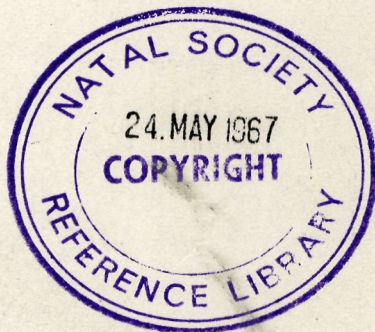


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CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
WORLD MORALITY FOR A WORLD COMMUNITY <i>D. E. Hurley</i>	1
A FLY AT THE SPA: <i>M. W. Fosbery</i> <i>L' Année Dernière à Marienbad</i>	13
THE PARADOX OF HUMOUR: <i>D. van Maelsaeke</i> A Comparative Study of <i>Don Quixote</i>	24
CHRISTIAN NATIONAL EDUCATION <i>R. G. MacMillan</i>	43
MARVELL'S ' <i>An Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland</i> ' <i>W. J. B. Wood</i>	57
CORRESPONDENCE: <i>E. H. Paterson</i> Simple thoughts on William Blake	63

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PIETERMARITZBURG

IN JUNE 1947 Professor B. Notcutt and Professor J. N. Findlay pushed a fledgling *Theoria* off their parental branch as 'A Journal of Studies of the Arts Faculty, Natal University College'. From that early flutter we have continued quietly but resolutely to the point of entering the twenty-first year of publication. We feel this is a time to rejoice. Is there any comparable periodical in Africa which has lived so long? Like most gentle ventures in a harsh continent we have been nourished by subsidies and we acknowledge gratefully a huge debt to the coffers of the University of Natal. We must also mention how we have depended on the scores of contributors far and near who have written without any hope of recompense—excepting perhaps a corner in the House of Fame! Nor should we forget all who have done the work of editing and proof-reading as labourers without hire.

Looking ahead, we wish to encourage literary critics to maintain a side of the journal which has always been strong but to appeal more urgently to scholars in the other humanities to provide a balance. *Theoria* aims at representing all disciplines in a Faculty of Arts and this should be valuable at a time when the Sciences are favourite stunt flyers of the academic world, capable of bearing down on us and threatening our more modest existence.

Those who have subscribed since that first issue might mark their interest in the age of our journal by writing to give their views on the character and quality of *Theoria*. There would be no question of printing such letters but we should be glad to have your comments whether favourable or adverse.

It would also be a pleasure if former contributors who are overseas were to submit new articles. We pride ourselves on having these international links and on being in touch with old friends.

THE EDITORS.

WORLD MORALITY FOR A WORLD COMMUNITY

by D. E. HURLEY*

Though the title I have chosen may create the impression that I intend to announce a change in the ten commandments, this is not quite the case. I am a firm believer in not discarding things until they have been tried. When we talk about morality we talk about that mysterious endowment of man which moves him to distinguish between right and wrong in behaviour. Morality is an ingredient of freedom. Because men are free and not inexorably determined to fixed ways of acting by physical laws or animal instinct, they need something to tell them what to do and what not to do. This we call conscience—an aspect of the human mind which, like all other aspects, is inborn in man but needs training and sensitizing.

In the process of being trained the human mind acquires guidelines—axioms and principles which result from the interplay of intellectual insight and living experience. So we have rules of grammar, canons of good taste in art and literature, laws of mathematics and science, methods of research and technology. We also need guidelines of morality. The classical formulation of them is the ten commandments, which Christ placed in the setting of the all-embracing law of love. It is sometimes asserted today that the ten commandments are out of date. But this is not really so. The commandments are not out of date, but our understanding and application of them may be behind the times. 'Thou shalt not steal' may sound as if it prohibits only straightforward honest pilfering. But it also prohibits the evasion of customs duty and income tax, big-time dishonesty on the Stock Exchange, the merciless crushing of business rivals, the paying of unjust wages and the exploitation of a poor country.

Human situations change with social evolution, and new conditions call for new applications of old rules. The situation is changing so rapidly in our time that what we need more than ever is a deeper appreciation, not so much of the rules, as of the ideal enshrined in the rules. When people claim that 'Thou shalt not commit adultery' is out of date, they are thinking only of an irksome negative rule that seems to limit their human gratification. They are not thinking of the positive human ideal enshrined in

*University lecture delivered in Pietermaritzburg on 8th March, 1967, by the Archbishop of Durban.

the negative rule, the ideal of a true and permanent communion of love, loyalty and fidelity between a man and a woman. No one can say that is out of date, and no one can say that a transitory sex experience can be compared with it.

Only a great positive ideal is capable of facing up to the rapidly evolving world of today. We recently read something about this world and the place of South Africa in it in a speech made by Mr Jan Marais to the Cape Town Afrikaanse Sakekamer. 'Bearing in mind', he said, 'that more scientific achievements were recorded and more things were invented during the last twenty years than during the whole of the 200 years before, invention and discovery in the years ahead must be foreseen as outshining anything in the past. Whatever the mind of man visualises, the genius of modern science can turn into fact. Man's dreams, in short, have a way of coming true.'¹

There is a lot in what Mr Marais says. We are beginning to reap the fruits of the scientific and industrial revolutions. We are moving into a world in which machines and computers will be producing more and more wonderful things with proportionately less and less human effort, in which research and technology will be reaching heights of achievement undreamed of before now, in which education will be revolutionized and intensified beyond recognition, in which travel and communication will bring people of scattered continents closer to one another than the population of a city suburb. In a few decades people will differ as much from us in social outlook as we differ from our ancestors of the Stone Age. A few years ago we used to smile at the science fiction writers. Now we are recognizing them as prophets.

All this holds particularly for the developed countries that have taken off and are in the full flood of scientific and industrial progress. But there is a disturbing note, just as there was a disturbing note in Mr Marais' speech to the Cape Town Sakekamer. It was a note he left muted, but one that cannot fail to obtrude on the thoughtful reader of his speech. He painted a glowing account of South Africa's future. Here are some of the points he made: South African industry's average annual growth rate of more than 8 per cent during the last five years has been surpassed only by Japan, with 10 per cent, and is well above that of between 5 and 6 per cent for most countries. South Africa generates 57 per cent of all the electricity generated in the whole of Africa. South Africa is now the twelfth largest trading nation in the world. Its exports increased by 32 per cent during 1966. In the next 35 years, the living standards of all in South Africa will more than double and our gross national product should, in terms of present

prices, increase at least six-fold. South Africa provides 90 per cent of its own capital, and saves for re-investment 25 per cent of its national income.

The disquieting note is why, with all this going on, there should be such dire poverty among the great majority of our population, especially among the Africans. It appears that the five million people in the Bantustans cannot live without sending 40 per cent and more of their manpower into the White areas to work. Without migrant labour they would starve to death. But migrant labour, as everyone knows, is utterly destructive of family life and therefore of social stability. In the townships, the situation is not much better. In most families both father and mother must work, or engage in some other form of money-making, to meet basic expenses. With no parent in the home to supervise the children, they grow up without discipline and without morals. Need we wonder at the incidence of crime?

Recently in answer to a question in Parliament, the Prime Minister and Minister of Police indicated that during the five-year period ending December 31, 1965, there were 1,192 cases of death by violence in the township of Soweto, Johannesburg. There were 247 persons convicted. Of these, 130 were under the age of 21.² A searching piece of reporting in the *Rand Daily Mail* by Mr Michael Cobden quotes a recent study on crime by a Mr T. J. van Heerden as showing that, in 1964 alone, the medico-legal laboratories of Johannesburg handled 1,168 cases of murder.³ Though the area investigated is larger than Soweto there would appear to be some disproportion here that needs checking. Of the 1,168 victims, 97 per cent were non-Whites, and most were males between the ages of 22 and 26.

One of the most disturbing aspects of the whole business is education. We all know that education is a vitally essential element in preparing people to share in and make their contribution to the stability and prosperity of a country. At the same time as Mr Jan Marais was painting his glowing picture of South Africa's future, (and incidentally including all races in it, for he spoke of our total population as already exceeding 18,400,000 and likely to reach 40,000,000 in the next 35 years), Mrs Helen Suzman was giving some information in Parliament about Bantu education. She said that of 360,000 children who entered grade I in 1958, about 75 per cent reached grade II, about 66 per cent reached Std I and about 50 per cent got to Std II. Only 3 per cent of African children reach secondary school and 0.2 per cent get to matriculation. In 1964 fewer than 300 qualified for university entrance, and probably not more than a quarter of these passed in mathematics.⁴

Many of the deficiencies of Bantu education could be cured by pouring more money into it. Surely the prosperous country described by Mr Jan Marais could do this. Yet it pegs the contribution from general revenue to African education at R13,000,000.00 per annum, as if African education had no right to share in our growing prosperity. Dr McConkey pointed out in 1964 that the state expenditure per head on African children was about 7 per cent of what is spent on White children.

Attention is distracted from these distressing facts by idealistic talk about separate development. No evidence is forthcoming that separate development can ever do anything constructive for the great majority of South Africa's 15,000,000 non-White citizens, that for their benefit they can ever be separated from the Whites and the Whites from them. They remain and, in the light of the best calculations available, will remain part and parcel of a single South African economic community under the control of a single political system. The glowing picture of South Africa's future painted by Mr Marais is impossible without them—as consumers and producers. The businessmen know this, the universities know it and the government knows it. The only conclusion one can draw is that the talk of separate development is a smokescreen for a reality that the world will not stomach today—racial discrimination. It is a smokescreen that deceives nobody except those who have created it. By saying this, I do not imply that there is any easy solution to South Africa's problem. The emotions involved are too explosive for that. But the sooner we face the fact that it is humanly impossible to reverse the process of integration that makes it possible for men like Mr Marais to speak of South Africa's golden future, the sooner we shall be in a position to square our political morals with the economic realities of our country.

The contrast in South Africa between the prosperity of the Whites and the grinding poverty and social disintegration of so many of our non-White citizens is a reflection within our borders of a world situation.

In South Africa about 18 per cent of the population, the Whites, hold undisputed sway over the economy of the country and enjoy, as Mr Marais points out, a living standard that is among the five highest in the world. Among the other 82 per cent (the non-Whites) there are some prosperous people, but the great majority is very poor. In the world at large, 17 or 18 per cent of the human race, referred to very roughly as the North Atlantic community, and embracing Europe and North America, enjoys about 70 per cent of the world's production, while the rest of the world, comprising

mainly the developing countries of Africa, Asia and South America (the so-called 'third world'), must make do on a scanty 30 per cent of world production. The developed countries have achieved an economic well-being that is self-supporting and self-propelling. It just keeps on growing. Its basic problem is that supply is inclined to outrun demand. In the United States, for instance, 6 per cent of the population produces all the food necessary for the country and for enormous aid programmes to developing countries as well. The developing countries, on the contrary, just cannot get their economy off the ground. Whatever small increases they achieve in production are swallowed up by the increase in the population. In these countries demand is forever outstripping supply and nothing can be put aside to make the country more productive. The rich countries get richer and richer and the poor countries get poorer and poorer. It is not that the goods cannot be produced. The developed countries prove that natural resources are such that, given the necessary skill and capital, nobody need be short of anything, even with a rapidly expanding population. There is a story told about a scientist who said: 'We don't really have to bother about resources in the future because a hundred years from now we'll just have to lean down, pick up a piece of earth, put it into a little nuclear reactor, and out it will come as any shape or thing we want. We're used to the idea of margarine coming from coal. But we ain't seen nothing yet.' Then he stopped and added: 'I do have one anxiety; will anyone be able to lean down, given the pressure of the population?'

I have friends in Durban who love drawing my attention to the population explosion. Possibly they think that by keeping the pressure up on me they will end up by persuading the Pope. They regularly cut the most horrifying articles from medical and other scientific journals and post them on to me. In one such article I read that the present rate of increase will produce, within 1,700 years, a mass of mankind equal to the weight of the earth. By the time another 8,000 years are gone by, the population will occupy the whole astronomical space and will be increasing with the speed of light. At that point the process must stop, since Einstein's Theory of Relativity has shown that no greater speed is possible.⁵

My counter to their dire predictions is to ask: if Stone Age Man had decided to limit reproduction, because he was running out of hunting space, where would we be today? And in 8,000 years' time Einstein will probably be cutting as brave a figure as our Stone Age ancestors do at present. What if our destiny is to colonize outer space, with the present astronauts playing the rôle of Christopher Columbus and Bartholomew Diaz? After all, it

does seem incongruous that mankind, the crown and climax of creation, as far as we know, should be limited to this little earth in a universe composed of millions of galaxies, of which our own modest model has a diameter measuring only 200,000 light years.

Whatever the relevance of these considerations, the problem of the developing countries is an agonizing one. Illiteracy, disease and malnutrition dog the lives of their citizens from the cradle to the grave. The grave is often a happy release. What is most frustrating and agonizing about it all is that the resources are available. They are just not used. They cannot be used because the people haven't the knowledge, the ability and the equipment. Some say that the only solution is an all-out world-wide campaign for birth control. It may be the answer. I couldn't be sure. As you know, the Roman Catholic Church is going through an agonizing reconsideration of its attitude to the morality of artificial birth control. Whatever be the outcome of this and whatever effect it may have on a world problem that concerns many times more people than are practising members of our church, I cannot see how a negative approach can ever solve a problem. In reality the problem facing us at present is not one of cutting down the growth of the human race to match limited resources. It is rather the problem of developing practically unlimited resources to supply a growing human race. If this problem were solved, the increased prosperity of mankind would automatically bring about a decrease in human reproduction. It always has. In other words, if mankind devoted all its energies to solving the problem of poverty in the next fifty years, it would have ample time to study all aspects of population growth in relation to the earth's resources—and in the meantime we may have begun to envisage our future on other planets.

I am no economist and I suppose I am treading on dangerous ground when I venture into this field, but I am intrigued by the apparent simplicity of the solution proposed by Barbara Ward (Lady Jackson) in her 1964 lecture in memory of Dag Hammarskjöld, *The United Nations and the Decade of Development*.⁶ According to this author one begins 'by establishing the rate of growth of population and to achieve a small surplus for further saving. A minimum 5 percent of growth allows for a 3 percent increase in population and a modest 2 percent for investment in the whole apparatus of modernization—in education, in farming, in industrial development—which is needed to take a community over the threshold into the modern economy in which self-sustaining growth becomes possible.'⁷ That seems to be the vital issue—to get the struggling developing nations over that critical threshold.

Once they manage that, they are on the way to self-propelling growth. According to Barbara Ward's rough outline 'the imports needed by the developing nations by 1970 will be in the order of 20 billion dollars a year'. They may be able to earn 9 or 10 billion themselves by exports. They will need another 10 billion in aid of one kind or another—grants, loans and credits. And this, according to Barbara Ward, represents 1 per cent of the combined national incomes of the developed countries.⁸ It sounds quite amazing—if the rich nations offer 1 per cent of their incomes they can seriously begin to solve the problem of world poverty. Just imagine what would happen if they offered 2 per cent—but I suppose that is impossible.

It is of course not just a matter of offering the money. Human skill must go with it, either in the form of experts from abroad employed in the developing countries or people from the developing countries receiving training in the other countries. It is also a matter of patience and trust in the face of apparent failure at the beginning, tolerance too in the face of reactions and attitudes that at first sight are incomprehensible to people in the developed countries. If it is going to take 50 years to do the job thoroughly, we must not expect perfect results in the first few years.

The problem of world poverty has got to be faced—for many reasons. The basic reason is that any person who is comfortably well off should not be able to live with his conscience when he thinks of the physical and moral misery caused by dire poverty. One of the most appalling aspects of the world poverty situation is that the rich countries of the world nearly all belong to the Christian group, in the sense at least that Christianity has affected their culture. How do we square the present situation in the world with a Christian conscience, with a conscience that is supposed to be concerned about the poor and suffering?

There is a selfish motive too for worrying about world poverty. Misery is the breeding ground of revolution and war. Can we risk a world war today in which the major powers could obliterate each other and most of the human race with nuclear bombs? Here again is a situation about which the Christian conscience should agonize. It never agonized enough in the past about war. Christians were always great crusaders and campaigners, despite the Lord's condemnation of violence. Today, whether we like it or not, we have got to be against violence. Pacifists have found the absolute solution. They rule out all war as inherently evil. Many of us, much as we sympathize with the pacifist position, are unable to be as absolute as that, because we know from history and experience that no public order has ever been kept without violence or the

threat of violence. Just imagine what the situation would be in any country if the police force was abolished. There is no international police force to keep peace between nations, so they arm themselves to protect their rights. The ultimate solution will have to be some form of world authority controlling the forces of coercion. In the meantime every thinking person who is not a pacifist lives with a divided conscience. He is against war, but, if he belongs to the West, he knows in his heart of hearts how much he depends on the nuclear bombs of the United States.

This divided conscience about war showed itself in the recent Vatican Council of the Roman Catholic Church. On the one hand the Council said 'As long as the danger of war remains and there is no competent and sufficiently powerful authority at the international level, governments cannot be denied the right to legitimate defence once every means of peaceful settlement has been exhausted'.⁹ What is legitimate defence against nuclear weapons? Whether it is defence or deterrence, the answer can only be other nuclear weapons. But this is what the Council says about the use of such weapons: 'Any act of war aimed indiscriminately at the destruction of entire cities or of extensive areas along with their populations is a crime against God and man himself. It merits unequivocal and unhesitating condemnation.'¹⁰ I don't think there is any way of using a nuclear bomb except by destroying 'entire cities or extensive areas along with their populations'. So nuclear bombs are unequivocally and unhesitatingly condemned and yet—a nation has the right to legitimate defence. That is how mixed up we got over war in the Second Vatican Council, and it's a pretty good reflection, I think, of how mixed up most people who aren't pacifist get when they think about war.

I have introduced these few words about war here because war and poverty are so closely related and because poverty and the threat of nuclear war are the gravest social evils facing mankind at the present time. They are so grave that each one of us must feel personally concerned and involved. Never before were those words of John Donne as true as they are in our time: 'No man is an Iland, intire of it selfe; every man is a peace of the Continent, a part of the Maine; if a Clod be washed away by the Sea, Europe is the lesse, as well as if a Promontorie were, as well as if a Manor of thy friends or of thine owne were; any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankinde; and therefore never send to know for whom the Bell tolls; it tolls for Thee.'

There is no escaping our involvement in the human family today. It grows by the day. This is how Barbara Ward describes it:

All the time our universe shrinks. Only twenty years ago, it took twenty-one hours to trundle across the Atlantic. Now it can be done in six hours. The supersonic planes are off the drawing boards and they will do it in two-and-a-half so that we can arrive before having left. Then comes the day when they put us in rocket sardine-tins and shoot us. And then it will be, I suppose, a 30-second trajectory.

The point is that this process will accelerate. We are inescapably destined to live nearer still to each other. We shall be nearer, too, in ideas and shared experience . . . the instantaneousness of human communication, and therefore of human experience, is bound to increase.

Last of all—perhaps in every sense—there hangs over us the risk of instant, total annihilation from the hydrogen bomb. As I have often said, if a person is not a neighbour when a man can lob a bomb into his back yard, I do not know when he is one.

The world is a physical neighbourhood which is growing ever closer. And at the same time social and economic contradictions are driving the world further apart. Unless this paradox is understood, and really accepted not as fantasy but as fact, we may well face in the next decade or so a series of explosive social situations which will resemble the French Revolution, the Russian Revolution, and the Chinese Revolution rolled into one. Surely one of the inescapable lessons of modern history is that in the long run a small, immensely privileged minority cannot be confronted with a large, increasingly restive and angry majority without something giving.

In the past we have been insulated by oceans, by mountains, by distances; they are all ceasing to be barriers. Now communication is instantaneous, proximity is total, we are completely involved in a world society which is physically one yet socially, morally, and economically tending to greater divisions. This is, I suggest, the fundamental reality of politics today and we shall only begin to make sense if we accept it.¹¹

This is the world community for which we need a world morality. As I said at the beginning of this talk I am not advocating a new morality. I am quite happy with the same old ten commandments in their setting of the law of universal love. It is just that universal love has got to become precisely what the word universal means. It has to include everybody. That was

always what was meant, but we managed to make our own adjustments and interpretations. Now the economic, cultural and political forces at work in the world are backing us up against the wall with the threat 'Love all men or—!'

It comes to this: man will not be able to avoid war and the rich nations will fail to come to the aid of the undeveloped ones unless human love takes on its proper universal dimension, unless a man living in comfort in the West becomes really concerned about his neighbour dying of starvation in the streets of Calcutta or bleeding to death on a battlefield in Vietnam. The significance of the story of the Good Samaritan is that it was the stranger, the alien, who turned out to be the neighbour. This is the demand the Christian law of love makes on the followers of Christ and which the followers of Christ have successfully dodged for nearly two thousand years. What our religion and our conscience failed to do, the hard facts of co-existence in the world of today are forcing Christians and all other men to think about. Please God, we shall get beyond thinking to doing. All that we are asked to do today on a world-wide scale is what Christ set before us in very simple terms when he described the standards by which his followers are judged.

I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me. (Matt. 25: 35-6.)

This sounds simple, but it is a desperately difficult programme, so difficult that most of us Christian ministers of the gospel duck away from preaching it, or, if we do preach it, we stay on the level of safe generalities where nothing need be said that will disturb the complacency of our congregations or contrast too drastically with our own practice.

The trouble about preaching the gospel of human and Christian concern in South Africa is that it hits home right away in an extremely sensitive area. The stranger, the alien, whom we must love as ourselves is not only the remote beggar dying in the streets of Calcutta or a sobbing Vietcong succumbing to his wounds in the Mekong Delta, it is the limp and bleeding victim of assault in the back-street of Soweto, the African mother weeping for her kwashiorkor child.

But of what relevance is the human love of one individual like you and me to the enormous social problems of the world? To the enormous social problems of South Africa? Not much in one

way. Very much in another. For the giving of human love is the most anyone can do. No one can do more.

It has its problems quite evidently. Many of us gathered here are professed Christians, some may be Jews from whose Scriptures Christ took his law of love, others are humanists dedicated to the human cause. But looking back over the recent weeks or months, how many of us can remember an act of human love that really cost us something? It is easy to believe in love but very easy too not to practise it in any significant way. In South Africa the significant way is in respect of our most significant problem of human love—the colour bar. I know the opportunities are few and growing fewer. That is why significant human love demands effort and ingenuity. Personally, though I would never underestimate the value of the individual effort in this regard, I am persuaded that it takes a group, talking together and searching together, to inspire and encourage one another to find the opportunities and to make use of them. Otherwise we forget, we overlook, and, despite the principles we believe in, we never really practise human love in a meaningful way. It is amazing when you come to think of it what enormous organised effort is put into educating the head of man and how little is done to educate his heart.

The Christian churches have failed lamentably in this regard. Judging by our sermons and our behaviour one who did not know the Christian Scriptures would never suspect that Christ had said: 'By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another' (Jn. 13:35). The concern of every Christian, the concern of every Christian group, should be that love should be conspicuous in their behaviour. Love only becomes conspicuous against the need that calls it forth. If ever Christians had an opportunity they have it in South Africa. The need is colossal. And what a part we South Africans could play in the development of universal love throughout the world. For success here against such appalling odds would have an incalculable effect on others.

In the end, of course, it depends on each individual. This is the paradox of humanity: that the growth of community depends so much on personal effort, and personal enrichment depends so much on community. Earlier in this talk I referred to the fantastic universe in which we live with its millions and millions of galaxies of which our Milky Way is only one small unit. This enormous complex works. Why? Because the infinitesimal particles of which it is composed, the electrons and protons, work. The success of the universe depends on the heart of the atom. The success of mankind will depend on the heart of man. Man will have to go

on using his head of course, but that is only half of him. The other half is his heart. As the immensity of the future looms up before us, we shall have to put a lot more into the conscious cultivation of human love. Without it there is no hope for mankind. With it we can go forward to the incredible destiny that awaits us in the universe—and beyond.

NOTES

¹ *Natal Mercury*, 29/2/67, p.8.

² *World*, 1/3/67, p.1.

³ *Rand Daily Mail*, 20/2/67, p.5.

⁴ *Sunday Times*, Johannesburg, 26/2/67, p.15.

⁵ Liebermann, A., "The World Population Explosion", in *Medical Proceedings: Mediese Bydrae*, 21/1/67, p.39.

⁶ First published in *The Quest for Peace*, ed. by A. W. Cordier and Wilder Foote, Columbia University Press. Subsequently published under the title *It Can Be Done* by G. Chapman.

⁷ *It Can Be Done*, p.7.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p.8.

⁹ *Constitution of the Church in the Modern World*, par. 79.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, par. 79.

¹¹ *It Can Be Done*, pp. 6-7.

A FLY AT THE SPA

L'Année dernière à Marienbad

by M. W. FOSBERY

At the present and in the last few decades the cinema has absorbed the energies of men of unquestionably exceptional creative gifts, among them Renoir, Eisenstein, Visconti, and Kurosawa. About many of the other directors whose work is interesting there may be some doubts. What Alain Resnais' place in the cinema should be is not so much a matter of doubt or reservation as of very sharply divided opinion. *Hiroshima Mon Amour*, despite some intelligent and interesting acting, seems to me a meretricious work, emotional in a bad sense, equating by sleight-of-hand completely disparate elements, besides showing alarming cracks in its intellectual structure, and—for all its apparent concern with moral questions—a work of no moral integrity. (About Alain Resnais' integrity in the popular sense I know nothing and it is hardly relevant.) *L'Année dernière à Marienbad* also juggles with time but to rather different effect. The effect of the film in general is in fact unusual in the cinema and seems worth some attention.

L'Année dernière à Marienbad is the kind of film that people call contemporary. That is to say, not only are its preoccupations up to date but its methods seemingly untraditional and it appears to demand unaccustomed responses. Whether or not its audiences—and for that matter its creators, M. Robbe-Grillet and M. Resnais—are decided which is the more important, the preoccupations or the method, is uncertain. Most serious critics, by whom I mean not only those who write down their reflections but all those who take the trouble to think about their responses, would probably say that the two are inseparable. *L'Année dernière à Marienbad* indeed confirms such a conviction but the way in which it does so raises a number of questions about the respective importance of and the relation between form and content; questions about which the film itself, for all its air of self-sufficiency and defiance of conventions, seems decidedly uneasy. I should add that contemporary in any real sense of the word the film is not; this, as a start, suggests that the film is fashionable in a way that encourages such loose use of descriptive terminology.

About one thing there can, I think, be no disagreement: the visual appearance of the film is frequently striking and, depending

on the viewer's temperament and inclination, beautiful. Some people may feel that that is all that matters, all that the work demands to be a success; this attitude begs the artistic question, as well as a good many others, for the film is after all not a matter of a series of disconnected perambulations of the camera. Whether any film can be is questionable; even the fashionable *ciné vérité* begins with some notion of a unifying subject, however vague or comprehensive or accommodating the notion may be. The work in question is about as far removed from *ciné vérité* as it could be; it may be thought vague and even accommodating but it reveals the presence of very definite premises as to what kind of work it aims at being. It is in fact—and this may seem at first sight to confirm the belief that it is enough if it is found visually remarkable—done on an almost exclusively aesthetic premise. Thus, to return to the question of its contemporaneity, it is really old-fashioned; the critical question it raises with such an air of novelty is the familiar one of art for art's sake.

M. Resnais employs a baroque style presumably to match the baroque architecture and decor of his hotel and the landscaping of its gardens. Just as the film merges different moments of time, even using time to suggest the different possibilities of a situation, so the camera works over the same areas in countless different ways—and does so with considerable ingenuity. Just as the objection has been levelled at baroque art, so it can be levelled at M. Resnais' film that this is arbitrary, irrational, and falsely dramatic. In baroque art, certainly in architecture, these charges can be answered by reference to the psychological basis of visual perception; the eye is guided by a visual logic, a fact ignored by the importation of literary and other criteria. (Geoffrey Scott's *The Architecture of Humanism* is interesting on this.) M. Resnais seems to have concluded that, since *dramatic* is used to describe baroque art, *drama* will therefore be established in another medium by the use of a baroque style. The cinema obviously depends on drama if it is to show people in any kind of action, however much the drama may be diluted into the most casual narrative. M. Resnais' fallacy is manifest in every moment of the film; his drama lies in the way a thing is seen, not in the subject; where there should be drama there is a vacuum, which means that the camera angles, varied and ingenious as they are, are fundamentally all the same. In short, they don't explore, though the restless movement of the camera, the continual tracking down corridors and across rooms in search of elusive foci, seem designed to give the impression of exploration. The various ways of seeing what is essentially the same object merely repeat a blank fascination.

After what has been written about the subject of the film, one might expect to be bored or irritated or even compelled into admiration after the first half hour, but at least to find an initial fascination in the visual offering. This is by no means an uncommon experience; it is, I believe, a frequent reaction to the work of Antonioni. But it is not the case here. The visual image, as I have said, is frequently striking and it is intermittently fascinating; the curious thing is that it is no more fascinating before one finds the work suspect than it is afterwards. The opening sequence seems to me positively boring, rather in the manner of an overture composed of nothing but chords and arpeggios. From the start the camera does not see—it rolls its eye, it gapes. M. Resnais and his photographer have gauged composition, exposure, texture, and so on, with remarkable precision but the anonymous eye, as it were, that must be presumed to be the recording instrument of the subject is blank.

The more one says of the purely visual, the more one is obliged to refer to the subject, to move away from the purely visual, for the blankness of the recording eye clearly corresponds to the blankness of the conception, both being supposedly anonymous. And here, whatever may have been the differences of opinion between M. Robbe-Grillet and M. Resnais, the work must stand and be considered as a single entity.

M. Robbe-Grillet follows in his script much the same method as in his novels. He employs the same pedantic descriptions and repetitions of externalia (which pass for a poetic style); here, instead of obsessively surveying a banana plantation, he insists some three or four times in the first twenty minutes on how the carpets in the hotel corridors absorb all noise. This may be a way of establishing that in *his* treatment of the subject there is to be no rhetorical reverberation, though of course it may not be (this kind of uncertainty is in keeping with the film's general use of ambiguity), but if it is it seems a rather obscure and unnecessary way of telling one what is made obvious soon enough. Clearly a style which employs so many tricks is not without rhetoric; the point is that its rhetoric never moves outwards, it is a rhetoric without expressiveness—which is perhaps why the declamation of the commentary strikes so false a note. Furthermore, the script, a mixture of commentary and dialogue, eschews context altogether; hence what is said rapidly becomes meaningless. Any definite meaning in what is said would, of course, give one a context, bearings for the next remark; bearings not existing in M. Robbe-Grillet's world, this is avoided. It must be said that the script is literary in the worst sense, characterized by a grandiose banality;

because of its literary quality (not to speak of its absence of context), it is difficult to give it the attention which its niggling preciseness appears to demand. I am not convinced that M. Robbe-Grillet wanted the hypnotic effect but that is what he achieves.

His premise is that reality is relative—by no means an original notion—and certainly each successive point of view presented makes it not only increasingly relative but increasingly insubstantial and vague. His point of view seems to be the impossibility of establishing reality. There are difficulties here. The commonly used example of the hill will suffice. From each point of view the hill looks different; nevertheless it has a fixed and definable shape and the hill exists in that shape independent of the relative point of view—unless one posits that, because there is no evidence for the hill outside the individual point of view and because this evidence may be illusory, the hill exists no more than does the beholder. This may be so but within the illusion of *my* senses and *my* point of view it is possible to establish that hill as a fact the contours of which can be defined. Fairly obviously the hill is more easily defined than a human action or relationship. If a man murders another man, it may be impossible to establish legally that he has done so; but the body with a knife in its heart is a fact within the context of the supposedly illusory individual sensation of a life that goes beyond the individual and if Big Brother were watching he could observe exactly what happens. The feelings involved, the possible division of responsibility are, of course, another matter. *L'Année dernière à Marienbad* refuses to concede even that. M. Robbe-Grillet's reported comment is frankly disingenuous: 'to reproach the film for its lack of clarity is really to reproach human feelings for their obscurity'.

Mr John Russell Taylor notes of the film: 'it is the irresistible temptation to look for the truth behind the truths. Everything we see on the screen is a truth: what happens before our eyes "really" happens, different eras coexist and intermingle, and distinctions between subjective fantasy and objective truth become at best merely formal.' But are such distinctions *merely* formal? Mr Taylor may mean that only in the film are they merely formal, which seems true enough, but even if this is all he means he is obliged to commit himself more fully. If these distinctions are in life merely formal, then life is not 'absurd' (in Camus' sense) but is so meaningless as to have no urgency and be utterly trivial. (The 'absurd', on the other hand, is urgent; the question it raises—why should a man not commit suicide?—is clearly not raised lightly.) If this is what Mr Taylor means, he is in effect saying that since nothing matters at all *L'Année dernière à Marienbad* matters as

much as anything, which is to say not at all. And if Mr Taylor does not stand by such a view of comprehensive triviality, then he ought to state that its presumption in the film is limiting and damaging in the extreme. He does say: 'We can, of course, ask what really happened last year at Marienbad, but it would be foolish to expect an unequivocal reply . . . So, clearly, the best thing is to avoid the trap . . . Better instead to explore it as film for film's sake, by-passing intellectual responses altogether.' This is a rather off-hand way of begging the artistic question and one can only suppose that the central questions don't matter very much for Mr Taylor.

The film does, however, appear to be making some sort of statement on truth simply by implying its impossibility. Much of its evidence for this is, to say the least, naïve: people can't decide on dates and it's not even certain that what happened did happen at Marienbad—Marienbad is, in fact, the second choice. (Entitling the film after a second choice is, of course, something of a joke.) The situation through which the film makes its statement (though that is no word to denote a work so tentative in its effect) is simple. A man meets a woman at a large and apparently fashionable hotel; he tells her that the year before they had an affair and that she promised to decide at the end of a year whether or not to go away with him. (She has a male companion, possibly her husband, about whom she has fantasies in which she sees him shooting her.) She denies knowledge of the previous year and of him. At the end she does leave with him but they apparently never get out of the huge gardens of the hotel. (On the other hand, it could be argued, doubtless convincingly, that the fantasy shooting is in fact the reality and that the rest including the final departure from the hotel is the imaginings of the dying woman and her lover.) Various interpretations have been offered—the hotel is a mental home, or hell or purgatory (in view of the conclusion hell seems more likely). But the film gives no real support to any of these interpretations. One might as well suggest that the persistent man is a Marxist, the woman the human soul, and her companion a Fascist or capitalist (he wins games by playing by his own rules and the matchsticks he plays with could be taken as the properties of a capitalist economy). In fact, such interpretations must work against the film's evident preoccupation with the impossibility of establishing the shape of anything.

To make its point that history is ambiguous, the film reduces speech, gesture, and behaviour to their most ambiguous elements. This in itself tends to encourage rather than prevent interpretative speculation. Gestures may be reduced and stripped of their

empirical significance but gestures they nevertheless remain and as such are suggestive. One's inclination to speculate on the meaning of the film is further increased by the air of mystery which the film's preoccupation with the enigmatic and ambiguous merely serves to thicken (the gardens are grotesquely said to be unmysterious). Not only are these speculations more or less arbitrary and damaging to such purpose as the film has, they are a positive waste of one's effort (unless one is hard pressed for a mirror for one's own fantasies).

If there is a key to the film—and it is clearly not a key in the sense of explaining mystery of situation—it is the statuary in the park representing a man and a woman caught in a dramatic pose. Presumably one is meant to associate the two figures with Orpheus leading Eurydice out of hell. But is the man gesturing the woman to stand back or is the woman putting her hand forward to warn the man of some glimpsed danger? There is no answer or, rather, the answer depends on the viewer. Similarly who in the film is right—the man or the woman? And is there some danger which one of them has seen and which accounts either for the man's insistence on the woman's going away with him or for her refusal to recognize him? (This, of course, supposes that they did meet the year before, though, even if they did not, one could say that since the danger is in the present, they are brought together in the present whether anything took place in the past or not.) Then what is the dog doing at the feet of the two stone figures? (This being the kind of detail one tends not to notice, the camera picks it up only later.) The answer is that the dog was passing when the sculptor was at work and has no significance. Later, the woman's hanger-on states that the group represents Charles III and his wife in classical costume. (Clearly an art-historian.) This suggests the insignificance of dress and of time. To M. Resnais the absence of a final answer to any of these problems matters as little in the film as in the statuary. The sculptor was merely concerned with turning stone into art; Charles III and his wife were really as unimportant to him as the passing dog and their gestures meant no more than the form they gave to the composition. By implication it seems that this is what M. Resnais is doing but this argument is false because his medium commits him to his material in a rather different way from that in which the sculptor (and his work is no masterpiece) is committed to his.

The problem is clearly more complex than M. Resnais' use of the statuary implies. In any case, one may object that this very use of the statuary depends for its point on an interpretative response, on the audience giving the incident a meaning, and that

such a response contradicts the purpose of the statuary, which is that interpretative meaning is subjective (whether the man is holding back the woman or the woman the man depends on the kind of assumptions one makes about experience, as is the case with response to the Daumier picture of the man on a rope used in Thematic Apperception Tests) and that the only meaning held by art is the form it takes. Visual art (unprompted by situation and dialogue), it is often claimed (particularly by artists), is totally misconstrued as soon as the content of the picture is subjected to any kind of intellectual interpretation. Hence, the painter's bugbear: 'What does this mean?' The question is obviously inane; what is not so often appreciated in this context is that the same question asked of a poem is equally inane. It is inane because it assumes that the picture or the poem could just as well be put in another form. And the answer ('It means what it says') applies as well to the painting as to the poem, though clearly *says* is semantically misleading. Goya's *Watercarrier* (Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest) says nothing that one can verbalize; those disturbing murals with which he decorated his house or the great *Colossus* (or *Panic*) do allow one to verbalize a response. The *Watercarrier* seems to me the finer work but that this is because it offers nothing to verbalize seems to me uncertain; possibly it is because it defeats verbalization. Certainly it does not depend on an empty theatrical gesture as does, if one thinks about it, the statuary that is so important to M. Resnais. The *Watercarrier* (I take the painting because it will be agreed that it is a very fine work and because it is conceived completely in terms of its medium and also makes use of a human figure) manifests as great a concern for the subject, derives as clearly from Goya's experience, as any of the ostensibly more serious paintings (or, to put it more exactly, the paintings that imply some kind of idea about human life). Any comment that the one implies an idea and the other doesn't is in fact mistaken. In both the idea is fully absorbed into the painting. (This, I am afraid, suggests that Goya started with an idea and then set about painting it. Possibly Goya did in some cases but what seems more likely is that he may have had a feeling of what his subject was to be; certainly the idea—if that is the word for what one finds—reaches its exact form only in the form of the painting itself.) And the *Watercarrier*, which seems to approximate to pure painting, has a subject just as much as the paintings which start one thinking about the human condition; it is, as much as they, an existential statement. The statuary that M. Resnais makes so much of is not. He is right to reveal the various traps that response is likely to fall into but at the same time he ought to

recognize that the statuary in fact prompts such responses. The problem of what response is proper to art is much more complex than he implies and demands a much more interesting point of departure. But it must be admitted that for his particular purposes here his statuary is completely adequate. Anything more substantial, more impressive, would shatter the aestheticism of his argument.

The reduction to the blandly ambiguous is, in fact, a sleight-of-hand, a fraud. For, apart from the false analogy of the director with the sculptor, the thesis to be valid must be established on the basis of what is recognizable. And by reducing all his material in this way M. Resnais offers the unrecognizable. The people of *L'Année dernière à Marienbad* have faces, wear evening dresses, dinner jackets and lounge suits, move around in an hotel with the ordinary quota of walls and ceilings, and so on, but to suppose that the life recorded constitutes the recognizable postulates either the psychotic or the silly. What is absent is the social. (The familiar cliché of the breakdown of communication is not really to the point. The people of this film certainly cannot be said to communicate effectively and they seem to be at cross-purposes—it is no accident that they are first seen like realistic waxworks, watching doll-like actors on a miniature stage—but if breakdown of communication is measured by what takes place in Antonioni's *La Notte*, then *L'Année dernière à Marienbad* is concerned with something else, though the ineffectiveness of communication does contribute to the absence of the social.)

Various references to Hitchcock's work have been traced in M. Resnais' film; principally the situation here being reminiscent of the second part of *Vertigo*. This does not seem to be wilful reference-hunting. The man who plays the hanger-on looks very much like the gunman of the second *Man Who Knew Too Much*—he is seen at target-practice in the hotel and in one of the woman's fantasies shoots her. Apart from all this, the mystery encourages one to wonder whether or not the hanger-on is actually going to shoot the woman or the other man (the situation has obvious similarities to the triangle drama culminating in *crime passionnel*)—a singularity improbable event in the context of the film, since it would be a defined action. What is more important is the more general similarity between the situation here and that of a good many, if not most, of Hitchcock's films. Hitchcock places his protagonist in a situation where normal social existence is seen as deceptive and where the relationship of individual to society becomes menacingly ambiguous. *L'Année dernière à Marienbad* might be taken to work in much the same way but the difference is

crucial. Hitchcock starts with the recognizably social and never loses sight of it; it may not be quite what it is taken to be but it is still recognizable. Hitchcock doesn't have very much penetration into the social and what he has to say is mostly vulgarized popular psychology dressed up into rather self-conscious statements on human values which are either perverse or platitudinous; but in his most successful films the elementary psychology is given considerable formal tension and, of course, the basis of the recognizably social provides a basis for the ambiguities of the social to work on. For this reason, however small the claims of even the best of his work to art, that work is more successful than M. Resnais' film which makes an all-out bid to be a masterpiece; the enjoyable is always more convincing than the art film that tries too hard. And, since the social is so strikingly absent in *L'Année dernière à Marienbad*, even the presence of people is questionable.

But there is a significant way in which the people of *L'Année dernière à Marienbad* are uncommunicative: they do not mediate between the subject and the audience. The method is thus totally opposed to Henry James's; the protagonist is never a 'vessel of consciousness' through whom one is made aware of the subject. Quite apart from its metaphysical implications, this may be thought a somewhat impoverished, uninteresting method. It certainly means that talking of points of view *within the film* is merely a convenience.

The premise, in fact, seems to be that reality is most truthfully observed from a fly's eye point of view. If this were possible, it would follow that the work thus made would be meaningful only to flies. There is some opposition to the notion that the study of rats is a valid guide to human behaviour. I can see no evidence to indicate that the fly's point of view is valuable or profitable, even that it is accurate, and still less after seeing *L'Année dernière à Marienbad*. But the attempt is impossible; M. Robbe-Grillet and M. Resnais try hard at that kind of objectivity but they cannot bring it off—nature is against them.

And anyone could have told them this before they started. In presenting a work of such a kind and based on such premises, their intention is positively human. The subject is seen as shapeless; so to say, shaped without context and bearings. This itself implies an absolute point of view outside the relative and ambiguous world of the film. The material has, of course, to be selected—from the larger quasi-metaphysical notions of the impossibility of establishing reality down to the smallest details. A person has to be caught sitting at a particular table or standing in a particular place and so on; he or she might just as well be caught somewhere else but

the camera cannot catch him somewhere else and the place has to be chosen. To explain this by saying that the choice is determined by the requirements of the visual composition seems psychologically naïve. However listlessly and uninterestdly M. Robbe-Grillet and M. Resnais choose, the fact remains that they do choose and in so doing impose their own notion of reality. The intention, though impossible of complete realization, is at least constantly present and indicates, as one might suppose from the analogy with the sculptor, the absence of vital interest in the subject.

There is another way of seeing *L'Année dernière à Marienbad*, and that is as a kind of artist's notebook. The film works out various ideas, sees how other ideas work, and either rejects them or proceeds with them. There is thus no question of any distinction between truth and fantasy as both are merely ideas to be tried out. The film thus implied is in effect a parody of Gide's *Les Faux-Monnayeurs*—in Gide's novel only one character is writing a notebook on the novel that he thinks of writing. Most artists are rather diffident about advancing their notebooks as the finished article but I suppose it can be said here that if the subject is tentative the baroque form is not. However, even if one admits such practice to be valid, the notebook in question still plays with a notion that is or should be fundamentally serious. And if the notion is not reached by experience which is felt to be urgent, to matter, then the cynicism implied is itself trivial and empty and the work that conveys it, fraudulent. The film offers no evidence at all of any existential experience; it offers only indifference and boredom. Such being the case, M. Resnais would seem to be better employed filming guides to baroque architecture—preferably without commentaries by M. Robbe-Grillet.

If *L'Année dernière à Marienbad* is to be taken at what appears to be the Resnais—Robbe-Grillet evaluation, there seems to be no reason why one should ever draw a critical line; discrimination would be pointless. Cocteau's *Orphée* had a Parisian *littérateur* coming out with a book of poems (it may have been a journal) entitled *Nu* and *nu* it was—every page being blank. Anyone who has looked at commentaries done on *Thematic Apperception Tests* knows that the blank page in the middle can be extremely revealing; but this is partly or entirely because it is preceded by a series of actual pictures. M. Resnais' film is not composed of blank shots, not in the literal sense, but the result is much as if it were.

Both by default and also because M. Resnais' camera is so ingenious and striking in its baroque manner, the film reveals extraordinarily vividly how closely the visual image depends on one's conviction in the subject and how uninteresting the visual is

when unsupported and exclusive. The striking feature of M. Resnais' style is indeed its baroque quality. Just why the baroque style was thought to be appropriate is uncertain—unless one is to play on words by saying that the baroque attempted an illusion of reality. Quite as intellectually and visually ambitious, no less subtle and positing a very strongly felt context, Teshigahara's *Woman of the Dunes* in contrast amply justifies its distinctive style. I think Teshigahara's work must be considered minor, though unquestionably distinguished: minor, because, though achieved almost entirely visually, it suffers from the restrictions of a thesis about the human condition, a very intelligent and compelling thesis but still a thesis; but it is distinguished and moving precisely because Teshigahara is clearly and convincingly involved with the whole of the visual image. Hence, his film demands a response that is *engagé*.

Those who just aren't *engagé* (supposing such a state to be possible) are not likely to feel much either way about M. Resnais' film and his attempt at a cinematic *poésie pure* (M. Resnais' fly has a highly developed aesthetic sense). It is clearly for those who do not want to be *engagé*, to be in any way morally involved. A positive disinclination to feel and explore has to be present in an entirely sympathetic response to *L'Année dernière à Marienbad* as it is in the work itself. So positive a disinclination may well be thought an ironic admission of the claims of actual experience.

THE PARADOX OF HUMOUR:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF *DON*
QUIXOTE

by D. VAN MAELSAEKE

Folly and absurdity being as inseparable from the condition of human life as misfortune and crime, tragedy and comedy are more closely related to one another than is generally accepted. Man is, indeed, to put it in Hazlitt's words: 'The only animal that laughs and weeps'¹ because he is struck by the contrast between what he is and what he would like to be. That is why tragic and comic experience are never far apart in human life or in art and why in Ancient Greece both tragedy and comedy naturally sprang from the same orgiastic worship of Dionysius who, as the god of wine, was at the same time the god of death and rebirth, of despair and ecstatic joy, of fear and laughter. According to Nietzsche the comic is nothing more than the transition from momentary fear into short-lived exhilaration; 'In the tragic phenomenon, man passes quickly from great enduring exuberance into great fear, but as amongst mortals great and lasting exuberance is much rarer than the cause for fear, there is far more comedy than tragedy in the world.'²

However, when laughing at absurdity and awkwardness, hypocrisy and affectation, when deriding fools and those who pretend to be wise, we should not overlook that our laughing too often reveals satisfaction with ourselves or contempt for those about us. We usually laugh at that in others which is a serious matter to ourselves and always discover, too late, that self-love is stronger than sympathy. Real world-derision, however, is also self-derision. Without doubt, it requires much mature wisdom as a result of tragic experience and a high degree of honesty to laugh as freely at one's own illusions as at those of our fellow-men.

Humour is a way of looking at life, which is likely to appear whenever mankind is able to look critically at its own ideals. Although it is more easily recognized than defined, humour implies that old roguish philosophy of life, according to which life is worth while, provided we temper Utopian desire for heroic achievement with cool level-headed commonsense. Paradoxically humour is a very serious matter, a superior attitude of mind, gained through

the profound observation of the divorce between what things are and what they ought to be.

Such a superior humoristic attitude towards the irreconcilability of idealism and reality is pre-eminently Cervantes' attitude towards the two principal characters of his *Don Quixote*³: Don Quixote, the Utopian of whom it can be said that 'if he did not achieve great things, he died attempting them',⁴ and Sancho Panza, the realist who easily reconciles himself with the world as he finds it.

World-derision, which is at the same time self-derision, induced Cervantes to make *Don Quixote* the tragi-comic revenge of a disillusioned man on a world which can never altogether destroy the right to dream. There is a strange irony in the fact that *Don Quixote* was written by an author who had been 'more versed in adversity than in verse' and who had gained his superior humoristic view of the world through his disillusionment as a soldier, the hardships of Moorish captivity in Algiers, and the shabbiness of Spanish lower officialdom in Andalusia. Moreover, when Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra (1547-1616) wrote his tragi-comic epic of human heroism he had been struck by the discrepancy between the outward show of splendour and the inner emptiness of a Spanish empire where, as a result of political disasters (e.g. the defeat of the Invincible Armada) and exhaustion by the vainglorious adventure of the conquest of the New World, the Age of Gold had gradually though definitely shifted into a new age of iron and become almost as unreal as a romance of chivalry.

Cervantes found the courage to express his tragic sense of life in a book which was to fascinate readers as various as Fielding, Heine, Sainte-Beuve and Dostoevsky⁵ and which will be re-interpreted as long as mankind is concerned with the incompatibility of illusion and truth.

Certainly *Don Quixote* had been first conceived as a story about a mad hidalgo who sets out to imitate the fantastic deeds of knights-errant related in the romances of chivalry. Yet the more the narrative progressed, the more Cervantes had grown aware of his own strange affinity with a hero who, like himself, set out to reform life only to return conquered by it. Don Quixote no longer remained a mere buffoon but soon was to embody the author's own frustrated desire to play a noble part in the world.

No doubt, when Alonso Quijano imagines himself to be the knight-errant, Don Quixote de la Mancha, in the service of Dulcinea of Toboso, a peasant girl whom his imagination has transformed into a princess of incomparable beauty, he is mad. Reality has to bow to 'the strangest fancy that ever madman had in the whole world'⁶ and his fancy easily turns windmills and wine-

skins into giants, inns into castles and a barber's basin into the helmet of Mambrino.

However, we soon discover that his madness is, as Cohen says⁷, something we all share in so far as we tend to build belief upon illusions, and that Don Quixote simply embodies the protest of imagination against the limitations of reality.

As a matter of fact, Cervantes wanted to deride the vogue of romances of chivalry, which had fascinated readers as various as the Emperor Charles V, Saint Teresa of Avila and Cervantes himself in his youth but, as a true humorist, he could not be only destructive and he soon discovered the noble background of his hero's absurdities. That is why he allowed Don Quixote to become a profoundly human hero, endowed with rare gifts of head and heart, who is only ridiculous in so far as he grows presumptuous through Utopianism. We remain emotionally on the knight's side even when he makes us laugh at his fantastic adventures and his grandiloquent conversations about the glory and fame of chivalry, the gaining of kingdoms, the malice of enchanters and the beauty of Dulcinea.

As a knight-errant Don Quixote is indeed the embodiment of the Utopian, who always believes himself to be born in an iron age to revive the age of gold and who is looking to a perished past because in the present 'sloth triumphs over industry, idleness over labour, vice over virtue, presumption over valour and theory over the practice of arms, which only lived and flourished in the Golden Age and among knights-errant'.⁸

To Don Quixote knight-errantry is at once a religion, a science and an art, and Don Diego de Miranda is given an enthusiastic apology for the noble vocation of chivalry which, in the hero's mind, summarizes all or most of the abilities of an *uomo universale*.⁹ On the other hand Don Quixote's belief in enchantment gives evidence of the precariousness of his vocation. The Knight of the Sad Countenance is happy, in spite of disaster, because he has girt himself with the armour of phantasy. As a pet-child of the gods, he has been struck with blindness, which prevents him from succumbing to despair. He denies that everything to do with knight-errantry is folly and nonsense and, in order to preserve his illusions, believes that a crew of enchanters change and alter all his deeds and transform them according to their pleasure and desire either to favour or to injure him. Even when after his second luckless expedition he is brought home as a prisoner in a cage, his belief in enchantment is the only refuge for securing his phantasy against the claims of reality: 'I most certainly know that I am enchanted and that is sufficient to ease my conscience, which

would be greatly burdened if I thought that I was not under a spell, and yet remained in this cage as an idler and a coward, defrauding the many distressed and needy of the succour I could give them.¹⁰

Don Quixote is, as Don Diego's son remarks, only 'mad in patches full of lucid streaks'¹¹ and his sanity in madness is irrefutable evidence that in the Knight of the Sad Countenance we meet one of those heroes who, like Hamlet and Faust, confront us with the better part of ourselves. There is a great deal of both Christian and purely worldly humanism in the knight's discourses on education, the duties of a governor, the mutability of greatness, and life as a stage. Moreover, we cannot fail to see the typical Spanish blending of ethical and aesthetic ratiocinations, when Don Quixote discusses the pre-eminence of Arms above Letters as the shortest way to peace: 'That (=the object of learning) is certainly a lofty and generous aim, and highly praiseworthy, though not so much so as the profession of Arms, whose aim and object is peace, the greatest good which men can desire in this life. For the first good news the world and mankind received was proclaimed by the angels on that night which was our day, when they sang in the sky: "Glory to God in the highest and peace on earth to men of good will", . . . this peace is the true aim of war.'¹² The reckless adventurer in search of an Eldorado never to be found gradually develops into a philosopher. He no longer throws himself into adventures for the sake of adventures themselves. Instead of remaining the victim of his own madness, he becomes more the sport of fortune and the butt for the intrigues of others like the Duke and the Duchess. Sadness soon gets the upper hand of courage and there is a painful disproportion between the sublime humour of character displaying itself in the eternal dialogue of misunderstandings between Don Quixote and Sancho, and the triviality of burlesque adventures like that with the wooden horse Clavileño.

Don Quixote's defeat is that of a man who is broken by life as a result of his wish to rise above the monotony of the workaday world. As Brenan says, he stands for the idealist who has ruined himself by too generous illusions and too much confidence in the goodness of human nature. He is the man who, unable to compromise, has so absolutely imposed his own nobility that he has become aware only too late of his presumption. As a humanist who, like Montaigne, had gained a superior insight into the relativity of truth, from profound observation of a declining world, Cervantes felt the contrast between the presumption of the attempt

to reform the world by returning to a desperately perished past and the hero's innate good sense.

Don Quixote is defeated by the Knight of the Moon, who is none other than the disguised barber of his own village and the embodiment of reality. Through this failure as a Utopian Don Quixote is cured of his presumption; ' . . . every man is the architect of his own destiny. I have been so of mine, but have failed in the necessary prudence, and so my presumption has brought me to disaster'.¹³ He is no longer Don Quixote de la Mancha but Alonso Quijano the Good who, by a final return to discretion, as a mark of genuine humanity, 'only lived a fool and died wise'.¹⁴

Don Quixote returns to his village to die. Sancho, on the other hand, returns to live on in peace with the world. Sancho Panza, the squire from whom the Knight of the Sad Countenance is never separated, is in this tragi-comic mirror of humanity the touchstone of reality. He is a blunt man whom Don Quixote persuaded so insistently that he made up his mind to follow the new-born knight-errant and to serve him as a squire. Sancho has not read romances of chivalry because he cannot read at all, but he distinguishes himself by a fairly materialistic philosophy of experience and popular wisdom. He personifies the claims of reality against those of illusion. Eating, drinking, and sleeping rank high in his order of things and one could hardly imagine a more characteristic scene than that of Camacho's wedding, when Sancho's heart is filled with gloom as he sees himself dragged away from the flesh-pots of Egypt. He has to leave them behind him 'though he bore them with him in his heart; their skimmings in the cooking-pot, although almost consumed to the last, representing for him the glory and plenty of the good things he had lost'.¹⁵ Sancho loves good living and cannot understand why his master should look for unnecessary dangers in search of luckless adventures. His shrewdness and common sense prevent him from preferring a dead hero to a living coward: ' . . . for I've no courage and I'm no knight'.¹⁶

To Sancho a windmill is a windmill and a barber's basin is not Mambrino's helmet. He wonders what reason Don Quixote can have for going mad and for doing penance in the Sierra Morena. When Don Quixote, in imitation of what he has read in the books of chivalry, intends to have a sad face painted on his shield so that he may be known as the Knight of the Sad Countenance, Sancho says: 'There is no need to waste time and money on painting a face, Your Worship has only to uncover your own and show it to anyone who looks at you and they will call you the

Knight of the Sad Countenance all right, without any picture or shield.¹⁷ Sancho's interest in knight-errantry has its roots in plain self-interest and when Maritornes, the Asturian maid of the inn Don Quixote took for a castle, asks him what knight-errantry means, Sancho frankly replies: ' . . . a knight-errant . . . is beaten up one day and made Emperor the next. Today he's the most unfortunate and poverty-stricken creature in the world; tomorrow he'll have two or three kingdoms to give to his squire'.¹⁸ Even when he gets his governorship of the isle, his ambitions keep their roots in reality and his natural shrewdness prevents him from soaring too high above the field of his possibilities. Although as a governor he combines little learning with sound judgment so that he easily gains the confidence of the village that the Duke and the Duchess have given him for an island, he is soon aware of the instability of human power as well as of the relativity of idealism. Sancho is easily cured of his presumption and, while saddling his ass, comforts himself with proverbial wisdom: 'Here in this stable I will leave the ant wings that carried me up into the air for the martins and other birds to peck at. Let's come back to earth and steady walking, for if I'm not to look smart in slashed Cordova shoes, I shan't be short of rough hemp sandals. Every ewe to her mate, and let no one stretch his leg more than the length of his sheet'.¹⁹

Although Sancho is as selfish as Don Quixote is disinterested in his vain pursuit of an imaginary good, he cannot always keep on the safe side of custom and tradition. His happy ignorance does not remain unaffected by Don Quixote's high-mindedness and, frankly materialistic though he is, he has the common man's instinctive belief in the marvellous together with an undeniable capacity for hero-worship. Sancho loves his master dearly: 'I should have left my master days ago if I had been wise. But that was my lot and my ill-luck. I can do nothing else; I have to follow him, we're of the same village; I've eaten his bread, I love him dearly; I'm grateful to him; he gave me his ass-colts; and what is more I'm faithful; and so it's impossible for anything to part us except the man with the pick and the shovel'.²⁰ The more Sancho becomes the worthy lay-brother of the order of knight-errantry, the more he grows to be a charming popular philosopher whose shrewdness is immortalized in strings of proverbs, which in Sancho's conversations with his master are the voice of common sense. Sancho's peculiar charm of character will always be found in his humorous remarks on the mutability of life, the inevitability of death, the eternal conflict between those who have and those who have not, and the whimsicality of Fortune.

There is sublime humour in Cervantes' attitude towards the contrast between Don Quixote's noble madness and Sancho's realism which are as characteristic of the whole of mankind as of the Spanish character with its strange blending of recklessness, courtesy, and fatalism. We are indeed all to a certain degree Don Quixote and Sancho Panza according to our own temperament and the spirit of the age. We usually start as Don Quixote setting out to reform the world in order to return reconciled to it, and the more Don Quixote dies in us, the more Sancho lives on. Both Don Quixote's and Sancho Panza's views of life are inherent to humanity and as Renan says: 'La plus humble comme la plus sublime intelligence a eu sa façon de concevoir le monde; chaque tête pensante a été à sa guise le miroir de l'univers; chaque être vivant a eu son rêve qui l'a charmé, élevé, consolé; grandiose ou mesquin, plat ou sublime, ce rêve a été sa philosophie'.²¹

The universality of Cervantes' laughter reveals itself unambiguously in the many contradictory interpretations of Don Quixote's and Sancho Panza's character, which since the seventeenth century have thrown light upon the discrepancy between illusion and truth. As the author wished in his prologue, the reading of *Don Quixote* has made the melancholy laugh and the merry laugh louder; the fools have not been confused, the intelligent admire his invention, and the prudent do not withhold their praise.

During the eighteenth century with its tendency to make the enlightened best of human existence by a combination of practical humanitarianism and satire, the influence of Cervantes together with that of Richardson, Fielding, Sterne and Lesage also became a creative force in German literature of the Enlightenment. It was Cervantes who revealed to the young Wieland (1733-1813) the danger of a pre-eminence of idealism over reality for the harmonious development of personality. After a sentimental and pietistic youth and as a result of his conversion to a gay Rococo philosophy of life (Biberach period: 1760-1769), Wieland wrote his satirical novel *Don Sylvio de Rosalva* (1764) in close imitation of Cervantes. The story of Don Sylvio, who has been overwhelmed by imagination and who sets out to discover imagination in reality till he is cured of his presumption and is conquered by earthly love, proclaims, as the subtitle of the novel explains, the victory of nature and common sense over fantastic enthusiasm (*der Sieg der Natur über die Schwärmerei*). Wieland wanted to ridicule the sentimental and pietistic education which had been his own so that we cannot do justice to his interpretation of Cervantes by regarding it as a mere imitation of satirical name-giving and a caricature of

a literary vogue for fairy tales. It is obvious that Wieland had a deeper insight into Cervantes' work than most of his contemporaries. Although he did not read a tragic meaning into *Don Quixote* he must have considered it to be a superior satire on human eccentricity. *Don Sylvio de Rosalva* is a novel illustrating world-derision through self-derision on Wieland's way to enlightened humanitarianism (Agathòn 1795). Besides, a verse romance like *Musarion* (1768) carries on the same theme and, in a similar way to *Don Sylvio*, Phantias is cured of his enthusiasm for both platonic and stoic philosophical systems through his love for *Musarion* who brings him back to earth. *Don Sylvio's* and *Phantias'* return to common sense is part of the enlightened poet's surrender to the laws of nature and reason, with its harmony between reality and ideal.

As a result of its practical humanism and of its belief in the perfectibility of human nature combined with an immovable confidence in individual and social progress, the Enlightenment failed to look beyond the foolishness of *Don Quixote*. Wieland, Lichtenberg, and even Lessing who, as a result of his own tragic experiences in the struggle for liberty and tolerance, looked beyond the limitations of an exclusively rationalistic view of life, seem not to have been aware of the strange mixture of foolishness and wisdom in *Don Quixote's* character.

Only Bodmer (1698-1783), the Swiss leader of the revolt against Gottsched's reform of the theatre in particular and of poetry in general, had more understanding of the deeper meaning of *Don Quixote's* character. Contrary to Gottsched, who under the influence of Horace and Boileau clung to the principle that poetry was a product of reason governed by laws, Bodmer and his fellow-countryman Breitinger (1701-1776) endeavoured to reform literature by finding out how the author's work was conceived and by analysing the impression it left upon the reader. No wonder that Bodmer discovered behind the external eccentricity of *Don Quixote's* character a fine sanity in folly: 'Don Quichote ist in einem vornehmen Stück ein Narr, im andern ist er weise, und so sind alle Menschen'. (*Don Quixote* is for the greater part a fool, partly however he is wise and so is everybody.)²³

Bodmer prepared the way for Hamann (1730-88) and Herder (1744-1803). Herder replaced the rationalist's confidence in progress by a pantheistic belief in the organic development of nature and history and he felt intuitively the deeper unity of poetical expression throughout the ages and beyond the borders of nations. Herder came to a juster though typically romantic revaluation of the spirit of the Middle Ages, the essence of which he discovered

in the blending of Christian, Germanic, Romance and Moorish culture.²⁴ Herder's poetical translations of old Spanish and Moorish romances in *Stimmen der Völker* ('Voices of the Nations', 1778-79) are part of this rehabilitation of medieval literature as well as his German version of the Spanish *Poema de mio Cid*, which is as characteristic a Spanish 'cantar de gesta' as the *Chanson de Roland* is typically French.²⁵ Although Herder saw in *Don Quixote* an attack of common sense on foolishness, he condemned the negative attitude towards the fantastic world of Spanish romances and at the same time pointed out the realistic elements in Cervantes' novel as a mirror of Spanish culture.²⁶

Herder's creative and critical activity runs parallel to a general interest in Spanish culture which, in Goethe's time (1749-1832), was favourably influenced by W. von Humboldt (1767-1835) and J. G. Rist whose travel records soon made Spain one of the exemplary nations in German eyes. Goethe's interest in world poetry cannot be separated from his intuitive insight into the organic unity of artistic creation between the Orient and Europe: 'Nur wer Hafis liebt und kennt, weiss was Calderon gesungen' ('Only he who loves and knows Hafis, knows what Calderon sang').²⁷ Goethe's interest in Spanish literature was indeed part of his view on world literature and in his conversations with Eckermann (1827) he says that the age of national literatures will be followed by world citizenship through world literature (*Weltliteratur*).²⁸ Although the poet of Faust never visited Spain himself, he was given a realistic image of Spanish culture through W. von Humboldt's letters. We can assume with F. Strich that Goethe must have appreciated a work like Cervantes' *Don Quixote* from the time when, as a result of his rebirth in Italy (1786-87), he got rid of the undermining illusions and ambitions of his Storm-and-Stress period and managed to reconcile in a harmonious personality the claims of humanitarian and artistic ideals with those of scientific and social activities which likewise shape human life.

In 1821 Goethe had grown familiar with old Spanish poetry through Don Juan Nicolas de Pöhl de Faber's anthology (*Floresta de Rimas antiguas Castellanas*), and in his criticism of Beauregard Pandin's and K. F. von Jarige's translation of Spanish romances in *Kunst und Altertum* (1823) he intuitively pointed out, as the chief characteristic of the Spanish genius, that it tended to embody ideas in common life: 'Nun ist aber keine Nation vorzuführen, welche die Idee unmittelbar im allgemeinen und gemeinsten Leben zu verkörpern geneigt wäre als die spanische . . .' ('One cannot find any nation which so tends to incorporate ideas into general and common life as Spain').²⁹

As soon as an idea, noble and exalted though it is, is embodied in reality without being tragic, it soon degenerates into fancy or fantastic enthusiasm which, in the eyes of common people, is quickly identified with madness. Goethe was aware of the inevitable comic consequences of a Utopianism like that of Don Quixote which tends to reform the world by embodying ideas and which seldom leads to pity: 'Indem die Idee als phantastisch erscheint, hat sie keinen Wert mehr; daher denn auch das Phantastische, das an der Wirklichkeit zugrunde geht, kein Mitleiden erregt, sondern lächerlich wird, weil es komische Verhältnisse veranlasst, die dem heitern Böswilligen gar glücklich zusagen' ('When an idea appears to be fantastic it loses its value; so the fantastical which perishes in contact with reality, arouses no pity but becomes ridiculous as it brings about comic situations which delight the malicious').³⁰ On the other hand Goethe was conscious of the tragic background of such an idealism which ruins the noblest intentions: ' . . . selbst das Gefäß, in welchem sie (= die Idee) sich manifestiert, geht eben, wenn es diese Reinheit behaupten will, darüber zugrunde' ('Even the character in whom the idea is manifested perishes at the very moment when he wants to uphold its purity').³¹ The conflict between the Sublime (das Erhabene) and the Trivial (das Gemeine) was in Goethe's eyes the main theme of both humoristic Spanish romances and Cervantes' *Don Quixote* whereas he recognized the unique value of the attempt to surmount the contradictions of human life by a superior humoristic attitude: 'Ich müsste mich besinnen, um etwas zu finden das uns Deutschen in dieser Art gelungen wäre . . . die Quetschung ist nie tragisch, nie tödlich, sondern man muss am Ende lächeln und man wünschte sich nur einen solchen Humor, um dergleichen zu singen oder singen zu hören' ('It would be difficult for me to point to a successful German example in this line . . . the injury is never tragic, never fatal, but in the end one is forced to smile and only wish to possess such humour in order to produce something of this kind or to appreciate it').³²

Deficiency in humour as a result of a lack of insight into the relativity of ideas was in Goethe's eyes a negative aspect of German idealism (Fichte's transcendentalism). Being gifted with an extremely realistic view of the world as a result of his close contact with nature and his confidence in a sound philosophy of experience, Goethe was more than any other German of the classical age aware of the dangers and contradictions of both Spanish and German idealism. In one of his conversations with Eckermann he points out that enthusiasm for Kant's ethical ideas of inner freedom (*innere Freiheit*) had physically ruined a noble

poet like Schiller because it had made him overlook the limitations of reality. In another conversation with Eckermann Goethe answers the question as to the leading idea of *Faust* by censuring the German tendency always to look for abstract ideas behind the reality of life and art.³³ Moreover, Schiller himself stressed in his letters about *Don Carlos* how soon in a Utopian like the Marquis de Posa the pursuit of the general good of mankind degenerates into presumption and scrupulosity, when he sacrifices a friend's security to the realization of an idea.³⁴

We are not allowed to read into Goethe's own achievements like *Faust* and *Wilhelm Meister* even the slightest direct influence of Cervantes' work, but the relationship of the poet of *Faust* to the author of *Don Quixote* must be found in those strange affinities which, beyond the borders of ages and countries, will always give evidence of a human, too human tendency underlying all great works of art. We cannot but recognize the strong similarity in the superior ironical attitude of both Goethe and Cervantes to heroes like Wilhelm Meister and Don Quixote. When Wilhelm Meister, the chief character of Goethe's celebrated 'Entwicklungsroman', imagines himself to be born an artist through his idealistic illusions in the field of theatrical reform, the contact with reality soon brings him nearer to the disillusioning though purifying insight that his true vocation is not in a longed-for career on the stage. As he advances from apprentice to master (*Lehrjahre*) and from master to world citizen (*Wanderjahre*) he learns to recognize the constructive rôle of a harmonious personality in the framework and the service of society. *Wilhelm Meister* and *Don Quixote* are both mirrors of their authors' inner development. Both Goethe and Cervantes surmounted the incompatibility of illusion and truth by a superior attitude towards the vicissitudes of the world.

Goethe realized what Herder had dreamt of and what the Romantics failed to realize: the unity of life and art. The brothers Schlegel, Tieck, and Novalis found in Spanish literature what they hopelessly sought for in their own age. Spain had never known a break with the Middle Ages. In contrast with Italy and France, Spain had received the Renaissance without being overpowered by it, so that, as Bell says, it seemed less a rebirth of antiquity than a full flowering of the Middle Ages. With an exceptional comprehensiveness Spanish literature of the Golden Age had combined popular realism and humanism in lyrical poetry (Gongora, Lope de Vega), in drama (Calderon de la Barca, Lope de Vega) and in prose (Cervantes, Quevedo). It is not surprising that the Spanish genius, in its 'wide embrace of contrasts', had inclined to a superior humoristic view of life with its co-existence of reality and ideal in

both timeless harmony and struggle. The Romantics were fascinated by the timelessness of the struggle between truth and illusion and as a result of their own deracination overlooked the deeper harmony of the Spanish soul which easily reconciles the restless activity of Western man with the fatalism of the East. They looked upon *Don Quixote* as upon a baroque fresco of the most contradictory aspects of Spanish life in particular and human life in general.

When in 1797 F. Schlegel (1772-1829) read *Don Quixote* in the original text together with Cervantes' other prose works (*Exemplary Novels*) he expressed his enthusiasm in letters and in the new literary periodical *Das Athenäum* (1798-1800). Schlegel finds Cervantes' *Don Quixote unnachahmlich* (inimitable); it is in his eyes a lively picture of Spanish life and character, not a true satire but 'ernste, tragische Dichtung' (a serious, tragical work)³⁵. A. W. Schlegel (1767-1845) read the whole work of Cervantes during the years 1797-99 and made comments on *Don Quixote* in the comparative lectures he delivered in Jena and Berlin.³⁶ Joining with Schiller's classical criticism he points out the essential conflict of Cervantes' work as the main conflict between prose and poetry in life: 'In diesem Roman stossen und vereinigen sich die beiden grossen Kräfte des Lebens: die Prosa in der Person Sanchos und die von Don Quijote edel vertretene Poesie' ('In this novel both great powers of life repel and attract each other: prose in Sancho's character, and poetry nobly represented by Don Quixote).³⁷

A. W. Schlegel pointed out the complexity of Don Quixote's character with its blending of nobility, wisdom and foolishness: ' . . . denn Don Quijote war "übrigens ein verständiger und tugendhafter Mann bis auf die eine Narrheit, dass er die Ritterschaft auf eine Weise handhaben wollte, wie es der Geist der Zeiten nicht mehr gestattete' ('For Don Quixote was a wise and virtuous man and only a fool in so far as he wanted to maintain chivalry in a way which the spirit of the ages no longer allowed').³⁸ Moreover, as the translator of both Shakespeare's and Calderon de la Barca's plays, Schlegel was aware of the affinity in the creative process of Elizabethan and Spanish drama and Cervantes' novel-writing with its mixture of tragedy and comedy, verse and prose, the heroic and the pastoral, romance and realism, ethical precepts and literary criticism: ' . . . man kann wohl ohne Bedenken versichern, dass wer sich nicht in die Kompositionen des Cervantes zu finden weiss, wer die unendliche Tiefe darin nicht ahnt, wenig Hoffnung hat den Shakespeare zu begreifen' (one can say that whoever does not enter into Cervantes' works, and does

not feel its infinite depth, has little hope of understanding Shakespeare).³⁹

Cervantes' fame in Germany was definitely established by L. Tieck's brilliant translation of *Don Quixote* (1773-1853). Like F. Schlegel Tieck emphasized the tragic aspect of Don Quixote's character; he made Don Quixote a martyr of idealism and did not overlook the mixture of tragic and comic elements in Cervantes' sublimated parody which at the same time condemned Don Quixote's foolishness, without neglecting the praise of his nobility and wisdom.⁴⁰

The German Romantics mythicized Don Quixote as they mythicized the Greeks⁴¹, Shakespeare (*Hamlet*) and even Goethe (*Faust*).⁴² In *Don Quixote* they found realized what they believed to be a new mythology of the Middle Ages.⁴³ Moreover they discovered, in Cervantes' attitude towards the incompatibility of ideal and reality, that superior ironical attitude which has nothing in common with sarcasm or raillery, but overcomes the conflict between illusion and truth with a cheerful though in fact deeply serious laughter.

Cheerful laughter rooted in superiority towards the vicissitudes of human life is the main creative force of Jean Paul Richter's (1763-1825) humorous-satirical writings. From a belated *Stürmer und Dränger* who equally countered enlightened rationalism (Kant), Weimar classicism (Goethe and Schiller), and Romanticism, J. Paul developed into a true humorist who joined profound insight into the irreconcilability of the heart's infinite longings with the petty restrictions of every day to a never-failing ability to feel at one with life in all its positive and negative aspects. Jean Paul completed German classical aestheticism by justifying humour as an equivalent to and a counterpart of 'the Beautiful' (das Schöne) and the 'Sublime' (das Erhabene). In his *Vorschule der Ästhetik* (1804) he defined humour as 'the Sublime in reverse' (das umgekehrt Erhabene) and in his own novels and stories he managed to combine, like Laurence Sterne in *Tristram Shandy* and the *Sentimental Journey*, the Trivial and the Sublime. Having lost himself very often in coarse digressions he knows how by a sudden sublime change to show us sincere dignity and an enviable nobility of mind. As a result of his own pessimistic experiences of life Jean Paul had a keen sympathy for the humble and the poor whom he likes to transpose into a self-created world of idyllic happiness in spite of clumsy reality (*Quintus Fixlein, Wuz*). Humour has not been deficient in German literature since Jean Paul created such characters as Siebenkäs, who in spite of his

satirical whims and his sentimental enthusiasm for lofty though unpractical ideals, saves himself by sane self-criticism from a tragic conflict with the work-a-day world. Like Cervantes, Jean Paul was aware of the mature wisdom and the deep seriousness underlying a true sense of humour: 'Wenn der Mensch die unendliche Welt mit der kleinen ausmisst und verknüpft, so entsteht jenes Lachen, worin noch ein Schmerz und eine Grösse ist'. (When measuring and linking the infinite world with daily life, there arises a laughter in which there is still sorrow and greatness.)⁴⁴

A true humorist does not only deride the world by drawing a caricature of it; he also never spares himself, because by deriding his own vicissitudes he soars above the bounds of human conditions which he recognizes to be 'human, too human'. A humorist without love of life is no humorist at all. Jean Paul was aware of it and in characters like Leibgeber (*Siebenkäs*), Schoppe (*Titan*) and Vult (*Flegeljahre*) he illustrates the destructive force of sardonic humour. With superior melancholy and infinite scepticism, Leibgeber, Schoppe and Vult look upon life as upon an awkward farce till they ruin themselves by destroying in others the illusions they had first destroyed in their own lives. Like Goethe in *Tasso*, Jean Paul deals in the *Flegeljahre* (1804) with the irreconcilability of romanticism with reality. Both the world of illusion and action have their value in life although they will always affect each other without ever bridging the gulf. Moreover, this insight Jean Paul shares both with Cervantes and Goethe. Jean Paul recognized the universality of Cervantes' tragi-comic mirror of life when he wrote: 'Cervantes—dessen Genius zu gross war zu einem langen Spasse über eine zufällige Verrückung und eine gemeine Einfalt—führt die humoristische Parallele zwischen Realismus und Idealismus, zwischen Leib und Seele, vor dem Angesichte der unendlichen Gleichung durch und sein Zwillingsgestirn der Torheit steht über dem ganzen Menschengeschlecht' (Cervantes whose genius was too great for a long joke on accidental madness and common simplicity draws a parallel between idealism and reality, body and soul in the light of eternity and his Twins of Madness stand above the whole of mankind).⁴⁵

Humour and irony are a gift for the cultivated few because they imply a creative mind and a superior philosophical outlook on the world. Statements which on first reading seem to be absurd or contradictory often reveal through their piquancy and unexpectedness a better understanding of human incongruities. There are many such statements in the great dialogue of misunderstanding between Don Quixote and Sancho Panza. As a result of the para-

doxes in his own life and art Heine (1797-1856) was to discover them very soon in Cervantes' novel.

Even as a romantic youth Heine had been strangely attracted by the fate of the Knight of the Sad Countenance and in his satirical though very poetical *Reisebilder* he gives us a poetical account of his first acquaintance with *Don Quixote*. Lacking at a young age the deeper insight into the irony of the world, he had taken the work at its face value, although he had not been able to master the feeling that being derided and despised was an essential part of greatness. Instinctively he had taken the side of the luckless hero who was later to embody some of his own noblest illusions. He had felt that the heroic will of the Knight to reform the world was not less worthy of admiration when the lion turned tail on him without wishing to fight and that his deeds were not less praiseworthy as a result of the weakness of his frame, the brittleness of his armour, and the worthlessness of his palfrey.⁴⁶

Heine read *Don Quixote* in the most various moods and circumstances. We can even say that his contradictory comments on the principal characters of Cervantes' work run parallel to the paradoxes of his own development as a man and as an artist. Heine was a polemist gifted with an unusual sense of cutting irony. As a man who refused to compromise and who often clung to principles for the sake of principles themselves and in order to challenge convention, fighting windmills in the service of the ideas of the French Revolution (liberty, fraternity, equality) had appeared to him the most laudable thing in life.⁴⁷

Heine was aware of his being 'a Don Quixote in reverse': whereas the hidalgo of the Mancha had been desirous of restoring the past to its early splendour, Heine fought the old order of things. Rousseau and Mirabeau had been the initiators of Heine's Utopianism as the heroes of the romances of chivalry had been those of Don Quixote.⁴⁸ Moreover, his optimistic belief in the possibility of realizing ideals had cost him as much as they did Don Quixote himself. In 1831 Heine had to leave Germany for Paris, leaving many enemies and very few friends. The shadows of the Knight of the Sad Countenance and his level-headed squire followed him into exile, as they were later to accompany Thomas Mann on his emigration from Nazi Germany to his new 'Heimat' in the United States.⁴⁹

However, Heine was soon to discover his strange affinity with Don Quixote and Sancho Panza in another sense. Apart from the results of his political quixotry Heine was aware of the paradoxes of his own personality which was perpetually torn between idealism and realism, spiritualism and sensualism. His hopeless attempt to

reconcile in his soul Jewish spirituality with the paganism of the Greek gods in exile (*Die Götter im Exil*) enabled him to look upon his own incongruities and those of history with a rare superiority of mind. The cleavage between what was 'human, too human' in him and the illusions of the heart made him soon discover a deeper, more realistic sense in Cervantes' study of madness. In *Die romantische Schule* (1833), the literary outcome of Heine's Saint Simonian belief in the reconcilability of such contradictory worlds as life and art, he not only wrote a brilliant essay on German romantic literature in the light of his two-way interpretation of Germany and French literature. In addition, he wanted to denounce the renaissance of medieval spirituality in Romanticism, with its flight into the past, as a denial of the value of contemporary life. Heine discovered a subtle irony of chance in the fact that the young Romantic generation (Schlegel, Tieck) was to give the best appreciation and translation of a book like Cervantes' *Don Quixote* in which their own folly (returning to a hopelessly perished past) is delightfully satirized.⁵⁰ No doubt Heine attacks many of his own quixotic illusions in this remark but nevertheless in his discussion of Tieck's translation of Cervantes' work the question whether Cervantes really wanted to parody idealistic inspiration in his tall, lean knight, and common sense in his fat squire, is answered in an extremely realistic tone.

Certainly Sancho Panza is still, in Heine's eyes, the materialistic companion of Don Quixote's dream, who with his plain common sense and his proverbs, must all the same trot along after Don Quixote on his easy-paced donkey, led by his instinctive belief in his master.

Nevertheless, Heine also shows the reverse of the medal in the conflict between body and soul. The poor materialistic Sancho has much to suffer for his fidelity to the spiritual Don Quixote as a result of his vain attempts to bring the Utopian back to earth. 'Wirklich, der Leib scheint oft mehr Einsicht zu haben als der Geist und der Mensch denkt oft viel richtiger mit Rücken und Magen als mit dem Kopf' (Indeed, the body often seems to have more insight than the soul, and men frequently think far better with back and belly than with the head).⁵¹

During the years 1835-40, however successful they may have been for Heine's career as a cosmopolitan writer in Paris, the struggles with German censorship and debt, the cares of an unhappy though fascinating alliance (Mathilde) and the burden of social obligations had nearly brought him to bankruptcy. During these unhappy years Heine wrote his introduction for the so-called Stuttgart translation of *Don Quixote* (1837-38). More than ever

Heine grew aware of the real background of Cervantes' novel and Cervantes soon supplanted Shakespeare in Heine's attention.

Cervantes had not only written a parody of romances of chivalry but without being fully conscious of it he had created at the same time the most sublime parody on human enthusiasm. According to Heine's changed view, quixotry is not only ridiculous in as far as it tends to call back to life a perished past and gets involved in a clash with the claims of reality. There is another extreme of quixotry which is as absurd as the desire to restore the past in its pristine splendour: anticipating the future by Utopian belief in ideas whose worth has not yet been proved. Heine's criticism of Cervantes' *Don Quixote* combines in an unequalled way the conclusions of both a romantic and realistic attitude towards human paradoxes.

Heine stressed the double merit of Cervantes who, by destroying the old romances of chivalry, had created a new genre, modern novel-writing. Cervantes' genius had been both destructive and constructive: 'So pflegen immer grosse Poeten zu verfahren: sie begründen zugleich etwas Neues, indem sie das Alte zerstören: sie negieren nie ohne etwas zu bejahen' (So great poets will ever do: they create something new by destroying the old: they never deny without affirming).⁵² Heine responds to the irresistible charm of contrast which is characteristic of Spanish culture with its blending of idealism and realism. This tendency allowed an artist like Murillo⁵³ to paint a beggar-boy as brilliantly as a madonna, and proud noblemen like Quevedo and Mendoza freed themselves from the monotony of an aristocratic existence by writing their colourful picaresque novels in which they strip life of its pleasant but misleading appearances and show us the naked struggle for life of the picaro who has no arms but innate shrewdness and who loses his innate innocence in the struggle with the world's wickedness. Unlike his contemporaries, Cervantes does not separate the contradictory worlds of illusion and truth but combines them in his universal realistic picture of Spanish life: 'Er vermischt nur das Ideale mit dem Gemeinen, das eine dient dem andern zur Abschattung oder zur Beleuchtung, und das adeltümliche Element ist darin noch eben so mächtig wie das volkstümliche' (He mixes the ideal with the vulgar, each serving to set off the other with shade or light, and the noble element is as strong as the vulgar).⁵⁴

Although he makes allowance for changing standards in literary appreciation which depend on the individual critic or the spirit of the age, Cervantes is in Heine's eyes the unrivalled master of novel-writing, finding his place in European literature next to Shakespeare and Goethe. Cervantes is the creator of the modern

epic in prose as Homer was the initiator of the epic in verse. With the great Greek classic he distinguished himself by that Olympian superiority of mind which in an age of scepticism made him write 'with the pen of conviction upon the paper of doubt'⁵⁵ the tragicomic story of human life.

¹ W. Hazlitt, *Lectures on the English Comic Writers* (P.U.P. 1951), p. 1.

² F. Nietzsche, *The Complete Works*. Ed. by O. Levy (Edinburgh 1909), p. 173.

³ *Don Quixote*. Part I (1605); Part II (1615).

⁴ *Don Quixote*. Translated by J. M. Cohen (Penguin 1952), p. 215.

⁵ cf. Fielding's *Joseph Andrews* (Preface); Sainte Beuve's *Nouveaux Lundis*. VIII (Paris 1864); Dostoevsky's *Diary*.

⁶ *Don Quixote*. (Cohen, Penguin), p. 33.

⁷ Op. cit., p. 16.

⁸ Op. cit., p. 578.

⁹ Op. cit., p. 582.

¹⁰ Op. cit., p. 434.

¹¹ Op. cit., p. 583.

¹² Op. cit., pp. 340/41.

¹³ Op. cit., p. 896.

¹⁴ Op. cit., p. 939.

¹⁵ Op. cit., p. 607.

¹⁶ Op. cit., p. 726.

¹⁷ Op. cit., p. 147.

¹⁸ Op. cit., p. 119.

¹⁹ Op. cit., p. 815.

²⁰ Op. cit., p. 687.

²¹ G. de Plinval, *Histoire de la littérature française*. (Hachette-Paris 1965), p. 219.

²² cf. F. Sengler, *Wieland* (Metzler Verlag, Stuttgart 1949).

²³ Quoted by Schramm, *Die Einwirkung der span. lit. auf die deutsche*, p. 175.

²⁴ J. G. Herder, *Schriften* (Goldmann 1960), p. 49.

²⁵ id. *Cid-Romanzen*, 1802.

²⁶ id. *Adrastea*, 1801.

²⁷ J. W. von Goethe, *Gedichte* (Dt. Buch-Gemeinschaft-Darmstadt 1959), p. 932.

²⁸ id. *Gespräche mit Eckermann*. (id.), p. 235.

²⁹ id. *Schriften zur Literatur II* (dtv Gesamtausgabe 32—München 1962), p. 65.

³⁰ Op. cit., p. 66.

³¹ Op. cit., p. 66.

³² Op. cit., p. 66.

³³ Goethe, *Gespräche mit Eckermann* (op. cit.), pp. 223, 655.

³⁴ Schiller, *Schriften zur Ästhetik, Literatur und Geschichte* (Goldmann-München 1960), 'Briefe über Don Carlos', pp. 116-117.

³⁵ Schramm, Op. cit., p. 179.

³⁶ *Über schöne Literatur und Kunst* (1801-04) and *Über dramatische Kunst und Literatur* (1809-11).

³⁷ Schramm, Op. cit., p. 179.

³⁸ A. W. Schlegel, *Geschichte der romantischen Literatur* (Kohlhammer Stuttgart 1965), p. 51.

³⁹ Op. cit., p. 213.

⁴⁰ Grillparzer, *Werke II* (dt Buch-Gemeinschaft—Darmstadt 1959), p. 551.

⁴¹ F. Schlegel, *Kritische Schriften* (Hanser München 1964), pp. 496, 508.

⁴² Heine, *Sämtliche Werke* (Bibl. Institut Leipzig o.J.), p. 291.

⁴³ A. W. Schlegel, Op. cit., p. 100.

- ⁴⁴ cf. Jean Paul. *Sämtliche Werke* XI (Böhlau-Weimar 1935), pp. 111-130.
⁴⁵ Op. cit., p. 113.
⁴⁶ Heine. *Werke*. (dt. Buch-Gemeinschaft 1959), p. 911.
⁴⁷ Op. cit., p. 910.
⁴⁸ Op. cit., pp. 914-15.
⁴⁹ T. Mann. *Meerfahrt mit Don Quixote*. (Insel 1956).
⁵⁰ Heine. *Sämtliche Werke*. (Op. cit.), p. 291.
⁵¹ Op. cit., p. 292.
⁵² Op. cit., VII. p. 313.
⁵³ Op. cit., VII. p. 313.
⁵⁴ Op. cit., VII. p. 314.
⁵⁵ Quoted by G. Brennan, *The Lit. of the Spanish People*. (Penguin 1965).

I am indebted to A. Castro *El Pensamiento de Cervantes* (Madrid 1925), J. Casaldueiro *Sentida y forma del Quijote* (Madrid 1949), S. De Madariaga *Englishmen Frenchmen Spaniards* (Oxford 1949), G. Brennan *The Literature of the Spanish People* (Penguin Books 1963, pp. 169-188), A. F. G. Bell *Cervantes* (Oklahoma University Press 1947, pp. 21-51; 176-214) and E. M. Butler *H. Heine* (Hogarth Press London 1956, pp. 90-121). The title of this essay has been suggested by the study of Jean Paul's *Vorschule der Ästhetik* (1804) and Nietzsche's *Menschliches Allzumenschliches* (1878).

CHRISTIAN NATIONAL EDUCATION

"a scare slogan and a thing of the past"

by R. G. MacMILLAN

Many South Africans, Government supporters in particular, say that Christian National Education has historical significance only and that those who endeavour to stir up controversy over the subject are clearly doing so for political and racial ends. This is a viewpoint with which I cannot agree.

In trying, therefore, to offer some appraisal of the impact of Christian National policy on South African education, it will be as well to sketch in the broad background and some necessary detail.

Christian National Educational ideas originated in the Cape Province over a hundred years ago in reaction to anglicization. Later, after the Anglo-Boer War, the Dutch-speaking people of the former Republics feared the loss of their identity through deprivation of their language and nationality. Private Christian National schools were therefore set up in opposition to the state schools, the hallmarks of the system being (i) mother-tongue instruction (Dutch), (ii) teachers who were Christian men and women, and (iii) parent participation in the control of the schools.

This was an understandable development at that time and was supported by men like Generals Botha, Beyers and Smuts. In 1907, however, the 'Smuts' Education Act was passed in the Transvaal legislature, compromise being the keynote. The 'Christelijke Nationaal Onderwys' leaders were satisfied with the provisions of the Act, with the result that the C.N.O. schools were amalgamated with the Transvaal state schools.

Christian Nationalism grew, thus, out of the deep needs of a defeated people and served, by its emphasis on religion, nationality and language (the warp and the woof of the Calvinistic, Dutch-speaking people's way of life), to rebuild their pride in themselves and their belief in the future. The leaders of the day were, however, men of breadth of vision. Once they had achieved much of what they had struggled for, particularly in the fields of politics and education, they did not pursue a path which could lead only to sectionalism and division; instead, they took the highway, beset as it was with obstacles, leading to a united South Africa.

The ideas underlying C.N.E. were not forgotten, however; they became part and parcel of the thinking of those who were leading

the long, uphill struggle towards domination of South Africa by the Nationalist Party. In 1939 the 'Instituut vir Christelik-Nasionale Onderwys van die Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurvereniginge' was established. This was a small but influential group of strongly conservative, orthodox Calvinist Afrikaners who began to work on the formulation, in more organized fashion, of a theory of education which, put into practice by an uncompromising Afrikanerdom, would hold Afrikaners together and would ensure political, social and economic power through the careful and thorough indoctrination of its youth. In 1948 the first step towards the realization of C.N.E. policy (in the words of Professor J. Chris Coetzee) was taken with the publication by the Institute of the much-quoted pamphlet which set out the 'Christelik-Nasionale Onderwysbeleid'. The directors of the Institute included such well-known names as those of Professor J. C. Coetzee, Dr T. E. Dönges, Dr E. G. Jansen, Professor J. G. Meiring, Rev. G. D. Worst, etc.

This pamphlet is often credited with a status and an influence which some believe is exaggerated; but it has provided, in carefully-chosen words, the basic educational philosophy claimed to be 'acceptable to the majority of the Afrikaans section of the South African population'. Although the ideas expressed were far from new, a theory of education was provided which had the prestige of intellectual and academic support. The Nationalist Party, too, needed a ready-made educational blueprint for the future at a time when victory at the polls still appeared to be something distant.

The exponents of the C.N.E. policy believe in an education aimed at 'the moulding of people in God's image so that they become fully equipped for every good work', and at developing 'the Christian and national character of our Nation'.

Clearly one would like to know how 'Christian' and 'National' are defined. In the first place, Christian is defined as being 'based on Holy Scripture and expressed in the Articles of Faith of our three Afrikaans Churches'. The education of the children of the Afrikaans-speaking group should be Christian as thus defined in its aims and objects. Children must be taught the Word of God as revealed in the Scriptures. The whole interpretation of religion is, as is to be expected, Calvinistic and orthodox.

The education of the Afrikaner must also be national in outlook, 'National' being defined as 'love for everything which is our own' ('... die nasionale beginsel van liefde vir die eie'). The main considerations must be 'our country, our language, our history and our culture'. The school must be at the heart of national life. To the devoted Christian Nationalist there is only one country, one mother-tongue, one loyalty; the true Afrikaner

must be Christian National because he owes allegiance to the 'national' group to which he belongs and to no other. In the words of Professor J. C. Coetzee, allegiance is given to 'Dutch South African Nationalism'; 'no other national foundation will satisfy them'. This implies, obviously, that the Christian Nationalist must accept an exclusive, sectional, group-view and group-practice of nationalism in South Africa.

The aim of education is Christian but only of the kind inspired by South African Dutch Reformed Church Calvinism. It must be followed in the strictest fashion. That there are other Christian approaches to education, e.g. Anglican, Roman Catholic and so on, is recognized, but C.N.E. is the orthodox Afrikaner's interpretation of the Calvinist theory of education.

The 'Christian' principle and the 'National' principle are fundamental to this approach. The theorists who formulated the pamphlet, however, went further and brought the powerful religious and political sentiments associated with Church and State together with those associated with the Home (the majority of the Afrikaner community thus becoming welded into a unity, the Home, the Church and the State re-inforcing one another). Herein, of course, lies the source of much of the strength of the C.N.E. movement, parent and family, minister of religion and church-member, school and teacher, all being integral parts of a surging Nationalism.

The C.N.E. pamphlet contains some fifteen articles covering almost every aspect of education in fair detail. For example: each group, English-speaking, Afrikaans-speaking, Coloured, Indian and African, must be separated and kept apart; there must be no blending or mixing of language, culture, religion or race; there should be separate schools for Protestants, Roman Catholics and so on; dual medium or parallel-medium education should be abandoned and bilingualism should not be an aim of education.

Secular state control of education is opposed on the grounds that the typical state school is 'totally colourless and neutral' because it cannot, with heterogeneous groups of pupils attending it, teach or reflect any specific religious way of life. It should be replaced by a state-aided system under which subsidized schools would be established, maintained and controlled by the parents whose duty it would be to co-operate with the Church and the State. The parents would be required to pay something towards the schools, the function of the State being to provide most of the funds and to lay down certain educational requirements. The parents would also elect school committees which would, in turn, select the teachers. In addition, there would be a system of school boards providing wider representation of the parents, the Church,

the State and the teachers. The State, however, should not concern itself with the aims and the spirit of education, these being essentially the responsibility of the parents, as guided by the Church.

Further control of education is to be exercised through the teachers who must be Christian and National. If they are not convinced Christians, they are 'nothing less than the deadliest danger to us.' Put into operation, this means, of course, the elimination of the 'Conscience Clause' which most Western societies uphold. The whole matter goes further, however, for the Church would exercise discipline over 'the doctrinal opinions and lives of teachers as members of the Church'.

The curriculum and the content of education must be interpreted from the Calvinistic point of view. Mother-tongue instruction is essential; history reveals God's plan for people and is one of the best means of cultivating 'liefde vir die eie' (love of one's own); in respect of geography, 'Every people belongs to its own native soil allotted to it by the Creator'.

There are many other features of this educational doctrine but the fundamental tenets have been outlined. In this article, further discussion will be based, firstly, upon the policy laid down in the C.N.E. pamphlet and secondly, upon the impact of this policy upon South African educational thought and practice.

Some supporters of the policy have asked why it is that C.N.E. is distrusted and attacked. They state that the Afrikaner belongs to a homogeneous group with strong fundamentalist Christian beliefs which bring the Church, the State and the Home into accord, thus providing the driving power for their progress as a nation. Why should they be criticized because they have drawn up a plan for the education of their people and believe firmly that it should be followed? They emphasize that the policy applies to the Afrikaans-speaking population only.

The earnestness of those who drew up the pamphlet is not denied. It was written during a period of bitter political strife. The cry of the leaders for many years was 'Hou moed, Afrikaners' (Keep up your courage, Afrikaners), 'Keep together, close ranks, let no foreign influence weaken us in our struggle' and so on. The pamphlet provided a theoretical template for educational aims, spirit, curriculum, methods, staffing and organization.

Why is it then that the opponents of C.N.E. policy reject it as strongly as they do? It is most important in a consideration of the Christian National Education plan to keep note of the *words* used, but, more particularly, to study the implications of the scheme.

In many countries two powerful determinants of educational policy have been Nationalism and Religion. France, Holland,

Germany and England, for instance, have all had conflict over the question of the extent to which either or both of these factors should influence the shaping of educational policy. Most Western democracies have established secular compulsory systems of education based upon the Christian faith, with the right of those who so wish, to establish their own schools. Indeed, in the United States of America, because of the bitter experiences of the past, a constitutional wall has been set between Church and State, its effects being most apparent in the field of education where no state support is accorded to the parochial school and no Church interference is permitted in State education.

It is most unusual today in these countries to find any Church in a position to exercise control over any form of schooling, other than in its own schools. In South Africa, the reverse has taken place. Whether by remote, indirect and direct control, the three powerful Dutch Reformed Churches exercise great *de facto* influence over South African education which is in the paralyzing grip of politico-religious forces.

The problem of Calvinist interpretation of Christianity is, of course, a theological one but one may well ask whether C.N.E. is not the product of Calvinistic thought which is several centuries old. A reputed South African theologian has remarked that 'C.N.E. is no more "Calvinist" than the Vicar of Bray is Anglican. Both are aberrations due to the same factor: succumbing to the pressure of the time'. Whatever the theological judgment may be, the C.N.E. policy is a highly responsible, carefully thought out philosophy which teaches a rigid, narrow, exclusive brand of Christianity which is not acceptable to South Africa as a whole.

Afrikaner Nationalism has had a powerful impact upon government in South Africa, there being a strong tendency amongst Afrikaners to glorify the State. But does C.N.E. policy reflect the outlook of the majority of the Afrikaans-speaking population; or is it the view of a powerful group of politicians, churchmen and educators whose policy has been propagated by the mouthpieces of Nationalist Afrikanerdom? And 'what of the important minority of Afrikaans-speaking South Africans and members of other groups who do not accept C.N.E. but who may be deeply affected by the principles and practice laid down?

I equate Afrikaner Nationalism and Christian Nationalism; effective leadership in the one depends on acceptance of the other. Nationalism in South Africa, as elsewhere, has always been exclusive, concentrating on 'our, we, us, etc.'. It served its purpose in the building of a united Afrikanerdom (or at least two-thirds of Afrikanerdom), but it is too introspective and sectional for the

further and future development of a whole South African nation. It is difficult to learn to look up and outwards when you have spent much time looking down and inwards. We need a widely generous, inclusive, mature breadth of vision to help us solve the problems of a nation comprising so many creeds, races and colours.

It has been stated on a number of occasions that, in the term 'Christian National', there is a close relationship between 'Christian' on the one hand and 'National' on the other; that the 'Christian' aspect must come first, because it provides the illumination and inspiration for the 'National' aspect. This is naïve in the extreme.

Patriotism comes from living its virtues, through example and precept, and not through linking the two concepts, Christian and National, which are frequently incompatible. Love of one's country is deep and natural and not the preserve of any one group in South Africa. I resent, for example, being talked or referred to as though I did not know what it is to be a South African. Mine is a deep and joyful love of South Africa shot through with pride and a desire to give of my best. In this I stand back for no man, however loud his voice or powerful his politics; and I have no doubt that my feelings are shared by the vast majority of the English-speaking group.

For those whose patriotism is of this type, it is important to consider the impact of C.N.E. upon the educational systems of South Africa.

At university level there has been legislation forcing students of different colours and racial groups into separate institutions.

Regular and repeated assaults have also been made on the 'Conscience Clause' at University level. In non-denominational university institutions supported by public funds it is established Western practice for no religious test to be applied to applicants for posts. In South Africa such institutions are secular and should be heterogeneous in composition (from a religious, if not from a language or race standpoint). With one exception, freedom of conscience has always been guaranteed at our universities, but a steady undermining of this situation has gone on. It is said, for example, that South Africa prides herself on her tolerance and that, therefore, no 'Conscience Clause' is needed.

The campaign waged on behalf of elimination of the 'Clause' has been unrelenting, bitter, and is being steadily won. This was made very clear in the debate in the House of Assembly on the Charter of the new Afrikaans-medium university on the Witwatersrand (1966). In contrast to the response in 1962 when the University of the Orange Free State attempted to amend its constitution

so as to eliminate the 'Clause', there was in 1966 little public opposition. Yet the question was of considerable significance for education in South Africa. The President of the Christian Council of South Africa, representing 27 Protestant-Christian denominations and missions, stated:

We find it hard to understand how this threat to academic and religious freedom . . . can be put forward in the name of Protestant-Christianity. We see in this bill a serious threat to freedom of voice of thought and expression at university level.

England, with a State Church and a strong majority of Anglicans, has been most careful, through legislation, to guard against differentiation on religious grounds. Indeed, the 'Conscience Clause' is a strong guarantee to the people of any nation against any form of religious intolerance.

If one takes at face value the statement in the C.N.E. pamphlet that teachers who are not convinced Christians (Protestants) are 'nothing less than the deadliest danger to us', then the need for such protection in South Africa is most obvious. Abolish the freedom-of-conscience principle in an Afrikaans-medium institution and, in effect, the freedom of all religion and of all individuals in South Africa is at stake. It may be said that what is feared could never happen, and the sincere hope is that it will not, but the door has been opened to possible abuse.

Over 90% of European children in South Africa attend state schools (mainly provincial). These institutions serve all of the people and are paid for by all of the people. It is basic to the principles underlying such state organisations that they must remain above political, racial or religious controversy. Alternatively, as is done in some countries, like Canada, there must be clear recognition that in a certain stream or set of schools, the parents of the children belong to a common faith or belief (e.g. the French-speaking Roman Catholic system in Quebec is parallel to an English-speaking Protestant system). No attempt has been made in South Africa to solve recognised differences of religious views nor indeed has there been any real need to do so, because religion has not been a divisive force in South Africa, the great majority of the people belonging to nonconformist Protestant churches.

A two-stream policy is generally accepted in respect of medium of instruction, there being separate English-medium and Afrikaans-medium schools with a certain number of parallel-medium schools, i.e. two separate media under one roof and one principal.

Three of the provinces lay down that a child must attend a school the medium of which will be the same as the official language better known by the child, who will remain in that medium up to and including Standard VIII, when he may transfer to the other medium, if it is so desired. Few do. The parent has, in effect, no right of choice except that he can take the child to the school of his preference, but the principal does the deciding unless the child is approximately equal at both languages, when the parent can decide on the medium.

Most educationists would support the view that mother-tongue instruction is generally in the best interests of the child, especially in the earlier years, but why the compulsion and the increasingly rigid application of the law? There are a number of good reasons why, at this stage of our development in South Africa, more flexibility and sheer humaneness are needed. The politicians state that growing unity is at hand, but the school system deliberately and ruthlessly forces the people apart.

The aim clearly is to make sure that all Afrikaans-speaking children receive a type of education which will suit Christian-National policy, the protagonists and products of which are to be found in Parliament, Church and Education, many in powerful positions.

Some fifteen years ago in the Transvaal, a number of established parallel-medium schools were literally rent apart whether the parents agreed or not. After litigation, the provincial ordinance covering education was changed so as to permit the authorities to break up established parallel-medium schools. Such are the lengths to which C.N.E. exponents will go in order to separate the people of South Africa and to keep them separate virtually throughout the educational system.

What South Africa needs is more schools of the parallel-medium type. These should not be forced on the parents, but there is reason to believe that in many urban and semi-urban areas where English- and Afrikaans-speaking citizens live cheek by jowl, they would welcome schools where mother-tongue instruction is provided, but where the two White groups would really get to know one another. At university level, the need for one parallel-medium university, at least, is very great, preferably at a post-graduate and research level. It may be argued that the University of Port Elizabeth is an institution of this type. But it is a matter for cynicism when a ruling political party which has always opposed parallel- or dual-medium education begins to support it in one isolated case. It is to be hoped that the University of Port Elizabeth remains a parallel-

and dual-medium university and that others follow suit. The proof of the pudding will be in the eating.

The segmentation of education into separate education departments for Bantu, Coloured and Indian pupils, each within a government department controlling the affairs of that particular racial group, has been completed. However, education for Whites has remained under the divided control of the Minister of Education, Arts and Science and the four provinces. Consistency can only be achieved by all White education now being placed under the Minister with the four provinces carrying out the policy formulated at the top.

Under such a symmetrical pattern, however, there will remain no one authority or council which can view the problems of education as a whole. Whilst it is true that the various ethnic groups are at different stages of educational development, the problems are fundamentally the same. South Africa needs 'whole' thinking about the education of her people. The organization to ensure this, through the administration at regional levels of education on the basis of whole units including all races, creeds and colours, but allowing for ethnic separation within the pattern, if this is desired, would not be difficult to plan or carry out, provided the will were there. This the Christian Nationalist would never allow.

The drive towards uniformity in White education is well advanced. It has been fairly clear for many years that greater educational co-ordination was needed. England may be quoted as an example of what is almost voluntary co-ordination in educational administration. There is a central Ministry of Education with wide powers, which are seldom exercised, and local education authorities which control education in their own areas. In addition, there are several national advisory councils, the membership of which is voluntary and unpaid.

In South Africa, the strong opposition to the National Advisory Education Bill in 1962 was not on the grounds that such an advisory council was not educationally desirable, but because of the use to which such a council could be put and the conviction that it was the forerunner of a centrally-controlled system of education.

In 1967, the National Education Policy Bill was introduced into Parliament and hammered through both Houses in just over three weeks. The Minister of Education, Arts and Science did not accept a single amendment, however mild. He admitted that the original Bill accepted by the Provinces had been changed. It was clear that the Bill was drafted without proper and adequate consultation

with recognized teaching associations and educational bodies. The full part played by the National Advisory Education Council in the drafting of the Bill still remains somewhat of a mystery. Yet the Bill laid down certain educational principles which required full debate on *educational* grounds. Three of the most important were the following:

(i) Education shall have 'a Christian character' and 'a broad national character'. Have we not here come full cycle with the use of the words 'Christian' and 'National'? Both in themselves are acceptable and desirable, but they are to be condemned if they are being mouthed by Christian Nationalists who have changed direction on the question of the state-aided pattern, and have seen and grasped the opportunity to subvert a whole state system of education to their ends.

The C.N.E. policy statement could originally be regarded as one made by a group of people with strong religious convictions (and applicable to that group only). The logical outcome would have been the setting up of private denominational schools to serve those who subscribed to the principles and policies enunciated. Other religious groups like the Anglicans, Roman Catholics and Methodists have done this at very considerable financial sacrifice to themselves.

(ii) Mother-tongue instruction. This has been provided for in the Educational Ordinances of the four provinces. Natal, however, allows parental option. There was no way of bringing Natal to heel and so the Minister has given himself the power to lay down the provisions for compulsory mother-tongue instruction along the lines of the other three provinces.

The state-subsidized schools (almost exclusively English-medium) also now fall under this provision. This means that *no* Afrikaans-speaking child will be able to escape the net of language-medium compulsion. 'The elimination of parental option should be considered as an invasion of fundamental human rights', in the words of one group opposing the Bill. At one fell swoop, therefore, both Natal and the subsidized schools are placed, in effect, under the control of the Minister who assumes in this, and other matters, dictatorial powers.

(iii) Centralization of power at a national level. This is completely unnecessary and highly undesirable in a country with the variety and diversity which exists amongst the White group alone. Co-ordination is already being achieved at a great rate in the fields of courses, syllabuses, examinations and so on. Why then is there need for the Minister's Department, which has never handled the problems of primary and secondary education, to take over, with

threats of penalties if his policies are not carried out? In the meantime, the provincial system of education will have been emasculated—philosophy, ideology and policy being dictated from the top, whilst the administration at provincial level goes on as before.

In this way, the total grid system of education is being established, the ideological current coming from a central source. In the words of a spokesman for the Afrikaans-Calvinistiese Beweging before the Select Committee on the Advisory Council Bill (1962):

If we wish to remain a Christian State, the historic Christian National character and tradition of both Afrikaans- and English-speaking should be cultivated on a national basis. I am not against 'dreary uniformity' provided it conforms to C.N.E. policy in this country.

It may be argued that education for separate development, language-medium and language study for the Bantu, the National Advisory Education Council, the new 1967 Bill on Education and so on, are educational measures which can be defended on the grounds of educational principle. In terms of government policy, some of the measures stand up; in terms of educational principle they would be severely mauled and rejected in any company of trained, objective educationists.

There is no doubt, in my mind, that many Nationalist politicians have made the maximum political use of the Christian National policy and that the Dutch Reformed Churches in their understandable zeal for the spiritual and moral welfare and religious cohesion of their congregations have exerted pressure on the government to provide the kind of education the Churches want, education which produces a fine Christian man or woman, strong in his belief in God and in his country. So far, so good. It is for those within the Churches to control the shape and development of any theory and practice within that institution. It is when the policy infiltrates the State system, and steadily, but implacably, becomes State policy applying to all within that system, that deep resentment is bred.

If those carrying out the separate development policy, which one sees foreshadowed in the C.N.E. pamphlet, were truly consistent, then the State system of education should consist of two sections, one English-speaking and one Afrikaans-speaking, each under its own Director of Education, inspectors and principals of schools. Recruitment to the English-speaking section of the teaching profession would improve tremendously if this were done.

The reverse has happened and is happening. The call is for unity and yet the Christian National supporter speaks of 'ons eie', 'our own', 'our history', 'our language', etc. How can true integra-

tion of the English- and Afrikaans-speaking sections take place when the real aim is to get the English-speaking group to accept Christian National policy either through 'sweet reasonableness' or by the bludgeon of a national act on education which they do not want?

It is my belief that we in South Africa can agree on many matters in education. Let us therefore, through discussion and consultation, agree upon that on which we are able to agree. *All* of the rest must be left alone; and left to the local areas to solve, until such time as further agreement is possible.

Constructive criticism is, however, not welcome. In all the developments which have taken place, there has been no significant criticism of educational policy from within the ranks of Nationalism itself. This may appear strange, and yet it is not. The educational system of the last half century has produced an Afrikaner who does not challenge the authorities in the ideological field. Ideology and education are very closely linked and that is why so little criticism has been voiced. When most of those educationists who are known not to support government policy in education, express different viewpoints from that of the official policy, they are ignored or described as 'political'. This is a very unhappy state of affairs.

Education starts with the people, who should have a real say in the education of their children through decentralized local government in education. Flexibility must be preserved and people encouraged to do their own thinking. This applies to teachers as well. There is already, and will be, much activity in respect of *methods* of teaching e.g. arithmetic and mathematics, because there is no great room for disagreement. Should teachers or parents, however, raise questions about the philosophy of education, which in turn mirrors a way of life, they will be told in no uncertain terms that there is *one* educational philosophy in South Africa, the principles and content of which have already been decided. That educational philosophy will be that of Christian Nationalism.

Most leading Nationalist politicians disclaim any part in the implementation of C.N.E. principles; indeed, it is quite true to say that it has never become a matter of official policy and is therefore virtually non-existent! Those who pose questions are blandly asked whether they are against education being Christian and patriotic in spirit and aim. And yet, a policy which should be the affair of a private religious group, has become, in effect, no longer the expression of the educational position of the three Dutch Reformed Churches, but is being applied to all education at

provincial, and now at national levels. Is C.N.E. a thing of the past?—No, indeed! Much of what the 1948 group stated as its policy has already been accomplished. There will be no satisfaction with the situation, however, until the whole country in its social and political fabric is drenched in Christian National thinking.

This will, of course, be dismissed, as the ravings of one who hates the Afrikaner and sees his own culture disappearing into the swamp of apathy. Nothing could be further from the truth. My respect for the Afrikaner has always been great, and I am sympathetic towards his struggles and broad aims, but I see fear, amongst them, fear that the drift towards a modern westernised 'English' culture is well advanced both economically and socially. One educationist, giving an address entitled *Die Taak van die Afrikaanse Skool in die Nuwe Kultuursituasie* a few months ago made the statement that the integration of English-Afrikaans groups in South Africa was so advanced that 200,000 Afrikaners had become anglicized (including use of home language) and that the process was gathering momentum. What the basis of calculation was, is not known, but the direction of thought is interesting. He also spoke of the absorption of the Afrikaner into the industrial, commercial and financial world of South Africa with serious loss of those qualities which distinguished him from his fellow South Africans. There is serious concern amongst Afrikaans cultural leaders over the possibility of a marked decline in the numbers of people speaking Afrikaans, and over the possibility of a deterioration in the quality of the language. The desire of so high a proportion of non-whites to qualify themselves in English has been a further shock. None of these matters is in line with what the politicians *said* would happen—the Afrikanerisation of South Africa is not taking place as was expected.

Christian National Education has done serious harm to the country as a whole, *but* the greatest harm has been done to the Nationalist Afrikaner of whom it is not worthy, for it breeds narrowness of outlook, isolationism and exclusiveness. One is always in difficulty at this point, for, in writing about C.N.E. and one's convinced opposition to it, one exposes oneself to accusations of racialism. To those who read carefully what has been written here (and, unfortunately those who most need to read it will not do so), the whole approach is not one of carping and niggling criticism, but of deep concern based upon knowledge in the field of education in which so many unhappy events have taken and are taking place. One asks oneself, for instance, in how far does what has been described represent the average Afrikaner's view-

points and desires? Where a man or a woman is a good member of the Dutch Reformed Church, where does the Calvinistic teaching in respect of faith and beliefs stop and the very rigid bigotry of C.N.E. begin? Such men and women will surely want their children educated in a school environment which is, in effect, an extension of that created in the home and the Church. South Africa is basically a Christian society, certainly a religious society. State education in this country is founded upon Christianity, and religious instruction is part of the curriculum. So far no teaching of dogma has been permitted. When ideas are presented to Church adherents, which foster the natural and reasonable attainment of patriotic Christian goals, these are, quite rightly, embraced as good and proper.

It is the shading of what is Christian, in its best sense of love and charity, into the hard, uncompromising, self-assurance with which non-government educationists are so very familiar, that is so disturbing.

Christian National Education as we know it, is one of the products of the Afrikaner's struggle for political, social and economic identity. It should be accepted as such and as belonging to the pre-1948 era. Today, as an educational policy, it is outdated, even for a private and religious section of the community. It is dangerous for all of us, but particularly the Afrikaner, because it takes what is admirable within his Christian beliefs and love of his country and narrows it down, emphasizing 'we and ours' at a time when the country needs strong men and women who are able to think inclusively and stand firm in their beliefs. Young people must be given good religious foundations for living, but must be steered always in the direction of thinking for themselves and having the right to challenge old ideas. Christian National Education fears, and so denies, this fundamental God-given right.

MARVELL'S 'AN HORATIAN ODE UPON CROMWELL'S RETURN FROM IRELAND'

by W. J. B. WOOD

To consider Marvell's significance as a poet one could not do better than take his Horatian Ode. But before one can perceive his characteristic qualities in this Ode there are readily apparent difficulties to be met, the two most fundamental being how we are intended to take the poem, and how we are able to respond to it. It appears somewhat equivocally to celebrate Cromwell's achievements, yet is openly sympathetic to Charles. Is the tribute then insincere, Marvell ostensibly complimenting what he surreptitiously condemns? Or is he capable of such fine discrimination that he cannot decide either way without confuting qualifications? Such scrupulosity would suggest an even-handed justice that has a neutralizing and undesirable effect, implying a viewpoint basically uncommitted. One can appreciate Douglas Bush's⁵ irritation with Cleanth Brooks'⁴ appraisal of the poem's complexity and ambiguity: his endeavour to do the poem justice does tend to leave one dissatisfied (though not necessarily as Bush's fractious reply suggests). Complexity and ambiguity are not virtues in themselves but matter in so far as they prove to be revealing and to promote some developed, directed awareness. Can this be said of the poem?

Conceivably it will long prove a battle-ground for critical exegesis. If one is concerned in a restrictive way with the 'sense', evidence for the above charges and many more may readily be found. Yet if one does not squint *too* closely at the text, sitting and scrutinizing what is 'said' and accruing implications, but responds to what the poetry is 'doing', such difficulties begin to fall away. One is not left perplexed by equivocal ambiguity but impressed by a coherent, profound and mature insight into matters of real and wide-ranging complexity. One soon becomes aware that though the occasion of the poem is Cromwell's return from Ireland, and its specific subject a celebration of his rise to power and the deposition of the Monarchy, the poet's concerns range very much further afield. In common with all his finest poetry, it has the distinctive suggestiveness which T. S. Eliot cogently describes when he says ' . . . we are inclined to infer that (it) is the aura *around a bright clear centre*', that one does not 'have the aura alone'.

The kind of detail I should like to single out for attention is that

which suggests the carefully modulated tone of the poem. Marvell's characteristic play of wit covers more than metaphorical ambiguities and touches such as the bilingual puns on 'axe's edge' and the 'party-coloured minds' of the *Picts*. Its accomplishment is a superb poise (an 'alliance between levity and seriousness') that requires a highly flexible response to the varied shifts in the poetry. These are effected by his resourceful deployment of heroic verse as well as the language and inflexions of natural speech.

From the title one anticipates formal eulogy, a classical and heroic Grand Style. But it is 'classical' with a difference: the poetry produces an ironic effect and its seriousness proves to be of another order. Marvell does not, as Milton would have done, tell his readers not to take the poetry at its face value; he makes it impossible to do so by allowing the rhythms of real speech to off-set and deflate the exalted verse. The point of this kind of effect touches on the heart of the poem, which is concerned not simply with Cromwell but an attitude to Cromwell of a kind that lacks what Marvell believes to be a necessary and valuable perspective. His poetry does not dwell explicitly on this; instead of directly offering, it produces a positive viewpoint to counter what it decries. In acting upon one the poem complements what it criticizes. Marvell is not disapproving of the rhetorical attitude in any moralistic way. He can clearly delight in it as much as anyone. Nevertheless he has no illusions about the kind of value to be attached to it.

The verse pattern appears to be somewhat restrictive or monotonous, the solemn measure that befits a formal ode. Thus one cannot but marvel at the vitality and variety of the poetic effects achieved within it, when we see how these function in realizing the poet's point. We note, for instance, that the alternating couplets of four- and three-stress lines succeed in carrying one on with more movement in the longer lines, the more even rhythm amounting to an *accelerando* in the metrical tempo. But the three-beat rhythm restrains and slows down the pace, preventing one from being carried away, as it were.

The 'slower' couplet functions with particular point where it accompanies a modulation to normal speech, a most notable example being:

Tis Madness to resist or blame
 The force of angry Heavens flame:
 And, if we would speak true,
 Much to the Man is due.

After the cosmic imagery and the heroic tone of the first couplet, we find we are brought up, by metre as well as natural speech and voice inflexion, to register bathetic surprise: that real speech rhythms should occasion the surprise is implicit comment on the unreality of what has preceded. The deflating criticism is emphasised by the implications of 'if we would speak true' (what then, one is prompted to wonder, have 'we' been indulging in!). The stress that falls on 'Man' serves as a timely reminder that Cromwell is a man after all, and not some superhuman demigod.

In a more sombre key a shift in tone functions with different dramatic effect here:

Nor call'd the *Gods* with vulgar spight
 To vindicate his helpless Right,
 But bow'd his comely Head,
 Down as upon a Bed.

The rhythm, 'picking up' as it does in the first couplet, enables us to feel the aroused emotion appropriate to the drama of which we are enabled at this point to feel part. The rhyme clinches with impact the association of 'spight' with injured 'right'. Yet these feelings are assuaged by the slow rhythm that follows, appropriate to a nobly resigned temper. Instead of an emotional and essentially melodramatic gesture to the Gods, such as would have recommended itself to the mob, there is the dignity of Charles's action described for us in language that is genuinely moving by virtue of its simplicity and naturalness. At death, the *Royal Actor* declined to act and thereby showed himself to be something more than that. His conduct is truly heroic and in striking contrast to the popular conception of heroism suggested in the declamatory rhetoric of preceding lines. It is scarcely appreciated as constituting a value by the 'armed Bands'. The tenderness felt for the King is not in the least sentimental: the scene is too vividly before us. We register not only the image of a graceful and natural repose, but also the drop of the head suggested by the strategic placing of 'Down'.

A variation of yet another kind may be discerned in the following stanza where the shift in tone takes place within the natural speech rhythm:

And now the *Irish* are asham'd
 To see themselves in one year tam'd:
 So much one Man can do,
 That does both act and know.

The contrast in the couplets, marking a shift from a relaxed and rather casual tone to one of pointed directness in the shorter lines with their terse monosyllables, serves to interrupt the rather generalized and distant view of the Irish and their plight. Although there is slightly humorous levity at the expense of the Irish, as we are invited to consider their crushing defeat in such smooth and evenly moving verse, their case has an immediate significance that merits a more seriously realistic view into which we are prompted by the blunt tone of the ensuing couplet. The stanzas that follow expand on the more disturbing implications of such a resounding victory.

Another notable example where it is the flexible tone within a stanza that brings the verse to life and makes the point with telling effect is the close:

Besides the force it has to fright
 The Spirits of the shady Night,
 The same *Arts* that did *gain*
 A *Pow'r* must it *maintain*.

Even without the italics, the suspension after 'gain' caused by the run-over line, and the answering rhyme falling on 'maintain', give the appropriate stresses to the words that would suggest precisely the proper inflexion of voice to carry a tone of pointed, wry irony. Natural speech rhythms displacing the regular metrical stress, also emphasise 'Arts', and lend an apt nuance to the last line with its strong caesura after 'Pow'r'.

If we have been sensitive all along to such subtle shifts of tone and the ironic interplay between rhetoric and realism, as I have tried to illustrate, we are in a position to appreciate Marvell's point of view. We are not left looking, somewhat dazzled by the wit, two ways at once; we have been invited to consider, responsibly and realistically, the sense in which Cromwell deserves acclaim; secondly, the implications that attend the practice of military arts and prowess, both for society's good and to its detriment; thirdly, we are not allowed to dismiss the deposed Monarch. The implication is that although the Monarchy may have become weak, superficial and irresponsible, it yet embodied qualities which, in the interest of a cultured society, require to be preserved and continued. Marvell realistically accepts the tremendous upheaval of the civil war, but is concerned that the change should be for the better and that the realities that matter not be distorted or lost sight of through crude and false simplifications of what is at stake. The issues the poem brings before us concern far

more than political realities or the triumph of a 'good' regime over a 'bad'. It is precisely this kind of limited perspective that Marvell opposes with all the resources of his pen and wit. The doubt the poem prompts is countered, however, by what we perceive to be a mature, detached, yet seriously involved perspective—that produced by the poem.

The ironic note on which the poem closes, quite unequivocally suggests that the 'Arts' of war *per se* are *not* sufficient to promote the well-being of the state. Though they may prove the necessary means, they do not deserve exalted acclaim as if they were sufficient ends.

There is especial point in the fact that the close of the poem echoes the opening lines: the tone in which these 'Arts' are spoken of refers us to the mention of 'The inglorious Arts of Peace', and the tone of the passage in which this phrase occurs. We are invited now to consider the respective merits of the cultivation of the Muses' company and the active military life from the perspective offered by the poem. The full significance of the careful particularity of detail in the opening four couplets becomes clear. They provide a pertinent introduction, the wider context or background against which the poem is to be seen.

It is particularly addressed to youth, the next generation, who are bidden to come forward and play an active part in their country's history, fulfilling what present occasion demands of men. Touches such as 'Must *now* forsake . . . ' and 'Tis time to leave . . . ' stress firstly, the fact that these are pressures of the moment requiring them for the time being to set aside the more peaceful, cultivated and congenial pursuit of the Muses. But not only the urgency of military obligations is stressed: one is also conscious of reluctance. This is reinforced by details such as reference to the 'Muses dear', and the particularity with which the situation is portrayed. To ignore the call to arms would clearly deserve the criticism implicit in the lines,

Nor in the Shadows sing
His Numbers languishing—

of shirking responsibility and resorting to the Muses for escapist motives. Weight is nevertheless given to the fact that men are being called upon to set aside a valued occupation. Nor are we invited to take a generalised view of the situation but to imagine what it is to leave actual volumes that have meant something in one's life to lie gathering dust; to take down the family corslet, and oil the armour which (significantly) was not needed while one

was able to delight in the Muses' company. No crude parallel is posited between active and contemplative ways of life. Both aspects of existence are duly recognised as being interdependent and having valid but proportional claims on man. Marvell succeeds in bringing home that 'to cast a kingdom into another mold' requires more than the smashing of the old decadent order, and military arts. The upshot of his poem is to urge a return to the cultural pursuits that had to be set aside at first. The poem is itself a triumphant demonstration of how the poetic arts and a cultivated sensibility can promote the much needed integration of attitude that no other 'arts', military or political, can provide.

In this light the poem can be seen to offer an entirely consistent, constructively critical viewpoint. In prompting doubt by its ambiguities, and seeking to unsettle presuppositions by the shifts of tone and the ironic play of wit, the nature of the poet's entirely serious intention is made clear. As far as Cromwell is concerned, Marvell stresses that he is not merely an heroic Hotspur. After the reverberating eulogy (lines 9-26) we come to a passage which pays plain and genuine tribute to real qualities that deserve admiration. Cromwell *is* valiant in war, but his valour is of the kind that proceeds from a soberly industrious and responsibly dedicated disposition. His potential is not, exclusively, of a destructive kind; although he has 'ruined the great Work of Time', in private his is a nature inclined to make things grow.

We see that the poem's reply to the question—'on whose side is one expected to be?'—has been more than replied to. Marvell has established that there is a third possibility, a perspective such as his, and that such a question betrays a kind of concern with considerable limitations—the kind of limitations that prevent a country's recovery and progress. If we respond in the way I have tried to suggest the poem both demands and permits, we cannot fail to recognise that it exemplifies a mature awareness of the most positive and valuable kind.

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CORRESPONDENCE

SIMPLE THOUGHTS ON WILLIAM BLAKE

To the Editors of *Theoria*,

Gentlemen,

Two readings of the short poem 'My Pretty Rose Tree' have appeared in recent issues of our journal (24 and 27). Although Mr Pechey's reading is in some ways more acceptable than Mr Thompson's, I feel that both complicate and intellectualize the lines as Blake in his poetic simplicity surely does not intend.

On referring again to each discussion of the poem, my eye has lighted on a letter from Mr Nuttall (*Theoria* 24) in which he quotes jargon used by recent exponents of textual criticism. It would be unjust to group our two critics of Blake beside those who deaden English with the technical phrase, but it is possible that they are shadowed (however unconsciously) by a spirit which has hovered over literary studies in this decade and which creeps across the matter if not the manner of those who publish. This is inevitable at a time when brain power and a show of mental agility earn the readiest acclaim. We need not wonder that it has influenced readers of poetry. All the same, we must remind ourselves that poetry is not merely an exercise of the wits: its interpretation should not become an attempt to discover the hidden meanings which other readers have missed.

I wish to illustrate my objection to a cerebral reading of 'My Pretty Rose Tree' by writing briefly about the flower in the first verse, the character of the man who speaks the lines, and Blake's feeling about the incident he describes.

At the beginning of the poem we are told of a gardener who is offered

Such a flower as May never bore.

Does this mean a spring flower? Can we overlook the word 'never' and proceed to talk of a delicate, fresh beauty? Blake may

imagine what is fresher and more unspoilt than any other flower of that season, indeed the perfection of all that blossoms in May. But isn't it likely that he refers to a showy, striking beauty which is exotic and would not be seen among the profusion growing in the fields? This flower is also distinct from the familiar rose blooming in the speaker's garden with a colour and fragrance which are not stale though often enjoyed. The new flower, or the love, which comes enticingly within the reach of this man is 'sweet' because it differs from what he already cherishes (in the real sense of the last word and not 'perversely' as Mr Pechey writes). What is offered presents change and variety; or to use an excellent Tudor word, 'new-fangleness' describes the reason why he is charmed.

Does the gardener and, as we must regard him, the lover or husband possess his rose tree with a smug certainty that he has more in the material, wordly way than the new flower can give him? Doesn't this twist the meaning? How can we connect 'the stifling personal hell of property greed' with such a poem? An obsession with the iniquity of money values can make the intelligentsia blind to literary truth, it seems to me, and injecting Blake with twentieth-century Socialism brings the poet absurdly up to date. The speaker in this poem, I suggest, is faithful to his first love for her sake as well as his own. We are told of a rose *tree* because the bond with her is of long duration and the feeling between them must be represented by something perennial. There is no pride of material possession but a belief that love, sending out shoots and buds, flowers and then becomes dormant; it wells up and subsides again as the years of marriage pass. D. H. Lawrence describes with wonder this enduring but always varying communion in the poem 'Fidelity' where he compares love to a flower or a fountain and the constant bond of marriage to a precious stone, the sapphire. I think we can profitably, if roughly, relate his imagery to Blake's. That the gardener is ready to tend his rose tree 'by day and by night' is another detail showing a close marital tie and, further, it brings out the protective and responsible quality of this kind of love. The new flower offered to him would be his for a careless kind of rapture.

Now to come to Blake's view of the decision the gardener makes and the result of that decision. The literature of our time often shows the tedium of marriage, the irksome demands of either husband or wife and an impatient shirking of the curb on one's freedom. It can also show the paradisaical state of marriage to be an unrestricted and at times wildly primitive gratification of the senses; without that, a man and woman are unfulfilled and with-

out that they have the right to betray each other. This may not seem out of tune with a poet who writes of 'the lineaments of gratified desire' as all that men and women want of each other. But does it explain the last lines of the piece which concerns us now? Whether the poet is or is not the speaker in 'My Pretty Rose Tree', I believe that he has sympathy for the predicament of one who turns from the impulse to enjoy wanton love only to find that the woman who has been spared desertion and loneliness cannot understand his act of self-denial. Her envy prevents her from feeling gratitude that the crisis has passed. She thinks only of a slight to herself and she greets him, not with continuing and more joyful affection, but with peeved resentment that he hesitated a little before coming back to her. Noel Coward's film called *Brief Encounter* which, if my memory serves me, has more subtlety and breadth than his works for the stage ends on a another note. When a wife has overcome her passionate interest in the stranger she met on a journey away from home, she is welcomed back gently and thankfully by her husband. This is no less probable but far less painful than the sharply disturbing conclusion of Blake's poem.

To make a stand on lines by a writer like Blake who sketches an outline and leaves the reader to fill it in, is precarious. But the two readings of this Song of Experience previously published in *Theoria* assert a tortuous irony in a poem where I find for the most part deep compassion. Many of our contemporaries hasten to prove that they are clear-sighted about that highly suspect being, man. Mr Pechey, it is true, states that the irony is tragic yet he is too concerned with the speaker's failings and with arguing about the lines. I think it is time to affirm that poetry expresses feeling as much as thought and that we should be guided by our finer senses and intuitions rather than censorious judgments or sleuth-like clues.

In Blake's poem we discover the sadness of a fate where, if vice is not punished, virtue is not rewarded; and more bewildering, where vice and virtue are not always neatly distinguished from each other. The guardian of the rose tree like any suffering, imperfect mortal is left with the austere satisfaction of knowing that he did what he felt to be right. We feel pity for him as well as for the thorny rose who spurns his freely-given loyalty.

Yours faithfully,

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