his hind legs round'. His hip goes in and out of joint. It's as though he is continually losing himself and having to find himself again. 'At every stride he has to turn a corner/In himself and correct it.' Life has made him self-contradictory, continually having to mend himself, make a cohesion out of his body which doesn't cohere. Life has left him incomplete. 'His head/Is like the worn down stump of another whole jaguar.' There are parts of his body that don't belong and serve no purpose, his club-tail is lumped along behind gracelessly — it's a kind of appendix. His hind legs lag.

He's tied to the earth. The weight of his teeth makes his jaw hang to comb the ground. Teeth are a recurrent symbol in *Wodwo*. Teeth and intestines, standing for the same imprisonment and burden.

In a strange way this picture of the jaguar makes one think about man along the same lines. There is no *comparison* drawn. It's just that phrases are used that are so arresting that they take on a human meaning for us, like that 'At every stride he has to turn a corner/In himself and correct it'. But we're never allowed to escape from the jaguar's individual movement, the dislocated rhythm that still manages to gather a kind of mesmeric fluidity.

It is in fact precisely because the jaguar is just a jaguar and no more that we are made to think of man as just the creature man and no more: not the crown of creation; not planned; not complete in himself, carrying his own significance in himself; not necessarily in tune with his own purposes.

What is the jaguar's purpose, that makes him so intent on life? His teeth may be a great weight, they may take up a large part of his mind, but not all. 'He swipes a lap at the water-trough as he turns'—essentially he holds the process of drinking in contempt, it's simply to keep him going. What is this engine of his body carrying, then? Hughes speaks of the jaguar as 'carrying his head like a brazier of spilling embers'. As description this is extraordinarily intense, rendering the life in the jaguar's skull that is so full that it seems to be overflowing through his glowing eyes. This carrying of his head seems ambiguous, too, as though the intensity of the brazier is a torture, while it is also precious. For the suggestivity of the language is such that one is aware, in the image, of the primitive significance of fire for man. The brazier in his head is the jaguar's treasure. But it is also the jaguar's rage, which, as we come to see, *is* his life.

The markings on the jaguar's skin are called cain-brands. The jaguar is a murderer, he needs to kill in order to live, and so he is born into the tortures of murderous hatred. And his movements seem an attempt to escape these tortures, to wear the spots off from the inside, perhaps also to revenge himself on his incompleteness, his prison. The poem allows us to make that transition: from the jaguar's rage at his literal captivity, our normal interpretation of the scene, to his more fundamental rage against the captivity of his nature. And his bid to escape is a movement into an ecstasy of rage; he has to 'keep his rage brightening'.

It is this escape or revenge, this ecstasy, that the last part of the poem deals with, and that Hughes links with religious imagery, Hindu or Buddhist in this case. And religious ecstasy, being an attempt to escape from the wheel of life, is seen by Hughes largely in these terms. God is man's shout of despair or of vengefulness on finding himself a captive. As with the jaguar this shout is his life, the dissatisfaction with his situation that gives his existence its dynamism. But the attainment of ecstasy is not freedom. The jaguar in his ecstasy of rage is simply being driven the more efficiently and blindly by the instincts that have been built into him.

This is quite an important theme in Hughes, explaining some of his more puzzling poems. Certainly one of the most significant

aspects of our time has been the debunking of ecstasy as an absolute, or as anything like an absolute. Whether this debunking of ecstasy was effected by Freud, the neurophysiologists, or (most unintentionally) by the drug culture, it's anyway a fact. And for Hughes, though he is interested in the states, ecstasy or inspiration are in a particular sense a diminution, a loss of freedom, because they are a complete surrender to instinctual control, a becoming 'passive like a dead thing'. He frequently links them with death or suicide. He does the same with music, which for him is often an adventure into a purely determined and instinctively logical world.

Second Glance at a Jaguar is about a creature living uneasily in the anatomy that evolution has determined for him. But there is another way of regarding one's situation as it's determined for one by evolution, and Hughes explores the possibilities of this way in a well-known early poem, *Hawk Roosting*. If one has evolved so as to be suited to one's environment, if one is made for it, isn't it equally true that the world is made for oneself? Historically, it may be true that the world was made first, but as far as oneself is concerned it is oneself that comes first — that is one's initial experience, far more persuasive than reflection: the world is an extension of oneself.

Hawk Roosting

I sit in the top of the wood, my eyes closed.
Inaction, no falsifying dream
Between my hooked head and hooked feet:
Or in sleep rehearse perfect kills and eat.

The convenience of the high trees!
The air's buoyancy and the sun's ray
Are of advantage to me;
And the earth's face upward for my inspection.

My feet are locked upon the rough bark.
It took the whole of Creation
To produce my foot, my each feather:
Now I hold Creation in my foot

Or fly up, and revolve it all slowly—
I kill where I please because it is all mine.
There is no sophistry in my body:
My manners are tearing off heads—

The allotment of death.
For the one path of my flight is direct
Through the bones of the living.
No arguments assert my right:

The sun is behind me.
Nothing has changed since I began.
My eye has permitted no change.
I am going to keep things like this.

Ted Hughes once said that this poem is about a bird who 'believes that he's nature'. This explains lines like those in the fifth verse: 'For the one path of my flight is direct/Through the bones of the living.' There is no split in the hawk. He translates his will straight into action. The source, the sun, shines straight through from behind him. He's omnipotent because his impulses are in complete harmony with the world that feeds them for him. The universe is an extension of his eye and his claws.

This poem suggests a human parallel much more explicitly than *Second Glance at a Jaguar* does. It is shot through with suggestions that make it a caricature of a dictator. We must see this dictator as comparatively harmless, of course, seeing he is so engagingly insane. But simply by the fact that we can see the hawk in human terms we must see him as quite absurdly limited, lobotomized. In human terms the hawk is mad. He has a certain power and vitality of his own; he is even enviable: but fundamentally we can't be anything but ironical in our feelings about him. And the last line justifies our scepticism: 'I am going to keep things like this'. The hawk's world is static, and so fighting a losing battle with life. Just wait till that bird grows old.

In the poem *Wodwo*, the final and title poem of Hughes's third volume, he creates a creature who is much nearer to man. 'Wodwo' is a medieval word, meaning a wild man of the woods. Hughes's Wodwo is half animal, half man, lives alone (no other member of his species is hinted at); he is almost as much at home in the water as out of it (though this surprises him); and his sense of smell is as strong as his sense of sight. Beyond that we don't know much about him, except the things that he finds himself doing. This is of course the whole point—he himself is trying to find out what he is and how he fits in. The conviction that grows on us as we read the poem is that, in spite of the carefully recorded superficial differences between him and man, in essence he simply *is* man: his situation is the essential human situation.

Wodwo

What am I? Nosing here, turning leaves over
Following a faint stain on the air to the river's edge
I enter water. What am I to split
The glassy grain of water looking upward I see the bed
Of the river above me upside down very clear
What am I doing here in mid-air? Why do I find
this frog so interesting as I inspect its most secret
interior and make it my own? Do these weeds
know me and name me to each other have they
seen me before, do I fit in their world? I seem
separate from the ground and not rooted but dropped
out of nothing casually I've no threads
fastening me to anything I can go anywhere
I seem to have been given the freedom
of this place what am I then? And picking
bits of bark off this rotten stump gives me
no pleasure and it's no use so why do I do it
me and doing that have coincided very queerly
But what shall I be called am I the first
have I an owner what shape am I what
shape am I am I huge if I go
to the end on this way past these trees and past these trees
till I get tired that's touching one wall of me
for the moment if I sit still how everything
stops to watch me I suppose I am the exact centre
but there's all this what is it roots
roots roots roots and here's the water
again very queer but I'll go on looking.

The Wodwo—we get more and more certain about it— is man throughout, man seen with particular clarity. Unlike other animals, which can be defined by the needs that attach them to a particular environment, he is not tied down to any place, and this freedom makes him unsure about his identity. 'I've no threads/fastening me to anything I can go anywhere/I seem to have been given the freedom/of this place what am I then?' He doesn't know how far his identity extends. Where does his body end? It's not unlimited. He defines it in terms of the work it can do. 'If I go/to the end on this way past these trees and past these trees/till I get tired that's touching one wall of me'. Obviously this definition, like any other, is going to be a merely provisional one. He tries (unsuccessfully) to put together an objective sense of space and gravity out

of his experiences with reflection and buoyancy in the water. He tries metaphor to order his experience, comparing the surface of the stream to the grain of wood. He even makes scientific experiments, dissecting a frog like a biology class learning about human anatomy vicariously. 'Why do I find/this frog so interesting as I inspect its most secret/interior and make it my own?' Already he's seeing himself as an object as well as a subject. And already he's aware of breaking a taboo, though so far he believes it's only the frog's sacred secrecy he's invading. The Wodwo even plays. 'And picking/bits of bark off this rotten stump gives me/no pleasure and it's no use so why do I do it/me and doing that have coincided very queerly'. He realizes that his will, even, is a problematic thing. And where does he come in the order of creation? 'If I sit still how everything/stops to watch me I suppose I am the exact centre'. This is more compelling, I think, than any of the lines in *Hawk Roosting* that make us see the hawk as the centre of his perceptions. It is a hallucination we've all had in childhood but had forgotten. For one moment the Wodwo sees himself as the hawk sees *him*self, with short-lived smugness: 'I suppose I am the exact centre'. But then: 'but what's all this what is it roots . . .' The Wodwo knows that the weeds and the roots have a life of their own, utterly alien to his and unimaginable.

The conclusion of the poem is a proof of its quality: 'very queer but I'll go on looking'. The tone of that is perfect. It's by no means casual, and yet there are no heroics either—there is no time for heroics in what is simply the (possibly tragic) business of living. And this balance in the tone is not merely local: it issues out of the kind of balance between despair and humour that appears in different forms in all Hughes's poems—in a gentle form here, more savagely on both sides in the poems of Hughes's latest book, *Crow*.

The book *Wodwo* seems chiefly concerned with the Wodwo's main problem, the consciousness of a world which is not human. Though this has always been a problem, there are reasons why it should be a special problem of our time. Through our knowledge the universe has got much larger in both directions, outwards and inwards—and more impersonal. We have had wars that have created whole landscapes of anonymous death and depersonalized cruelty in our minds. We find that we must link these with science and impersonal social techniques. Above all we are aware of how much in our personality is a matter of automatism, and we're afraid we might turn out to be automatons all through. Some people believe we are that, and this gives them frightening powers

which they can use to manipulate us, though we hope that some part of us must escape them.

As well as poems, the book *Wodwo* contains stories and a radio play. All these deal with a man being attacked, sometimes destroyed, by contact with something non-human that is more powerful than he is and that makes him lose his grip. In one story it's a mad horse, in another the sun, in a third it's emptiness. In this story a man's plane crashes on an apparently infinite plane of ice. Snow is falling all round him and he has no way of knowing where he is or in what direction he is setting out. I'll read a passage from this:

> Useless to think about it. Where my energy ends I end, and all circumspection and all lucidity end with me. As long as I have energy I can correct my mistakes, outlast them, outwalk them—for instance the unimaginable error that as far as I know I am making at this very moment. This step, this, the next five hundred, or five thousand—all mistaken, all absolute waste, back to where I was ten hours ago. But we recognize that thought. My mind is not my friend. My support, my defence, but my enemy too—not perfectly intent on getting me out of this. If I were mindless perhaps there would be no difficulty whatsoever. I would simply go on aware of nothing but my step by step success in getting over the ground. The thing to do is to keep alert, keep my mind fixed in alertness, recognize these treacherous paralysing, yes, lethal thoughts the second they enter, catch them before they can make that burrowing plunge down the spinal cord.
>
> Then gently and without any other acknowledgement push them back—out into the snow where they belong. And that is where they belong. They are infiltrations of the snow, encroachments of this immensity of lifelessness. But they enter so slyly! We are true, they say, or at least very probably true, and on that account you must entertain us and even give us the run of your life, since above all things you are dedicated to the truth. That is the air they have, that's how they come in. What do I know about the truth? As if simple-minded dedication to truth were the final law of existence! I only know more and more clearly what is good for me. It's my mind that has this contemptible awe for the probably true, and my mind, I know, I prove it every minute, is not me and is by no means sworn to help me. Am I to lie? I must survive—that's a truth as sacred as any, and as the hungry

> truths devour the sleepy truths I shall digest every other possible truth to the substance and health and energy of my own, and the ones I can't digest I shall spit out, since in this situation my intention to survive is the one mouth, the one digestive tract, so to speak, by which I live. But those others!

This, I think, explains very well the kind of language Hughes is trying to speak in *Wodwo*. He is trying to see the mind as merely one of man's tools, which must be discarded or curtailed when it threatens his capacity for survival. He is really trying to make a tremendous shift in thought and expression, the shift from the mental truth, which says: the facts are these, or very probably these (a kind of truth on which almost the whole logical structure of the language is based) to the truth of the will to survive. Perhaps it's an attempt which can't, finally, succeed.

The method was perhaps one that couldn't succeed, but we must see the attempt as an honourable one and not an evasion. The modern critic tends to be ghoulish in his tastes, seeing the origin of any real modern poetry in the experience of 'truths that kill'. That way poetry becomes a suicidal enterprise. Hughes's determination is to survive in spite of those truths.

I want to discuss *The Bear* now, which is one of Hughes's most obscure poems. Despite the obscurity, it is so powerful that it has convinced me, at any rate, that it is the most important of all Hughes's poems to date.

The Bear

In the huge, wide-open, sleeping eye of the mountain
The bear is the gleam in the pupil
Ready to awake
And instantly focus.

The bear is glueing
Beginning to end
With glue from people's bones
In his sleep.

The bear is digging
In his sleep
Through the wall of the Universe
With a man's femur.

The bear is a well
Too deep to glitter
Where your shout
Is being digested.

The bear is a river
Where people bending to drink
See their dead selves.

The bear sleeps
In a kingdom of walls
In a web of rivers.

He is the ferryman
To dead land.

His price is everything.

I can't pretend to understand this poem, so I can only speak it impressionistically.

First stanza: The bear is hostile to man, he's a man-eater. He's watching you, and when he's got your measure he'll wake up. When he does, it'll be curtains for you.

The bear is a process which can't be stopped, being involuntary like somnabulism. The bear is a vast computer gathering information which it will one day present. It is rather like the way in which the Special Branch likes to think of itself. Or to be thought of.

Stanza two: The bear is preparing an apocalyptic fund of knowledge, which will one day be complete. He is sapping your vitality, taking the glue from your bones to make a new arrangement with it, leaving you glueless.

Stanza three: The bear is destroying the screens on which creation depends. He will bring about the end of the world.

Stanza four: The bear is impressive. He will take your suffering and revolt into account, however, and analyse it, or use it as statistics.

Stanza five: The bear destroys the possibility of refreshment as a true recreation of yourself. Instead of a new self, he offers you your dead self over again. He deadens the sources of inspiration.

Stanza six: The bear is a suspicious tyrant, subtle and complex. Hiding behind his walls and rivers, he is a tyrant who can't be got at. He's a city, perhaps a city you must live in. Come to that he might be your own body, with its bones and its veins, working against you. Preparing your objectness, your death.

As you can see, all these ideas don't add up to anything very unified, though the unity of the poem seems indubitable, if only because of its very particular, undermining rhythm. I find it most profitable to think of the bear as a gathering complexity of knowledge that is becoming so complete in its way that it is driving back the spot of darkness, the unknown in man that enables him to be creative, or feel himself at all alive.

Of course, in invoking the dark unknown in man, I've got Lawrence at the back of my mind, as Hughes must have had in many of his poems. Lawrence says: 'This is the innermost symbol of man: alone in the darkness of the cavern of himself, listening to the soundlessness of inflowing fate'. The concept is not the same as the Freudian concept of the unconscious. It's a different kind of unknown in himself that Lawrence recognizes and Hughes hopes to believe in. Lawrence approaches the problem of rendering the creative centre in the human personality quite directly. The end part of his *Song of a Man who has Come Through* seeks to lead the reader till he stands in this part himself. But the poem doesn't quite succeed, in spite of the power of the imagery, and the sensitivity of the rhythm: the poem's development is too brittle.

Yet it's the special power of poetry that it *can* create the reality of this human centrality in positive terms. Blake's *Songs of Innocence* are the obvious example. I know only one poem of Hughes's, however, which attempts this kind of positive statement, where he attempts to step straight into that indestructible (because unknown and unselfconscious) centre in himself—and carry the reader with him, returning him 'into his own kingdom'. This is the poem *Fern*.

Here is the fern's frond, unfurling a gesture,
Like a conductor whose music will now be pause
And the one note of silence
To which the whole earth dances gravely.

The mouse's ear unfurls its trust,
The spider takes up her bequest,
And the retina
Reins the creation with a bridle of water.

And, among them, the fern
Dances gravely, like the plume
Of a warrior returning, under the low hills,

Into his own kingdom.

It's weird little poem, with that strange configuration of three apparently unrelated images in the second stanza. Looking at the poem more closely, one sees that these represent three different ways of accepting the given. The mouse is a cautious putting out of feelers. the spider an acceptance of the world as its inheritance, working it deliberately but perhaps undiscriminatingly into its system. Finally there is that extraordinarily beautiful and tender image of the retina that 'reins the creation with a bridle of water', suggesting more powerfully than the other two the indissoluble knot between inner and outer on which vision itself depends. It leads us into seeing experience, and so consciousness, as a complex, counterpoised, vulnerable whole that can't be picked apart.

I don't know whether we are to think of the fern as a fourth principle to be added to these, or as something derived from a compound of the three, or as a point that the three other points define or frame in. But the meaning of the fern seems simply to well up out of the poem at this point. Finally the fern becomes the plume, evidence of where the warrior has gone. The warrior himself has disappeared where we can't follow him. Or rather, he's dived into some part of us where we can't see him—only know he's there.

In *The Bear* such a conviction of some such ultimate human resources shows itself only in the tone, in the wonderful trenchancy of Hughes's final rejection of what the bear stands for:

> The bear sleeps
> In a kingdom of walls
> In a web of rivers.
>
> He is the ferryman
> To dead land.
>
> His price is everything.

As in the poem *Wodwo* what we are left with is the poet's courage. And the amazing thing is that even in so terrifying a poem the courage suffices. The language is shot through with irony, but the irony is outstripped by a level seriousness. The poet 'means what he says' in a sense unknown to ordinary speaking. This level seriousness is what we're left with, and the force of the courage is just enough to hold the power of the bear in balance—only just enough.

Hughes's latest book of verse, *Crow,* is again quite different from its predecessors. Crow is a mythological creature, who is born in a series of poems that form a kind of anti-Genesis (with begats and all, and a black rainbow, which is Crow's plumage). Crow adds his own twists to creation, tries various experiments, finds out things about himself (usually by taking much punishment); he is irrepressible—and indestructible. The one thing he doesn't do is die. In fact Crow seems to stand for so many different things in different poems that the one indubitable significance or quality one can pin down as his is that of indestructibility.

He has many adventures. He tries to get free of his mother. For Hughes this means also Mother Earth, the tyranny of the instincts and physical needs—hence his obsessive interest in the Oedipus myth. Crow tries science to get away from his mother, gets on a rocket that finally drills a hole through her heart, crashes on the moon, comes to, and crawls out—under his mother's buttocks. God tries to teach him to say 'Love', but every time he opens his mouth he vomits up creatures imprisoned in murderous hunger or lust. Crow tries to get into relation with the sea, the infinite, but it just rejects him and makes him feel small. He believes at one stage that he can run away from the mental tyranny of knowing about death, but death picks him up by the leg and teaches him otherwise. Crow makes himself gods to play with, but then he realizes he's making them out of himself and there's now hardly any of him left. He tries to see his face in the mirror but all he can see is romantic images. He tries to be a hero, but makes all sorts of horrible mistakes. Se he decides he can be no more than he is: stories can't add anything to him. He tries to get a hold on Proteus, on change, but when Proteus changes into a bomb—Bang!—he's blown up. He holds a running battle with stone, the unliving, which goes on for aeons. The stone turns to flying dust and Crow gets better at dodging, but basically nothing changes: neither can defeat the other. Crow is indifferent to technology, indifferent to ideologies, indifferent to words. The latter simply slide off him, like water off a duck's back. Perhaps he is that which escapes expression, and so can't be done to death by a word.

No need to go into the devilish situation for a poet of writing about something which by definition escapes all words! Hughes deals with the problem in *Crow* by a technique of exhaustion. It's as though man can only find back to himself after hurling himself up against all the closed doors of the universe, and finally, exhausted, of force having to give up. Hughes shows Crow

exhausting all avenues—testing all the possibilities of illumination, transcendence, freedom, escape, and being rejected by them all—and this has the effect on the reader of a different kind of exhaustion: an exhaustion physical, mental, nervous and emotional. The experience is like having gone through some terrible destructive fight.

The *Owl's Song* shows this pattern in microcosm:

Owl's Song

He sang
How the swan blanched forever
How the wolf threw away its telltale heart
And the stars dropped their pretence
The air gave up appearances
Water went deliberately numb
The rock surrendered its last hope
And cold died beyond knowledge

He sang
How everything had nothing more to lose

Then sat still with fear

Seeing the clawtrack of star
Hearing the wingbeat of rock

And his own singing

The owl having apparently destroyed the world with his song, this very world suddenly and perversely comes terribly alive; it becomes also like an extension of himself, a mirror. It's like hearing one's heart beat so wildly that it seems to be beating outside oneself. Here the emotion this evokes is fear. In *How Water Began to Play* (a song sung by an Eskimo friend of Crow's) the emotion we are left with after the process of exhaustion is different, and quite indescribable—unearthly.

Water wanted to live
It went to the sun it came weeping back
Water wanted to live
It went to the trees they burned it came weeping back
They rotted it came weeping back
Water wanted to live

It went to the flowers they crumpled it came weeping back
It wanted to live
It went to the womb it met blood
It came weeping back
It went to the womb it met knife
It came weeping back
It went to the womb it met maggot and rottenness
It came weeping back it wanted to die

It went to time it went through the stone door
It came weeping back
It went searching through all space for nothingness
It came weeping back it wanted to die

Till it had no weeping left

It lay at the bottom of all things
Utterly worn out utterly clear

It is essentially a poetry by denial. It finds things by denial. And it seems a pity that such evidently great poetry should need to make its affirmation negatively like this. Conceivably Hughes might reply that this is the only way left for poetry to be written—as a last-ditch defence. But there was a greater complexity in *Wodwo* which meant also that larger areas of what a word can be made to mean were being brought into play. At any rate it seemed a complexity that couldn't permanently be lost. *Crow* seems to be a kind of splinter, an experiment that has split away from Hughes's main stem: it'll be interesting to see whether his next book is another splinter like *Crow*, or another attempt to allow all his powers to work at once, as in *Wodwo*.

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NOTE

Hughes has published poems since the publication of the Crow volume which still centre around the figure of Crow, but are once again richer in texture, reminding one of the poems in *Wodwo*.

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THE POETRY OF DYLAN THOMAS*

by J. V. CREWE

The poetry of Dylan Thomas remains a puzzle to critics, and a vivid experience to many readers. What is its value, and where does it stand within twentieth century literature? These questions may be easier to answer now than they were ten years ago. Thomas does not come to us white-hot and unfamiliar, and if some of the force has gone, so has some of the obscurity. In fact, Thomas has been (if somewhat hesitantly) installed as a 'modern classic', and it is possible to discuss him with that in mind. Has he anything approaching 'classic' vitality, and if so, how is that vitality to be defined?

My starting point in trying to give a part of the answer to these questions will be a quotation from Yeats's poem *Ego Dominus Tuus:*

> The rhetorician would deceive his neighbour
> The sentimentalist himself: while art
> Is but a vision of reality.

The more one examines these lines, especially in their context, the less simple they are likely to appear, but ignoring some of the complexities for a moment we may say that they are a permanently useful definition of the poet's responsbility, and that as a summary of the assumptions prevailing in the rich creative period following the First World War they can hardly be bettered. (Where would Dr Leavis's criticism have been without those key concepts 'rhetorical', 'sentimental' and 'real'?) No doubt many historical and literary-historical causes lie behind Yeats's formulation. The war itself had shown the lethal aspect of sentimentality and rhetoric in public life, and anything similar in poetry or art was deservedly suspect. It also seemed that the poetry of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries amounted to little more than the crumbs from the romantics' table, perhaps chiefly the marzipan icing. After 1918 a civilisation that had been brutally shaken (if nothing worse) needed something other than saccharine consolations.

* A lecture given at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, in May, 1971.

In criticism 'real' and 'unreal', as distinct from 'true' and 'false', acquired a new importance as evaluative terms, implying new expectations of the poet. Poetry as sincere personal statement, or (much worse) as day-dream or 'self-expression', could not satisfy the communal need for a 'reality' that would withstand the disintegrating forces of twentieth-century life, and that would replace the many shams that the war had exposed. The poet had to be, in the old English sense, a 'maker', not merely a sensitive private citizen: he had acquired responsibilities.

Dylan Thomas began to write poetry in the wake of that post-war generation, but he is in some ways an alien rather than merely an inferior in the company of Yeats, Eliot, and their contemporaries. He has sometimes been dismissed as though he were merely a ludicrous anomaly among serious artists: in fact, though he must surely be considered a minor poet, his art is within its limits a real art, and his historical importance should not be underestimated. Insofar as the generation of students before the present one felt that, they showed themselves wiser than their professors.

In a manner of speaking a great artist is always more radical, whatever his social or political affiliations, than a lesser one. When we say this we testify to the power of the superior imagination to 'get at the roots of things'. In that sense Yeats or Eliot might be called more 'radical' than Thomas, but in the more common sense of the word, the opposite is true. Thomas was genuinely and wholeheartedly democratic, revolutionary and even anarchistic; his great near-contemporaries were almost to a man élitist, traditionalist and conservative. Their work represents a conscious reinforcement (and perhaps the swan-song) of a 'high bourgeois civilisation'; Thomas's portends the radical democratisation of Western culture, its cutting adrift from time-honoured moorings, and its attempt to 'make it new' without serious reference to the subtle inherited wisdom of the past.

Not unexpectedly, Thomas laid himself open to devastating attack by traditionalist critics, but (unlike some who were given the treatment) he rebounded. I suspect that the reason for that was not merely that readers sensed his 'talent', but that they sensed something even more important—a fresh breeze blowing. The framework of assumptions within which the attack on Thomas was conducted had itself been called in question. (One recalls the penetrating but unavailing attacks of the neo-classical critics upon the romantic poets.)

The charge brought against Thomas by critics associated with *Scrutiny* and Dr Leavis is the classic one: he is both rhetorical and sentimental, and is hopelessly unqualified to talk about the nature of reality. At best he had a minor talent for lyrical description; he lacks intellectual and moral passion; is often obscure and psuedo-profound; there is no evidence that he did more than skim the books he is supposed to have read, but he shows, nonetheless, a surprising facility in picking up snippets from the Bible, Donne, Hopkins, Lawrence, Freud, Joyce and various other writers. This formidable attack, in which the word hovers constantly between the lines is 'charlatan', has been diversified and extended in other directions. Kingsley Amis, for example, implies that there is something obnoxious about a poetic technique in which one need only take a phrase like 'In the beginning was the word', and invert it to read 'In the word was the beginning' in order to produce a suitably portentous opening line for a poem. And Robert Graves says about Thomas: 'He kept musical control of the reader without troubling about the sense. I do not mean he deliberately aimed off-target as the later Yeats did. He seems to have decided that there was no need to aim at all as long as the explosion sounded loud enough.' Thomas does not escape unscathed from this barrage. It only remains to be explained why he is not wiped out by it.

The first poem I should like to examine is the well-known and well-liked *Fern Hill:*

Fern Hill

Now as I was young and easy under the apple boughs
About the lilting house and happy as the grass was green,
  The night above the dingle starry,
    Time let me hail and climb
  Golden in the heydays of his eyes,
And honoured among wagons I was prince of the apple towns
And once below a time I lordly had the trees and leaves
    Trail with daisies and barley
  Down the rivers of the windfall light.

And as I was green and carefree, famous among the barns
About the happy yard and singing as the farm was home,
  In the sun that is young once only,
    Time let me play and be
  Golden in the mercy of his means,
And green and golden I was huntsman and herdsman, the calves

Sang to my horn, the foxes on the hills barked clear and cold,
And the sabbath rang slowly
In the pebbles of the holy streams.

All the sun long it was running, it was lovely, the hay
Fields high as the house, the tunes from the chimneys, it was air
And playing, lovely and watery
And fire green as grass.
And nightly under the simple stars
As I rode to sleep the owls were bearing the farm away,
All the moon long I heard, blessed among stables, the nightjars
Flying with the ricks, and the horses
Flashing into the dark.

And then to awake, and the farm, like a wanderer white
With the dew, come back, the cock on his shoulder: it was all
Shining, it was Adam and maiden,
The sky gathered again
And the sun grew round that very day.
So it must have been after the birth of the simple light
In the first, spinning place, the spellbound horses walking warm
Out of the whinnying green stable
On to the fields of praise.

And honoured among foxes and pheasants by the gay house
Under the new made clouds and happy as the heart was long,
In the sun born over and over,
I ran my heedless ways,
My wishes raced through the house high hay
And nothing I cared, at my sky blue trades, that time allows
In all his tuneful turning so few and such morning songs
Before the children green and golden
Follow him out of grace.

Nothing I cared, in the lamb white days, that time would take
me
Up to the swallow thronged loft by the shadow of my hand,
In the moon that is always rising,
Nor that riding to sleep
I should hear him fly with the high fields
And wake to the farm forever fled from the childless land,
Oh as I was young and easy in the mercy of his means,
Time held me green and dying
Though I sang in my chains like the sea.

I think, without committing myself on whether this poem is 'for an age, or for all time', that it can hardly fail to give immediate pleasure. It sparkles; it is moving; it is full of verbal inventiveness; it vividly evokes certain pictures and sensations of childhood, it is rhythmically seductive, it conveys, in spite of 'time', a magnificent sense of untrammelled life. Though there are greater modern poets than Thomas, none of them could have written this poem, and our first reaction must be one of pleasure and gratitude.

However, first impressions are not everything.

It has sometimes been said that *Fern Hill* is sentimental in that it presents, instead of the actuality of childhood, a nostalgically idealised state of being into which the adult may project himself. 'The sentimentalist would deceive himself', you will remember, and the appeal of the poem lies in the fact that it allows a simultaneous indulgence of adult self-pity and romantic self-inflation. This charge has been taken further. The poem describes a visionary childhood, akin to the visionary childhood in poems like Wordsworth's Immortality Ode or Vaughan's *Retreate*. In fact, it might seem to be summed up in the opening lines of *The Retreate:*

> Happy those early days! When I
> Shined in my angel-infancy
> Before I understood this place
> Appointed for my second race.

or in the Immortality Ode:

> There was a time when meadow, grove and stream,
> The earth and every common sight,
> To me did seem
> Apparelled in celestial light,
> The glory and freshness of a dream.

But there is one crucial difference between *Fern Hill* and the two poems I have mentioned: in the latter the idea of an 'angel infancy' has a very precise meaning. The visionary note is justified partly by the poets' actual belief in the soul, which enters the world uncorrupted and 'trailing clouds of glory'. Wordsworth even says:

> Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting.
> The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
> Hath had elsewhere its setting.

It is not childhood as such that is (in Thomas's words) 'Adam and maiden'. Together with the child's pure and intense apprehension of the world there is from the start a contact with corruption (not merely time) that fairly soon dispels the glory and the dream. In speaking about Thomas's poem 'And death shall have no dominion' Professor D. G. Gillham asked whether the idea of triumph over death in that poem can have any meaning at all, since Thomas is an agnostic poet, and the poem seems to convey no credible or even intelligible idea of victory over death. Perhaps the question to be asked in this case is whether the visionary, rhapsodic evocation of 'innocent' childhood can have more than sentmental significance, considering that this, too, is an agnostic poem, and one which appeals to our common experience of childhood, enabling us to say 'This simply is not true'.

Let us look at the poem more closely. It begins with a phrase that is like a traditional formula used by storytellers: 'Now as I was . . .', not 'When I was . . .'. That storyteller's phrase is associated with the larger-than-life, *selective* world of the fable, and the apparent confusion of tenses in it helps to suggest the timeless present of a story, which is also, mysteriously, part of a fabulous past. We should not assume too quickly that Thomas purports to give a naturalistic description of childhood, or that the child's world in the poem is a *sentimentalised* image. I shall return to this point later.

The main tension in the poem is apparently that between past and present; between the eternal 'now' of childhood, and the disillusioning 'then' of the 'farm forever fled from the childless land'. The world of the child is a timeless present, because he has not yet learnt to relate, or to see what is implied in the movement of the heavenly bodies which contribute so much to the beauty of the poem. To the child the sun is pure gold: to the adult the gift of gold carries the penalty both of time and of universal law imposed from without. The child is 'golden in the mercy of his means', a line which plays cleverly on the phrase 'in the meantime', as well as on the idea of 'largesse', and perhaps evokes the antithesis: 'the mercilessness of his ends'. The meantime is merciful; the end of time is cruel, and 'end' can mean both 'object' or 'conclusion'. Both mean and end are experienced simultaneously as we read the poem.

Fern Hill is an actual farm (in the last stanza of the poem the 'swallow thronged loft' is still there, and the 'moon is always rising') but for the child it is a farm transfigured. The 'easiness' (line 1) of the child, which implies a blessed absence of tragic, or

merely prosaic concern, is evoked first in the idyllic calm 'under the apple boughs'. We might notice that they are *boughs*, not *branches*. The word is slightly archaic and 'poetical', and we are already at one remove from circumstantial fact as we read it. It has connotations of peace, security and solidity which are not present in the more neutral word 'branches', and which are connected with the state of being 'easy'. One might compare the use of 'bough' here with Wordsworth's use of 'slumber' in 'a *slumber* did my spirit seal'. There, too, the word suggests idyllic security, retrospectively seen to be false. It implies, not the total oblivion of sleep, but half-oblivion, and because the word is slightly archaic and poetical we are reminded that certain hard, everyday facts are being left out of the reckoning. However, in 'Fern Hill' the 'boughs' retain much of their power to shelter and give delight, and the suggestion of false security is less drastic than it is in the Wordsworth poem.

In the second line we come to the 'lilting house', the first of those seemingly arbitrary but vividly expressive conjunctions that occur throughout the poem: 'the rivers of the windfall light', the 'happy yard', 'the tunes from the chimneys', the 'sky blue trades', the 'lamb white days'. The house is lilting because the rhythm of the poem is lilting, and because the rhythm of the child's life is lilting—a buoyant, varied, relaxed existence simply assimilates the surroundings into itself. The effect of all these phrases I have mentioned is to make connexions where the logical mind makes distinctions, or simply perceives no connexion. They tend to bring the entire farmyard scene into one harmonious totality, and to suggest the power of the child to embrace and transform his surroundings in whatever way his mood or fantasies dictate. There is no subjective and objective; there is merely an actuality in which the house is a 'lilting house' and has no separate, rationally admitted, existence as a prosaic farmhouse. Throughout the poem no distinction whatever is made between the fantastic or the fabulous, and the real; the child is:

> 'prince of the apple towns'
> 'famous among barns'
> 'the calves (sing) to (his) horn'
> 'Honoured among foxes and pheasants',

and everywhere the vivid, fresh, sensuous apprehensions are caught up and transfigured in the visionary patterns of his mind. He is the centre of a harmonious universe that exists equally

within and beyond his own mind, and the 'within' and 'beyond' are inseparable. Time conspires in allowing that visionary world to exist, and even enhances it by introducing into it the principle of variety. Day and night have their own revelations and sensations, and without time there would be none of those contrasts between the luxuriance of the 'golden heydays' and the sharp brilliance of 'night above the dingle starry' or the freshness of the 'farm like a wanderer white'. It is only in the final stanza that time reveals its power to disenchant as well as to enchant, and where there is a sudden consciousness of the invisible chains which set a limit to human autonomy as surely as they do to the movement of the sea. 'The moon that is always rising' implies the vision of the child, who is unconscious of the moon's setting since he is asleep before that occurs, but it is now also the moon that rises again night after night, and that measures the months, and controls the tides with its invisible chains of gravitational force.

So far I have done little more than give a superficial sketch of the poem, but I want to take this analysis a bit further, and also link this poem more generally with Thomas's other work.

Let me begin by pointing out that, though I don't consider this to be a fault of the poem, it is fundamentally repetitive. Though there is a movement of time, which brings about a continual change of schene, and leads finally to the recognition that there has always been a serpent in the Garden of Eden, there is a very large static element in the poem. In Stanza I the child is 'young and easy', in Stanza II, 'green and carefree', in Stanza III 'it was running it was lovely', in Stanza V, 'ran my heedless ways', in Stanza VI, 'young and easy' again. In Stanza I we find 'happy as the grass was green', in Stanza II, 'green and golden', in Stanza III, 'fire green as grass', in Stanza V, 'green and golden', in Stanza VI, 'green and dying'. Again, in Stanza I, 'honoured among wagons', Stanza II, 'famous among barns', Stanza III, 'blessed among stables', Stanza V, 'honoured among foxes and pheasants'. It would easily be possible to isolate other repetitive elements. The child's world, for all its variety is fundamentally a static one, and there is in the poem no very profound development; rather a horizontal elaboration and diversification. It may be argued that the child's world is necessarily static, since it exists 'below a time' and not in time. That may be, but even allowing for that there is some truth in the view that 'Fern Hill' is a sixfold repetition of the same general effect; idyllic enchantment given poignancy by the adult consciousness of time. One could imagine two or three

more stanzas to similar effect being added to the poem, and there is perhaps not one single stanza in it which is entirely indispensable: the last one probably comes closest to being so, although the outcome is already implied before one reaches it. The vitality of the poem has little to do with dramatic development, or progressive organisation of the kind one might find in a poem by Yeats, for example. Its vitality has something in common with that of a characteristic passage of Thomas's prose:

> There they go, every spring, from New York to Los Angeles: exhibitionists, polemicists, histrionic publicists, theological rhetoricians, historical hoddy-doddies, balletomanes, ulterior decorators, windbags, and bigwigs and humbugs; men in love with stamps, men in love with steaks, men after millionaires' widows, men with elephantiasis of the reputation (huge trunks and teeny minds), authorities on gas, bishops, best sellers, editors looking for dollars, existentialists, serious physicists on nuclear missions, men from the B.B.C. who speak as though they had the Elgin marbles in their mouths, potboiling philosophers, professional Irishmen (very lepricorny), and, I am afraid, fat poets with slim volumes. And see, too in that linguaceous stream, the tall monocled men, smelling of saddle soap and club armchairs, their breath a nice blending of whisky and fox's blood, with big protruding upper-class tusks and county moustaches, presumably invented in England and sent abroad to advertise *Punch*.

Thomas has none of the 'traditional' English respect for understated effects, and there is clearly a connexion between this kind of ebullient virtuoso performance and the art of *Fern Hill*. One is beguiled, not merely by the frank self-indulgence, but by the fertile recklessness of the prose, which is of a sort that one has to go back to Elizabethan writing to match. Here, in comparison, is Thomas Nashe (1556-1601):

> But let none of these scum of the suburbs be too vinegar tart with me for if they be I'll make mine oath upon a red herring and eat it to prove their fathers, their grandfathers and their great-grandfathers, or any other of their kin were scullions' dishwash and dirty draff and swill, set against a red herring. The puissant red herring, the Golden Hesperides red-herring, the Meonian red-herring, the red herring of red-herring's, every pregnant peculiar of whose resplendent laud

> and honour to delineate and adumbrate to the ample life were a work that would drink dry fourscore and eighteen Castalian fountains of eloquence . . .

and so on, torrentially. There is in Thomas something of the headlong over-reaching, the love of pun and whimsy, and the fantastic and unexpected association of sounds and ideas. Naturally it does not always come off, and one can certainly have enough of it. But that kind of energetic play seems to me an essential part of *Fern Hill* appeal, and one might almost describe the poem as a series of shimmering improvisations on a simple theme.

Here I want to introduce an analogy that has been used before. If we say that in Thomas's poems we often find, not the profound development of a theme within a minutely organised totality, but rather an almost improvisatory elaboration of a theme that remains itself fairly rudimentary, then we might go on to say that Thomas's poetry is to that of his immediate predecessor as jazz is to classical music. Arabesque begins to predominate over statement, and at the same time 'expression' acquires a new importance. (Thomas's broadcast or recorded readings of his poems contributed a good deal to their success). The poem is no longer to be regarded only independent, permanent creation on the printed page, but also as a 'live' communication, in the interests of which any or all of the modern media might be utilised. There is a conscious attempt to break down the wall that separates 'mass civilisation' from 'minority culture', and art begins to take on the appearance of a spontaneous 'manifestation' rather than a monument more lasting than bronze.

However, the 'jazz age' view of Thomas is incomplete, and I must move on to another aspect. Let us consider again the improvisatory *tone* of *Fern Hill*. This tone is suggested by the breathless, elated movement of the lines, the punning, and the apparently wayward use of language in defiance of grammatical and logical relations. All these things appear to be connected with the child's experience of the world, and with the dramatic representation of that experience in poetry. However, one can see how Thomas's diction in this poem might be adapted to other uses: to the symbolic or 'stream of consciousness' representation of the adult psyche; to the achievement of surrealistic compression and association, and to a kind of impressionistic description of the natural scene. These, let me say, are among the healthier possibilities. There are others which critics have not been slow to seize upon, namely, tedious word-spinning, obscurity and psuedo-bardic declamation.

So far, I have spoken only of *Fern Hill*, which is principally about childhood, and in which the diction seems, as I have said, to be determined by the need to evoke dramatically the child's state of being. I want to introduce now a poem of purely adult consciousness.

A REFUSAL TO MOURN THE DEATH BY FIRE, OF A CHILD IN LONDON

Never until the mankind making
Bird beast and flower
Fathering and all humbling darkness
Tells with silence the last light breaking
And the still hour
Is come of the sea humbling in harness

And I must enter again the round
Zion of the water bead
And the synagogue of the ear of corn
Shall I let pray the shadow of a sound
Or sow my salt seed
In the least valley of sackcloth to mourn

The majesty and burning of the child's death.
I shall not murder
The mankind of her going with a grave truth
Nor blaspheme down the stations of the breath
with any further
Elegy of innocence and youth.

Deep with the first dead lies London's daughter,
Robed in the long friends,
The grains beyond age, the dark veins of her mother,
Secret by the unmourning water
Of the riding Thames.
After the first death, there is other.

I have time only for a brief comment. In the first stanza 'darkness' is both 'making' and 'humbling'. It 'makes' and 'humbles' mankind, in common with 'bird, beast and flower': it is the darkness of death as well as the womb, and of the chaos preceding creation as well as the chaos in which the universe ends with the last light 'breaking'. (Thomas characteristically puns on

breaking, as he does later on the word *grave* in 'grave truth'.) In the second stanza the continuous movement from dark to dark becomes fully cyclical, as the speaker enters 'the round Zion of the water bead', a tricky phrase. 'Round' implies a cycle, but also the perfect sphere of a drop of water. That drop of water is a microcosm, an infinity of such drops makes up the sea, which is associated with 'darkness' both as source and end of life. It is a Zion by virtue of its brilliant purity, perhaps, but also because Zion, the Holy Land, is present in every particle of creation. It does not lie belond the universe of created things, but rather within it, and it is in that universe and not beyond it that God has his being. Men come out of darkness and return into darkness, but with the implication of further resurrection. Never will Thomas 'blaspheme down the stations of the breath' with any further 'elegy of innocence of youth', not simply because compassion is out of place, or because there are already too many elegies, but because death is part of a cosmic process, to which there is no beginning, middle, and end, except in infinity. The 'unmourning water' of the Thames symbolises that process: it moves back to the sea, as 'London's daughter' returns to the 'first dead' and the 'dark veins of her mother', which implies at once the womb and the earth itself. 'After the first death, there is no other' implies, among other things, that individual deaths are implicit in the 'first death' and that to mourn them individually is therefore meaningless.

I am aware that I have left many questions unanswered, and perhaps some of them are unanswerable. Furthermore, there are possible critical objections to this poem which I am simply ignoring for the moment. All I want to suggest is that there is a clear affinity between the poetic diction of *Fern Hill* and that in this poem, and that further affinities exist between these two poems and the majority of Thomas's other poems. I have already suggested some of the uses to which the diction of *Fern Hill* might be, and is in fact, adapted: symbolic expression, free association, surrealistic compression and impressionistic description. Is it possible to link these together in a unified theory of Thomas's diction?

Here I must rely on quotation, from a book of modern literature by the American critic, J. Hillis Miller. He begins by quoting Thomas who said: 'I am lots of people', and then goes on:

> . . It is not a question of a first-person singular 'self' which becomes 'another' and enters into a new state of existence. Thomas from the beginning contains in himself the furtherest star. He is the centre of an adventure which is the total cosmic adventure, and, after the first experience of birth, which is coming into existence of everything, there is no possibility of adding more to the self. What exists for Thomas as soon as anything exists at all is a single, continuous realm which is at once consciousness, body, cosmos and the words which express all three at once.
>
> To give an example, 'in the beginning' describes as identical events the creation of the universe by God, the creation of Adam, the formation of the poet's body in the womb, and his attainment of consciousness. If anything is prior in this series, it is God's all-creating word, but this is identical with the coming to consciousness of the poet.
>
> The overlapping of body, mind and world means that language, which in conventional speech would apply to one of these three realms can be used to describe all three simultaneously. The difficulty of so many of his poems stems from the assertion as literally true of what would usually be thought of as metaphorical relations: e.g. 'The owls are bearing the farm away'.

Finally, let us see this theory applied to the lines:

> 'All the sun long it was running, it was lovely' . . . etc.
>
> The 'it' is the anonymous subject of all possible activities or things. 'It' is connected with each by a form of the verb 'to be': it was running, it was lovely, it was air and playing. To put it another way, the word 'it' is the name for the undifferentiated substance which underlies all activities and entities. 'It' is the fact that something is, the unnameable, unthinkable fact of existence itself.

Miller's explanation is a good attempt, and perhaps as successful as any could be, to state a unified theory of Thomas's diction though, of course, it cannot be used to 'explain' all the poems. He elaborates his arguments in the book from which these quotations are taken, and which has as its title *Poets of Reality*. You will have noticed that word: *'reality'*. Thomas is being credited by implication with the very achievement which is one of the highest aims of the poet, and which he has consistently been denied by his hostile critics.

This explanation makes some of Thomas's linguistic practices clearer, and weakens the charge of arbitrariness that has so often been brought against him. As an organising principle within his work there appears to be a cosmic vision with a logic of its own — perhaps we should add, a vision and a logic that actively repudiate those by which our society ordinarily lives.

It is not difficult to imagine how a critic like Dr Leavis would greet the claim that has just been made, and indeed it *is* difficult to decide whether the 'cosmic' Thomas is not simply a reincarnation of the 'cosmic' Owen Glendower, with the traditionalist critics in the rôle of Hotspur:

Glen: . . . give me leave
To tell you once again that at my birth
The front of heaven was full of fiery shapes:
The goats ran from the mountains, and the herd
Were strangely clamorous to the frightened fields.
These signs have marked me extraordinary,
And all the courses of my life do show
I am not in the roll of common men:
Where is he living clipped in with the sea
That chides the banks of England, Scotland, Wales,
That calls me pupil, or hath read to me?
And bring him out that is but woman's son
Can trace me in the tedious ways of art,
And hold me pace in deep experiments.

Hotspur: I think there's no man speaks better Welsh;
I'll to dinner.

Glen: I can call spirits from the vasty deep.

Hotspur: Why so can I, or any man,
But will they come when you do call for them?

Glen: Why I can teach you cousin to command the Devil.

Hotspur: And I can teach you cousin to shame the Devil,
By telling truth.

Glendower is nicely quelled, and Thomas similarly — or are they? It is certainly possible to share Hotspur's impatience with the seemingly pretentious, visionary *hwyll* spouted by Glendower, but Shakespeare does not present Glendower as a negligible fool, nor

is the briskly positivist retort from Hotspur as conclusive as it might be from a more imaginative man. Glendower is not, as Hotspur imagines, 'telling stories': his mental world is a mythical one, with which Thomas's has conspicuous affinities, and which contains intuitions of a sort that do not come to the ironclad rationalist.

However, for readers brought up on 'the great tradition' (and of these I am one) there is a resistance to be overcome before Thomas can be taken really seriously. *'Fern Hill'* is one of Thomas's most easily accessible poems because the kind of cosmic egoism attributed to him by Hillis Miller is easier to take in a child than in an adult. For a child to imagine itself 'the centre of an adventure which is the total cosmic adventure' is one thing: for an adult to do so is another. The child's world of *Fern Hill* turns out, perhaps, to be a fairly close representation of adult reality, or at least of adult reality as perceived and communicated by a poet. The child's vision need only be slightly refined by the consciousness of time for it to become the full adult reality. Even then the change is not as fundamental as one might think.

> Time held me green and dying,
> Though I sang in my chains like the sea.

As in the *Refusal to Mourn the Death . . .*, green and dying exist almost statically within the same moment; they are not just opposite ends of a scale. Once again the image of the sea is significant, since, although it is time-bound, its movement within time is one of continuous withdrawal and resurgence, and it remains a symbol at once for the beginning and the end of life. Time is both linear and cyclical, as 'time in all its tuneful turnings' suggests. We remember, too, that the poem does not begin with the usual story-teller's formula 'Once upon a time', but with 'Now as I was . . .', which implies a complex or paradoxical attitude to time. The effect of disillusioning consciousness in the poem is only relative, and we are not presented with a linear progression from childhood fantasy to adult maturity. In one perspective the farm *has* 'forever fled', leaving behind a disenchanted and perhaps envious adult, but in another perspective, also offered by the poem, both child and adult are present together in a single, timeless existence. Historically speaking, the time is lost; poetically speaking, the time is regained in the act of visionary creation.

Perhaps enough has been said for the moment in justification of Thomas's poetry. I have already mentioned a number of criticisms that have been levelled against it, and I should like to return briefly to them. The two most important seem to me to be that the poetry is meaningless, and that it is inhuman. To take the second point first: the *Refusal to Mourn the Death . . .* exhibits the potentially dangerous aspect of the visionary mentality. The poet assumes a rôle as interpreter of the universe, and the child's death becomes 'the majesty and burning' which solemnly affirms the visionary world beyond mundane actuality. There is (or perhaps should be) something in us that protests against such a high-handed view of things.

On the second point — namely that Thomas's poetry is generally meaningless — both the attacker and the defender are likely to find themselves stalemated in the end. As far as I can see it is impossible to prove or disprove the validity of Thomas's work in ordinary rational terms. We find ourselves forced to regard it as the social anthropologist might regard primitive myth: it is 'a sacred tale . . . divinely true for those who believe, but a fairy tale for those who do not'. Furthermore, the interpretation of vision or symbol may give us unique access to the human psyche, or to the nature of reality, and it may just as easily be nothing more than what Edmund Leach, in his book on Lévi-Strauss, calls 'clever talk'. Proof, or even consensus, appears to be unattainable.

Let me now try and draw this slightly rambling discussion together. Many critics have spoken of the 'elated rhythms' of Thomas's poetry. The implication is often that Thomas must generate a certain rhythmic excitement to prevent readers, or listeners, from asking too many questions about what is being said. It is true Thomas placed an unusual amount of emphasis on what he called 'the colour of saying', that is the sound, the weight and shape of words, as distinct from their meaning. This has naturally made people suspicious, since in poetry sound and sense are usually conceived of as mutually enhancing one another.

To take the famous example from Donne:

> On a huge hill,
> Cragged and steep, Truth stands, and he that will
> Reach her, about must, and about must goe;
> And what the hills suddenness resists, winne so.

In the first line the alliteration on 'huge hill' has nothing to do with musicality; it places an almost breathless emphasis on the daunting massiveness of the 'hill', which has none of the agreeable or romantic connotations of a 'mountain'. 'Cragged' suggests in its guttural harshness the nature of the ascent. There is a marked pause after 'steep' before one comes to the phrase 'truth stands' — there it is, in lonely isolation almost beyond human reach. In 'about must, and about must go', the laboriousness of the slow, disheartening, oblique ascent is magnificently conveyed in the rhythm and the repetition, though in the last line the surprising victory in 'win so', coming after all that resistance, makes the quest for truth worth engaging in. Donne is clearly aware of the colour of saying; the sound of the words and the movement of the lines magnificently reinforce what is actually being stated. But the colour and the saying are one. As soon as as a distinction is made, and words begin to be used for their 'colour', there is an immediate weakening of the logical and grammatical relationships between words, and of the actuality that is implied in those relationships. Sound begins to generate sound, and rhythm becomes an exciting colouring that is laid over the poem.

> 'Now as I was young and easy under the apple boughs
> About the lilting house'
>
> 'Green and golden I was huntsman and herdsman'.

The rhythm is relevant to the experience presented, but it has a musical charm of its own, so powerful that one is not *driven* forcibly back to the sense as one is in the Donne poem. However, this is very much a part of Thomas's general strategy, which is to disintegrate our commonsense, perhaps rationalistic way of seeing things, and draw us into a new realm of vision and inner experience. Distinctions are to be obliterated, not refined, and the cramping sense of actuality thrown off in the interests of liberation and new insight. Nietzche speaks in *The Birth of Tragedy*, of:

> . . . the tremendous awe which seizes man when he suddenly begins to doubt the cognitive modes of experience, in other words, when in a given instance the law of causation seems to suspend itself. If we add to this awe the glorious transport which arises in man, even from the very depths of his nature, at the shattering of the principle of individuality, then we are in a position to apprehend the essence of Dionysiac rapture, whose closest analogy is furnished by physical intoxication. Dionysiac stirrings arise either through the influence of those

> narcotic potions of which all primitive races speak in their hymns, or through the powerful approach of spring, which penetrates with joy the whole frame of nature. So stirred the individual forgets himself completely. It is the same Dionysiac power which in medieval Germany drove ever-increasing crowds of people singing and dancing from place to place . . . There are people who from lack of experience or sheer stupidity turn away from such phenomena, and, strong in the sense of their own sanity, label them either mockingly or pityingly 'endemic diseases'. These benighted souls have no idea how cadaverous and ghostly their own sanity appears as the intense throng of Dionysiac revellers sweeps past them.
>
> Not only does the bond between man and man come to be forged once more by the magic of the Dionysiac rite, but nature itself, long alienated or subjugated, rises again to celebrate the reconciliation with her prodigal son man . . . he is no longer the artist, but he has himself become a work of art: the productive power of the whole universe is now manifest in his transport, to the glorious satisfaction of the primordial one.

This quotation might be taken as a clinching summary of what is offered by Thomas's poetry.

I have suggested that though Thomas's poetry is, of its very nature, likely to arouse strong reactions either way, its value cannot be debated beyond a certain point. However, I believe that the familiar sneer at Thomas is unjustified: whether we like it or not he is (or was) a minor prophet of our culture, and one of the first to hit the modern freedom-trail. The serious possibility remains that he was a false prophet, and in that case the last word would go to the Ancients, for whom Eliot is the appropriate spokesman. He refers in *Four Quartets* to those who:

> . . . riddle the inevitable
> With playing cards, fiddle with pentagrams
> Or barbituric acids, or dissect
> The recurrent image into the pre-conscious terrors —
> To explore the womb or tomb or dreams: all these are usual
> Pastimes and drugs, and features of the press:
> And always will be, some of them especially
> When there is distress of nations and perplexity
> Whether on the shores of Asia, or in Edgeware Road.

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NOTE.

As this talk was not prepared for publication in the first instance, I did not compile a bibliography. I should, however, like to acknowledge my indebtedness to several critics and authors.

EREC AND THE RED KNIGHT. SOME OBSERVATIONS ON ARTHURIAN ROMANCE AND COURTLY IDEOLOGY

by DIETER WELZ

Hartmann von Aue (c. 1170-1250), the first in line of the great German courtly poets, introduced Arthurian romance into medieval German literature. Gottfried von Strassburg (c. 1170-1250) praised him as the unsurpassed master of poetic form: 'Those who esteem fine language with due sympathy and judgement will allow the man of Aue his garland and his laurels.'[1] Hartmann's *Erec* is the first known Arthurian romance in German. It is based on Chrétien de Troyes' verse novel of the same name. Hartmann's version differs from its source in so far as it more explicitly deals with the basic conflict of chivalric life, the conflict between love and duty. His work gives an idealized and highly stylized picture of chivalric life. It may even be considered as a guide book to it.[2] A strong didactic trait is the outstanding characteristic of his novel.

The conflict between love and duty, in Freudian terms, the conflict between pleasure principle and reality principle,[3] provides the framework within which the plot of this romance is set. The story of *Erec* may be sketched as follows. Erec wins a beautiful bride, Enite. Their wedding is celebrated with great pomp at Arthur's court. Then Erec returns to his father's kingdom -- and thinks no more of chivalry. He is entirely preoccupied with his wife. Steeped in connubial bliss, he neglects his knightly duties and thus lays himself open to criticism. He is accused of dishonourable sloth. By ill luck he overhears Enite reproaching herself as the cause of these complaints. He immediately orders her to accompany him alone on a journey into the unknown. He forces her to ride ahead of him and forbids her to speak to him unless spoken to. A series of chivalric adventures follows, culminating in the adventure of 'Joy of the Court'. In a magic garden which is enclosed by a wall of clouds, he defeats a gigantic knight in red arms and breaks the spell that forced his opponent to defend the garden against all intruders. The name of the red knight who thus is restored to normal (chivalric) life is Mabonagrin. Erec and Enite return to Arthur's court for approval of their adventures, and there is great rejoicing. On the death of his father Erec becomes his successor, a worthy king and the model of a knight.[4]

This verse novel is more than a mere tale of love, marvel, and adventure.[5] Above all it is a novel of education (*Bildungs- und*

Erziehungsroman). The maturity attained by the hero in his progress from an inactive life of love and peace toward an existence of chivalric activity and glorious warfare is taken as it is defined by the given society. Society as depicted in this novel emerges as a lasting and expanding system of useful performance.[6] It is a society governed by the performance principle. The hero of this novel must learn to give up his claim for timeless and useless gratification as asserted in his withdrawal from society and his temporary disregard of societal values. He does so, and, after many trials and tribulations, adjusts himself in such a way to society that his personality perfectly fits the socially desired pattern of behaviour and thought. He becomes the paragon of a knight. In Hartmann's *Erec*, a novel of initiation, man is evaluated according to his ability and willingness to get involved in socially useful activity, namely, knighly deeds of valour (according to the historical form of the reality principle at this stage of civilization).

As long as one blindly accepts the values of courtly society on the terms of the then established reality principle, any interpretation of Hartmann's *Erec* — as well as of any medieval romance for that matter — must inevitably succumb to the official ideology of the blessings of chivalric life that is put forward in most of these works. In that case, interpretation remains in a strict sense ideological. That is to say, it offers a paraphrase, not a critical evaluation of the work in question. Small wonder, then, that the tenor of working morality is almost all-pervasive in articles and books dealing with Arthurian romance.[7] Hartmann's *Erec* proclaims an ideology that basically is not different from our concept of life under the rule of the performance principle. One therefore might have guessed that this novel almost universally is hailed as Hartmann's most sympathetic work (*sein sympathischstes Werk*).[8] A critical approach to this work, however, tries to penetrate its protective ideology in so far as it views it in terms of history, and thus avoids the transformation of facts into essences, of historical into metaphysical conditions.[9] At least, I hope so.

Throughout Hartmann's *Erec*, the narrator makes his presence felt. The process of telling is dramatized. Hartmann the poet assumes the part of Hartmann the narrator imposing his view of the tale on the audience. Even the modern reader of the story may be left with the conviction that all the opinions voiced by the narrator should be accepted at their face value. For the narrator makes it quite clear that he is the final authority and that his audience entirely depends on him for its view of the story.[10]

Unless one refuses to be taken in by that device, one is left with the narrator's attitude toward his tale — thus missing its full meaning. For the narrator's perspective is a restricted one. Its limitations are those of courtly ideology. Hartmann's novel has a social orientation, and the narrator's view reflects the poet's moral purpose in *Erec*. This purpose becomes manifest in the resentful deprecation of rest, indulgence, and receptivity on the one hand and in the glorification of knightly activity on the other. It is the pattern underlying the narrative and determining the importance attached to the incidents it relates. Shifts in the narrator's mode of presentation are indicative of his effort to guide the audience's ethic sympathies, and to make sure that his view of the tale is accepted without reservation.[11]

The lover's life in deliberate isolation is presented in such a way as to make it virtually impossible to consider a less critical interpretation than that given by the narrator: 'we are not allowed to contemplate the possibility of some moral nobility of the hero's abandonment of society for love.'[12] Erec's preoccupation with the marital bed is derogated and ridiculed. Such a life is impossible from the point of view of society and its advocate, the narrator. The way it is presented underlines this. The claim for happiness and pleasure as an end in itself is bitterly resented by the narrator. Therefore the quiet life of the lovers is interpreted as a perversion of the normal, as a world upside-down. Here love is not practised within the framework of socially useful activities. Erec does not just take a rest from his chivalric exertions which earned him honour and a bride, he withdraws from active life altogether and turns recreant. That is bad: it implies an egoistic withdrawal from society and its rightful claims on the individual. The distinction between good and bad in this context is derived from the ideology prevalent in the narrative, of course. It is a questionable distinction therefore — as far as the modern reader is concerned. The narrator is satisfied with it. This love is asocial and antisocial, because it is not conducive to knightly activity. In other words, love, taken seriously, is outlawed by the narrator — it is out of the question in terms of courtly ideology as well as in terms of unbiased presentation.

The scene in which the hero changes his mind, surprisingly enough, is presented in a different light. Here the narrator seems to regard the lovers with sympathy for a moment. The description of their favourite occupation, spending all day in bed making love, is appreciative. The sun shines into their chamber and is at their service. There is harmony between man and nature indicative of

an idyllic vision of life. For an instant the narrator seems to approve of this existence removed from society. He seems to recognize a reality with standards quite different from those he defends and propagates in the process of telling. But what appears as an inconsistency on the part of the narrator is in fact a calculated risk taken by the poet. Somehow or other the audience must be put in a position to understand that the hero of the novel is not at all bored with his recreancy. He enjoys it and so does his wife. Otherwise his decision to give up this life of peace and happiness could not be explained as a sacrifice. For what Erec is meant to do is to sacrifice his individual happiness in order to serve society. Therefore it is inevitable that at least a hint is given of the pleasant aspect recreant life has to offer. The fact that this is done at a time when this way of life is about to come to an end is significant, and so is the fact that the narrator does not elaborate this point — a possibility that Gottfried von Strassburg demonstrates in his anti-*Erec* romance *Tristan*.

As soon as Erec learns the 'truth' about his life, he spontaneously undergoes a change of mind. Society's verdict is unconditionally accepted. Social authority is absorbed into the conscience of the individual and forthwith works as Erec's own desire and morality.[18] He repents and obeys the commands of society. In a way becomes reactionary. He not only condemns his former life, but he eliminates love and marital happiness from his new life altogether. Enite is not even allowed to speak to him. Their companionship in love is ended. Thus he demonstrates his and Enite's need for punishment. The pleasure principle under the rule of which they spent their days up to now is rigorously supplanted by the performance principle. The severity which Erec exercises against himself and against his wife meets with approval from the narrator, though there is a certain amount of compassion in his comments, especially in those concerning Enite's plight. Erec's quest for adventure is, all things considered, a crusade against the arch-enemy of courtly society, namely against the pleasure principle. The 'Joy of the Court' episode proves this.

The garden near Brandigan where the scene is laid for the decisive battle is a symbol of rebellion against society. The garden is magically protected against intrusion from outside. It is defended by a giant knight and ruled by a fairy mistress of unearthly beauty. This Other World of Celtic origin represents the domain of the pleasure principle. It is beyond the rule of the performance principle. Eighty stakes bear the heads of those who failed to conquer

the red knight. Eighty widows mourn their dead lovers. Courtly society has so far failed to overcome the lord of the garden. The rule of freedom and love is interpreted as a reign of terror.

Mabonagrin, the red knight, has promised his *amie* to defend the garden against society's mercenaries. She has tricked him into promising this, and he is unable to break his word.[14] She thinks this place is paradise regained (*daz ander paradise*), a place meant for a life lived according to love. She rejects society and initiates the *Great Refusal*[15] for which the defence of that earthly paradise stands. The lovers' behaviour is usually understood as egoistic withdrawal from reality, viz., from courtly society and its system of values. Mabonagrin's defence of the garden appears as a series of murders committed by a wanton brute. That, however, is the narrator's view, and that view prevails in nearly all interpretations of this episode. The fact remains that the red knight offers resistance against attacks from outside. He never leaves his domain. He is not aggressive, but defensive. Society is the true aggressor. Its accumulated aggressiveness turns against those who do not want to belong to the whole, and whose existence is its denial. The agents of courtly society fight the spectre of an existence which they might desire but which they are compelled to reject.[16] Erec turned renegade is an example of this. The garden near Brandigan symbolically represents the socially disruptive identity of freedom with happiness, something society cannot tolerate to remain unchallenged. Therefore it sends its knights in order to abolish it. Erec, once a rebel against social conventions and in this respect akin to Mabonagrin, finally succeeds in doing exactly that.

On entering the garden as a challenger, he finds himself in Elysian fields. An ideal landscape and an ideal climate indicate that he has gained access to a world of uninhibited and eternal pleasure. But the flowers growing here are *fleurs du mal*, manifestation of pleasure and happiness for its own sake, and therefore evil. He meets the fairy mistress of the garden, and is dazzled by her beauty. She exerts a seductive influence on him which he only resists because Enite acts as his good angel. He remembers her and thus is rendered immune against the otherwise fatal beauty of the lady in the garden. Enite not only helps him to overcome the giant knight, she moreover prevents Erec, after conquering his opponent, from killing him and usurping his place — by marrying the widow. That happens in *Iwein*. There the victorious aggressor slays the defender of the fountain and the kingdom beyond it, marries the widow without delay, and thus becomes the defender of a region he was supposed to conquer for society. In *Erec*,

however, Enite represents love in its socially desired form (*guote minne*), love that promotes the aims of society by offering reward for socially useful activity, and thus inspiring it.

The defender of the garden appears and challenges the intruder from outside. He embodies something monstrous and terrifying. The red colour he prefers indicates murderous intentions. His enormous size and his superhuman strength, his cruelty, malignity, and destructiveness characterize him as a demon. He is actually referred to as a devil (*vâlant*). Once he is defeated, all these awe-inspiring properties vanish. They are no longer mentioned, are forgotten: society is no more afraid of him. He is now redeemed for courtly society, and that means he is domesticated, normalized and reduced to 'human' dimension.

During the fight, however, the red knight appears as a devilish fiend. The battle assumes allegorical aspects. Two antagonistic principles are engaged in battle, and good finally triumphs over evil. The champion of socially accepted, legitimate love carries the day. Society is the winner at last. Flowers and grass are crushed during the fight: the place is laid waste that gave shelter to an existence considered as an insult to courtly society and its aspirations. Therefore, I think, the obligatory words of regret for the damage done to flowers and grass are here missing. What happens meets with the narrator's approval.

After his defeat Mabonagrin explains why he had to defend the garden. He does not blame his mistress, but he makes it clear that he welcomes his defeat as a release. He even hails Erec as his saviour, thus providing an ultimate justification for Erec's attack. There is no question of disputing the right of society to interfere with his way of life. The conflict between two contradictory visions of life is settled, not in terms of a compromise, but by unqualified acceptance of the values Erec represents.[17] Mabonagrin accepts the requirements of the established reality principle as those of law and order.

When the dispute is settled, a happy crowd invades the garden. There still is the problem of integrating the *amie* of Mabonagrin into the newly found happiness. For she is not at all pleased with the turn of events, as could be expected. Obviously the happiness of the many is not necessarily identical with the happiness of the

individual. Enite discovers that she is a relative of the girl in the garden. Thus, the narrator decides, everyone is happy now — and leaves the garden. The grand objective order of things, here represented by courtly society and its ideology, is re-established. What remains is not the fairy tale, but its denunciation.

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NOTES

1 Gottfried von Strassburg, *Tristan,* trans. A. T. Hatto (1960; rpt. Penguin Books, 1969), p. 105.
2 Frederick Ritter, 'Hartmann von Aue,' in *European Authors 1000—1900,* ed. S. J. Kunitz and V. Colby (New York: H. W. Wilson Company, 1967), p. 390.
3 Freudian terms are used as philosophical categories. See Ludwig Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1956), p. 7.
4 See M. O'C. Walshe, *Medieval German Literature: A Survey* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1962), pp. 143-144.
5 Roger S. Loomis, *The Development of Arthurian Romance* (London: Hutchinson, 1963), p. 33.
6 Marcuse, p. 89.
7 This statement is based on research work to be published elsewhere this year. It is entitled 'Glück und Gesellschaft in den Artusromanen Hartmanns von Aue und im "Tristan" Gottfrieds von Strassburg'.
8 Friedrich Neumann, 'Hartmann von Aue,' in *Verfasserlexikon,* V (Berlin, 1955), p. 330.
9 See W. Wolfgang Holdheim, 'Das Ästhetische und die Zeitlichkeit,' *arcadia,* 6 (1971), 240.
10 W. H. Jackson, 'Some Observations on the Status of the Narrator in Hartmann von Aue's "Erec" and "Iwein",' *FMLS,* 6 (1970), 65.
11 Jackson, p. 68.
12 *ibid.*
13 See Marcuse, p. 46.
14 See H. B. Willson, '"Triuwe" and "Untriuwe" in Hartmann's "Erec",' *German Quarterly,* 43 (1970), 18. He thinks Mabonagrin neglects his duty by *not* breaking his promise.
15 Marcuse, p. 170.
16 Marcuse, p. 101.
17 Jackson, p. 68.